

AFGHANISTAN MONTHLY PROTECTION MONITORING SUMMARY

MAY 2024





4,231 assessments conducted in May

25,270 persons reached



3.39% increase of total assessments compared to April



Conducted across **72 districts** in **31 provinces**



24.9% of interviewed households are headed by women. Out of the overall household members, **53.57%** are female, of which **33.21%** are girls, and **62.68%** are children



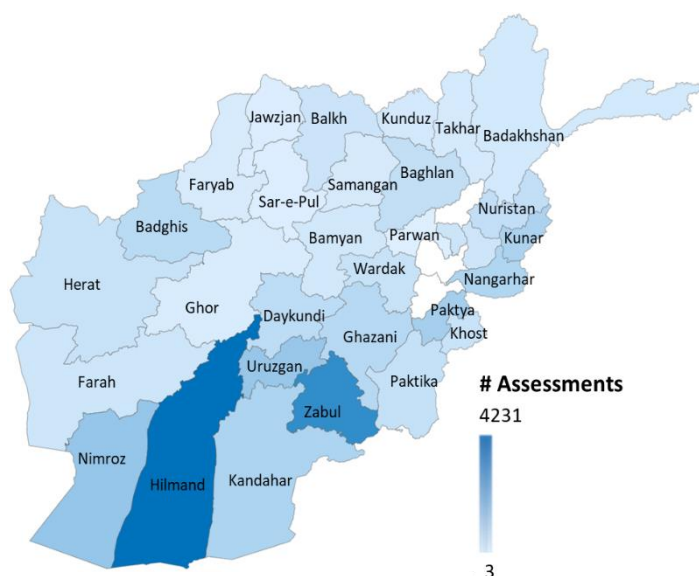
9.8% heads of households with **disabilities**

Introduction

The analysis provided in this report relies on data gathered through UNHCR's protection monitoring tools. UNHCR's **Community Based Protection Monitoring (CBPM)** interventions include household-level assessments, key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), aiming to collect evidence-based information on the protection needs and risks of displaced, returnee and host communities. CBPM outcomes inform UNHCR programming and strategic decision making and advocacy, and also feeds into the [Afghanistan Protection Cluster's analysis](#) and information products. **Rapid multi-sectoral household assessments (RHAF)** aim to identify persons in need of assistance through UNHCR's protection and assistance programmes and also provide valuable insights into the vulnerabilities of households as well as related protection needs and risks. The selection of areas is based on the high density of displaced and returnees among communities, including priority areas of return and reintegration and newly accessible areas. UNHCR's population groups include refugee returnees, IDPs, IDP returnees, refugees and asylum seekers and members of the host communities.

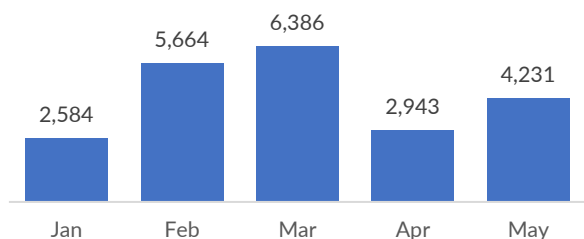
KEY POINTS

- **Women and girls** continue to face significant challenges in accessing basic services and assistance, reflecting their systemic discrimination and movement restrictions.
- **Among the surveyed households, 67%** have at least one **family member lacking civil documentation**.
- **Among the surveyed population in May, 55%** of head of household reported experiencing one or more vulnerabilities.
- **Food assistance** was the most crucial need highlighted by surveyed households.
- **Many families reported having resorted to harmful coping mechanisms**, such as borrowing money, selling assets or harmful practices that imply serious child protection risks.

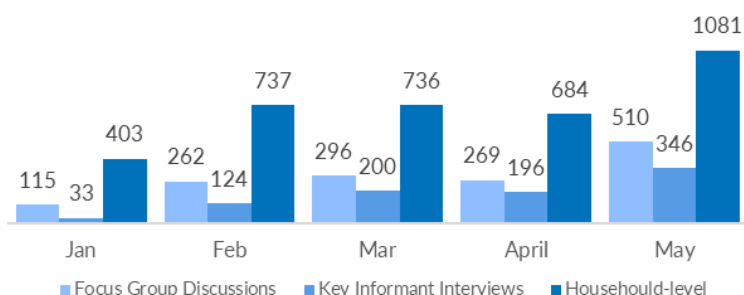


OVERVIEW OF THE DATA COLLECTED

RHAF Assessments (household-level)

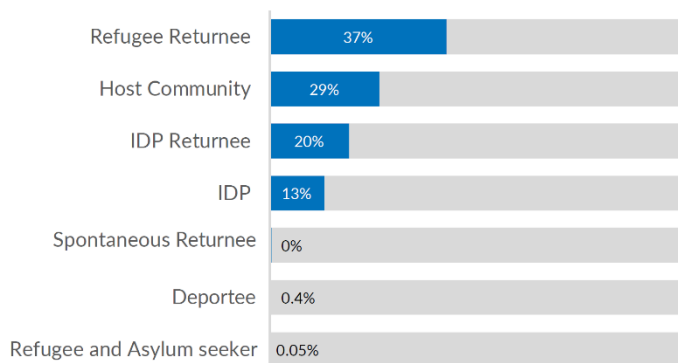


CBPM Assessments



- UNHCR conducted 4,231 assessments in May 2024, using various tools such as household assessments, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions to assess communities' protection needs and risks.
- Most interviewed households were refugee returnees**, reflecting UNHCR's focus on the specific protection issues that Afghans face upon their return.
- Across all assessment modalities, **UNHCR reached 25,270 individuals** in the month of May, the majority of whom were women and children. 24.9% of the households were headed by women.
- UNHCR is working closely with all its partners to **ensure the participation of female staff in all activities** and is using various modalities to **capture the voices of women and girls despite the severe restrictions**.

Population Types



IDENTIFIED VULNERABILITIES



55% with vulnerabilities



51% experienced stress affecting their day-to-day life



9.8% heads of households with disabilities

- According to the RHAF survey conducted in May, **55% of head of households have some form of vulnerability**, among them persons with life-threatening health issues, persons with disabilities, and women and older persons at risk. These findings are supported by the CBPM household assessments, which also point to 12% of the households surveyed being headed by widows and 6% by older persons or children.
- According to the CBPM survey conducted in May, **51% of respondents indicated that they or their family members had experienced feelings of stress that affected their day-to-day life**, pointing to a high prevalence of MHPSS issues among the surveyed population. The main stressors identified were lack of employment and severe economic hardship, food insecurity, and lack of services, alongside physical health problems, child labor, and school dropout. The **behavioral changes observed** in the household include family members appearing sad and stressed, loss of appetite, and aggressiveness.

- Vulnerabilities were also high among household members, pointing to the **multi-faceted protection risks that Afghan families face**. The main vulnerabilities observed under the RHAF include children at risk **31.7%**, women at risk **26.8%**, pregnant and breastfeeding women **20.5%**, Elderly persons at risk **5.4%**, as well as persons with disabilities among heads of household **9.8%**. In addition, CBPM data also points to high rates of school dropouts among surveyed families due to a lack of financial support by families and the engagement of children in child labor. In addition, CBPM data also points to high rates of school dropouts among surveyed families due to a lack of financial support by families and the engagement of children in child labor.
- **CBPM monitors have also observed tension or violence in 16% of the households**, affecting largely women (44%), children (33%), persons with disabilities (12%), as well as older persons (11%).

SAFETY & FREEDOM



27% mention community areas **off-limits for women and girls**

- **27% of the heads of households indicated that there are places in the community that women and girls cannot access**, highlighting the significant challenges in freedom of movement and participation in public life.
- The **main places that women and girls cannot go to** include education facilities, markets, water points, clinics, and latrines.
- The **main reasons for movement limitations** include discrimination, harassment and intimidations in public areas, lack of identity and civil documents, mahram requirements and safety concerns related to debts.

CIVIL DOCUMENTATION



67% report lack of **civil documentation**



51% reported barriers **accessing legal services**

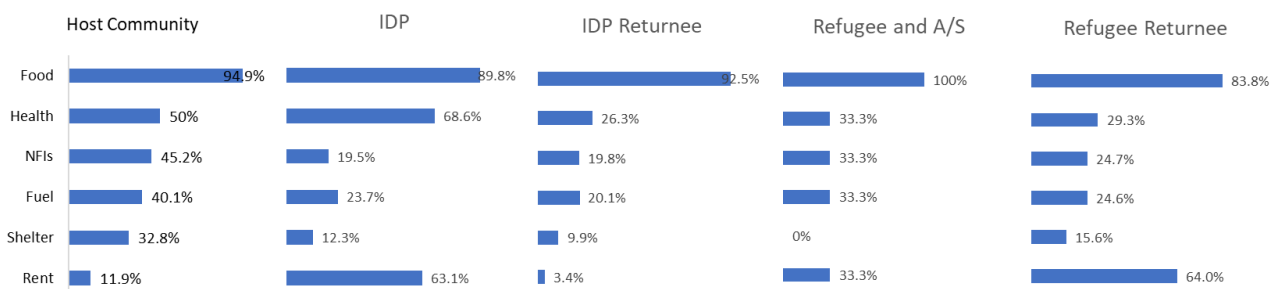
- Around **67% of all households surveyed have members who need civil documentation**. **Women and children are by far the most affected population groups**. **IDP returnees and undocumented returnees display significantly higher rates (70% and 96%, respectively)**, while the number of refugee returnees and IDPs is lower (63% and 59%, respectively). In light of the civil documentation needs reported for Afghan returnees from Pakistan, this trend will be closely observed over the next months.
- The **main documents missing are the e-tazkera and the paper tazkera**, followed by passports, marriage, birth, and other certificates. The main reason is that these documents were never obtained, or the households interviewed lack knowledge about the procedures.
- **According to the CBPM survey conducted in May, 51% of the respondents needed access to legal services**, including civil documentation and HLP. Women and girls were most affected by high costs, unavailability of services, and lack of information on services.
- The **impact of not having documentation is drastic**, with two-thirds of the respondents indicating that it prevents them from accessing basic services. It is also a barrier to accessing documentation and governmental or humanitarian assistance and contributes to movement restrictions.

NEEDS PRIORITIZATION, ACCESS TO SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE PROVIDED



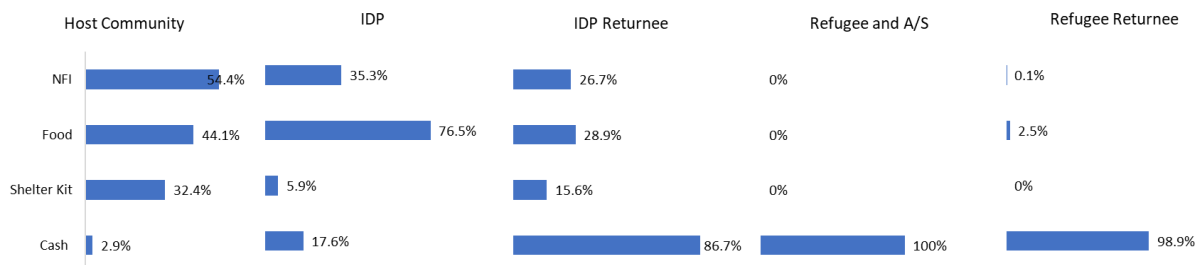
87.3% mention **food** as the most pressing need

Top Needs



- Food assistance** was the most crucial need prioritized by households surveyed under the RHAF, followed by health costs, NFI/clothes, rent, fuel for cooking, water, hygiene items and household items. According to the RHAF survey conducted in May, despite the assistance provided, 51% of the surveyed households are still in need of humanitarian assistance.

Assistance Provided



- This is confirmed by the CBPM findings, which show 73% of all households reported being in need of food assistance in the past three months, mainly due to lack of knowledge about eligibility criteria and procedures. The percentage is even higher among female respondents (76%) pointing to the heightened economic vulnerability of women.
- Respondents also face challenges in accessing MHPSS services and drinking water**, with 64% and 56% of households needing access to these essential services. Interestingly, access to health services was considered better by female respondents than by male.
- However, irrespective of the gender of the head of household, **all respondents highlighted that among those facing access challenges, women and girls are by far the most affected**. Refugee returnees and host community members are particularly affected by overcrowded shelters. Other shelter related concerns include damages, lack of protective walls and doors and privacy.
- Overall, women and girls continue to face significant challenges in accessing the most basic services**, reflecting the systemic discrimination and movement restrictions.
- Other main barriers to accessing services include unavailability of services, high costs (including for transportation), lack of information on services as well as lack of documents.

LIVELIHOODS AND COPING STRATEGIES

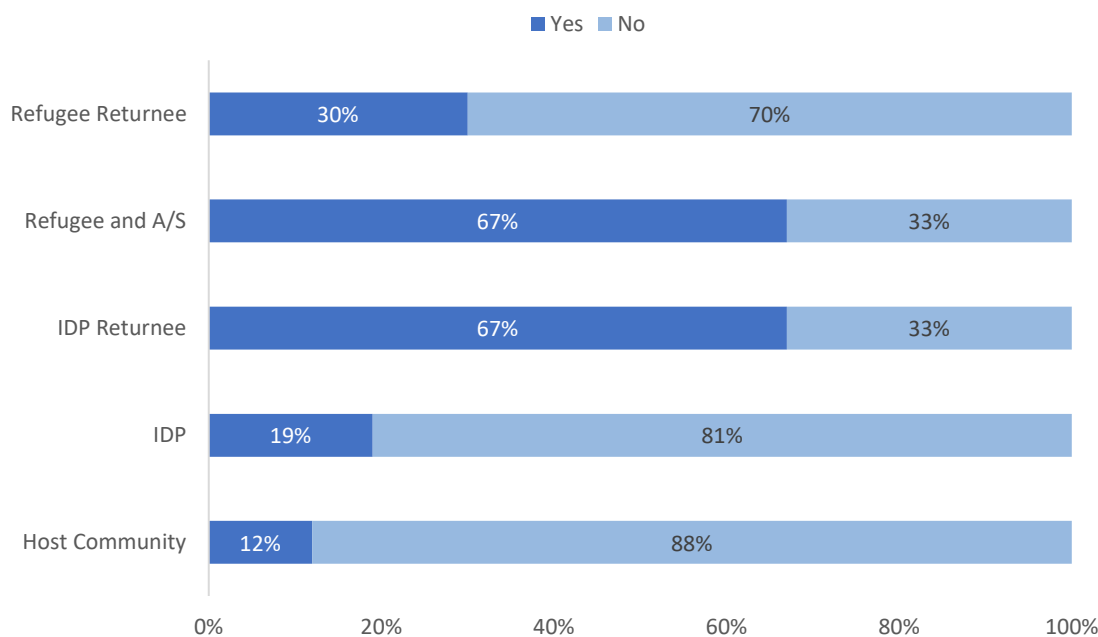


79% reported **selling assets** to meet vital needs.

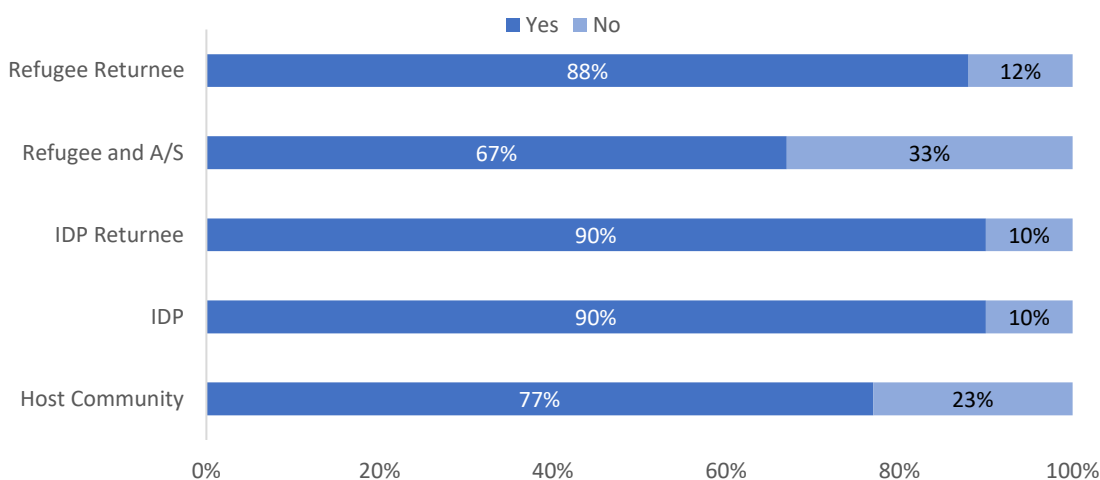


76% struggle to cover **daily living expenses** (food, rent, and other basic needs)

Are you able to work and cover your expenses (food, rent, etc.) on a daily basis?



Did you or any of your household member sold any assets including livestock, jewelry, furniture, electronics, etc?



- Due to financial constraints and high poverty, many families have resorted to harmful coping mechanisms, with severe implications that especially impact women and children. Both CBPM and

RHAF data indicate that most **households borrow money to cope with their financial problems**. The prevalence was even higher for refugee and forced returnees surveyed.

- **Other coping mechanisms** identified were selling assets (87% of RHAF respondents have resorted to this measure), skipping meals or reducing meal sizes, engaging in hazardous work or family members relocating abroad.
- Alarming, a significant number of CBPM respondents indicated that due to acute poverty and financial reasons, their **families had adopted harmful practices that imply serious child protection risks**, including sending children to work – including to neighboring countries – and child marriage. The findings highlight the urgent need to support vulnerable families through integrated programming interventions, including child protection, livelihoods and community engagement.

HOUSEHOLDS EMPLOYMENT STATUS & SOURCE OF INCOME



68.6% engaged in **informal income-generating activities**



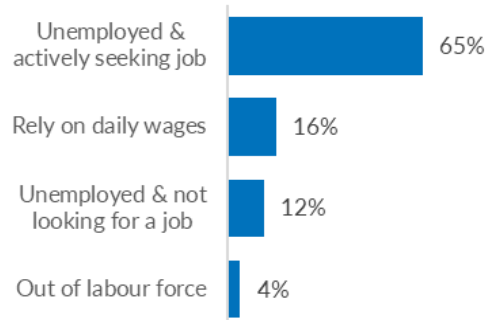
62.7% rely on **financial support from relatives**



60.6% are **unemployed**

- According to the RHAF survey conducted in May, **over 60.6% of households are unemployed**, and 28.9% rely on daily labor, with whatever income generated usually spent on essential needs and debt repayment. A total of 69% of the surveyed households were not able to afford daily life expenses such as providing food, rent, and other basic critical needs.
- The lack of economic opportunities, entrenched poverty alongside repeated and protracted displacement and the shrinking protection space have been eroding people's resilience and point to the critical need for livelihood and economic empowerment interventions.

Employment status



LEADING CAUSES OF DISPLACEMENT, AND INTENTIONS FOR RETURN AND REINTEGRATION



While **49% of all IDPs** refer to **armed conflict including human rights violations** as top reason for their displacement, those displaced within the last three months referred to **natural disasters** as the main cause.

- According to the CBPM survey conducted in May, the main reason for the displacement of IDPs in the last three months is natural disaster, followed by security and human rights concerns. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that floods have affected the North, Northeast, and Western regions during this period.
- According to the CBPM survey conducted in May, the IDPs displaced in the last three months expressed uncertainty about whether to return, integrate, or move onward, mainly due to overall security situation, economic hardship, children's education, natural disasters and lack of humanitarian

assistance. 56% of the respondents preferred to integrate at their current location, citing safety and family considerations as the main reasons.

- **According to the CBPM survey conducted in May,** IDPs, and refugee returnees were uncertain about returning to their places of origin due to children not being able to access education, women and girls not being able to move around freely, economic hardship, and lack of access to humanitarian assistance.
- **35% of FGD participants** noted that their communities have received new arrivals. These include returnees deported from Pakistan and Iran, as well as families displaced by floods, drought, and security issues.

