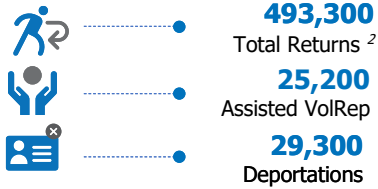


## Key Figures (from 15 Sept to date)



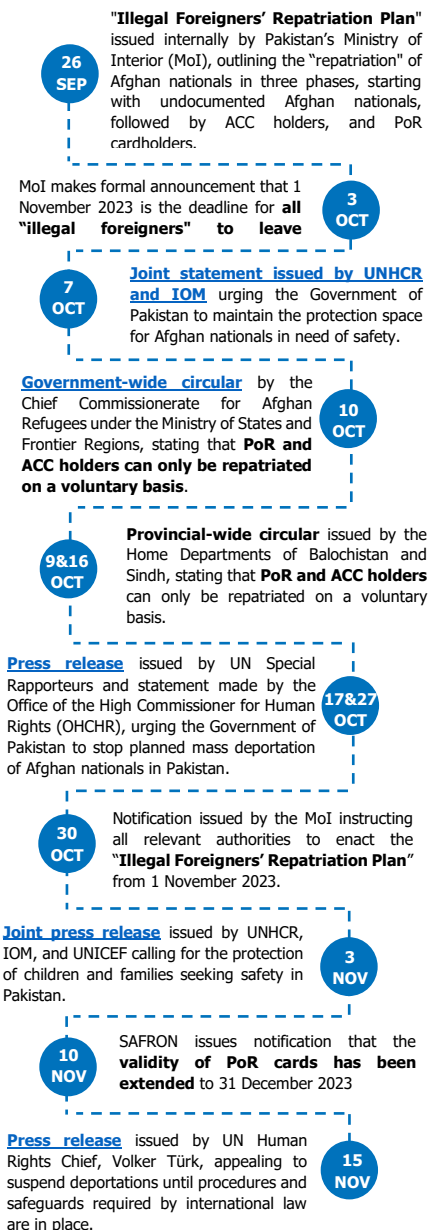
## UNHCR Funding Requirements

**\$43.48M** for Afghanistan from November 2023 to July 2024

**\$8.43M** for Pakistan from November to December 2023

*The quoted figures are currently under revision.*

## Timeline of Key Events



Source: [UNHCR-IOM Joint Update #12](#)

## Background

On 3 October 2023, the Government of Pakistan announced plans to repatriate "illegal foreigners".<sup>1</sup> In view of the ongoing humanitarian and human rights concerns in Afghanistan, particularly for women and girls, UNHCR and IOM issued a [joint statement](#) urging Pakistan to maintain the protection space for Afghans in need of safety. This was followed by a [joint statement](#) by UNHCR, IOM, and UNICEF which appealed for the protection of children and families seeking safety in Pakistan.

Population trends during the reporting period indicate that most Afghans made the decision to leave Pakistan following the announcement of the repatriation plan although deportations through Torkham and Spin Boldak border crossing points were also recorded. People arriving at the border are exhausted and require urgent assistance as well as psychosocial support. Arrivals back to Afghanistan are also adding to the worsening humanitarian crisis, as winter temperatures start to dip to -4°C in some locations. Many Afghan returnees are vulnerable, including women and children, who could lose their lives in a harsh winter if left without adequate shelter.

1.3 million undocumented Afghans were estimated to reside in Pakistan before the repatriation plan was announced. Approximately 720,000 undocumented individuals and 50,000 assisted Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders are expected to require support at border points through July 2024, according to an inter-agency Border Consortium Appeal launched in November 2023. The surge in returns has put pressure on already strained resources, including shelter and basic services. Additional support is urgently required. UNHCR and partners in Pakistan and Afghanistan are currently working together to ensure a harmonized and coordinated cross-border response to the new emergency. In this regard, UNHCR and partners have stepped up their presence in and around Torkham and Chaman border crossing points and accelerated efforts to ensure protection-sensitive mechanisms are in place via regular border monitoring visits and protection screenings to identify and assist people with heightened vulnerabilities and needs.

UNHCR maintains a [non-return advisory](#) for Afghanistan, which has been in place since August 2021, and continues to call for a bar on forced returns of Afghan nationals to a country still impacted by recurrent conflict, instability and climate-induced disasters. UNHCR continues to appeal to the Government of Pakistan to maintain the protection space for Afghan nationals in need of safety and that any returns must be voluntary, safe and dignified with full respect for rights and protection of those in need.

## Key Highlights

The number of returnees entering **Afghanistan** from **Pakistan continued to decline**. The average number of daily border crossings came down to 1,500 people during the reporting period, compared to 18,200 in the first week of November. The total number of returns to Afghanistan since 15 September 2023 to date is 493,300.

<sup>1</sup> The Government of Pakistan announced that Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders and Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders are exempted. The validity of PoR cards was retroactively extended in November to 31 December 2023. Advocacy by UNHCR is ongoing at all levels to secure another extension.

<sup>2</sup> An umbrella term that includes all returns including deportations, assisted voluntary repatriation and other returns of Afghans of all statuses such as PoR cardholders, ACC holders, and the undocumented.

- In **Afghanistan**, UNHCR mixed-gender teams visited Spin Boldak and Torkham border crossing points and carried out protection interviews with new Afghan arrivals from Pakistan, including women returnees. Fear of arrest and detention, limited freedom of movement, reports of extortion, as well as challenges extending tenancy agreements, were some of the reasons cited by families returning to Afghanistan. Help desks are supporting returnees who require assistance and referring them to the available services. Winterization support, health, and water, sanitation and hygiene were identified as the most critical needs.
- In **Afghanistan**, UNHCR continued to biometrically process and provide cash assistance to PoR card holders and their nuclear family members, UNHCR slip holders, asylum seeker certificate holders and other protection referrals. Since 15 September 2023, some 65,300 individuals returning from Pakistan have been provided with cash assistance, including some 43,400 PoR card holders.
- In **Pakistan**, advocacy with authorities continues in response to reports of evictions and arrests of both documented and undocumented individuals, including holders of PoR cards, Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC) and reception slips. In 2023, 30,667 Afghan nationals were arrested, a figure exceeding any previous year since data collection on the arrest and detention of Afghan nationals began. For the latest figures, please see the [UNHCR-IOM Flash Update](#).
- In **Pakistan**, UNHCR held the last Refugee Protection Working Group (RPWG) meeting of the year on 27 December, bringing together partners to review their achievements and plans for 2024. UNHCR gave an update on developments related to the protection environment and the status of the implementation of the repatriation plan, including observed reduced pressure on the Afghan community and steadily declining returns to Afghanistan. RPWG members agreed that the situation needed to be closely monitored, given the uncertainty around the second and third phase of implementation.
- More funding** is needed to bolster UNHCR's and the inter-agency response to this unfolding emergency, with significant resource requirements identified in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Needs are continuing to rise due to a confluence of insecurity, instability, and environmental disasters as well as economic and geopolitical crosswinds. To support the response, UNHCR's ask under the inter-agency appeal is \$43.48 million for Afghanistan from November 2023 to July 2024 and \$8.43 million for Pakistan from November to December 2023.



UNHCR continues to provide cash assistance to Afghan returnees in Encashment Centers like this one in Kandahar © UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production