



Summary of Legal Assistance and Aid Programme

January - August 2017

Legal Assistance
34,423

Arrests & detentions
3,193 *

Interventions
2,013 **

Releases
3,191 ***

Key findings

Ten Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALAC) are operational in the main refugee-hosting areas of four provinces in order to provide free legal support to persons of concern: four in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), one in Sindh and three in Punjab and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) through partnership agreements with SHARP and two in Baluchistan each run by SEHER & CRS.¹

Arrests and detentions of persons of concern decreased in August (101 in August compared to 160 in July 2017). The majority of the arrests were observed in the province of KP (77%). In general the protection situation remained calm in August with no significant incidents.

ALAC teams and the Ministry of SAFRON take proactive steps to mitigate the risk of detention including enhanced advocacy and pre-emptively intervening at police stations to prevent arrests and enhancing the response capacity of partners. UNHCR has developed and disseminated additional awareness raising material on legal assistance program for refugees (ALAC posters, brochures & use of social media).

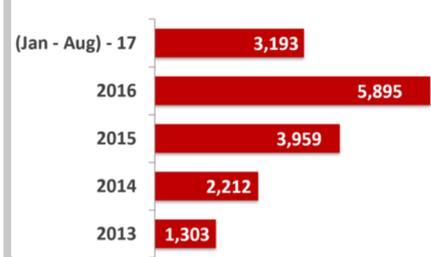
In August 2017, UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance to a total of 4,106 persons of concern. During the month, UNHCR and its partners **intervened at police stations for 95 arrested/detained persons of concern** and secured the release of all detained individuals. In the majority of all cases, UNHCR and its partners managed to obtain the release of the arrested refugees before the official lodging of charges against them which resulted in their release from detention within 24 hours. (note: CRS-ILAC does not provide interventions at police stations for short detentions).

Overall, a decrease in arrest and detention was observed from March till August 2017. ALAC teams continued to disseminate the official notification issued by the Ministry of SAFRON on 24 February regarding the Federal Cabinet's decision to extend the validity of the PoR cards providing proof of legal stay for registered Afghan refugees until the end of 2017.

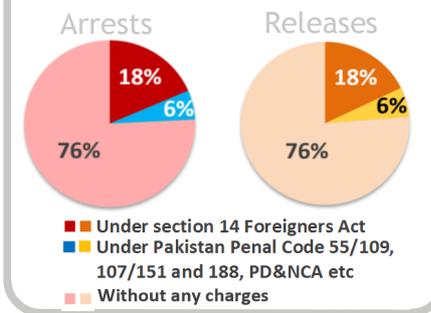
¹UNHCR funds 9 ALACs and CRS, as UNHCR's operational partner, funds 1 Information and Legal Aid Centre (ILAC) in Baluchistan. SHARP operates in KP, Punjab and Sindh. SEHER has implemented UNHCR funded ALAC legal aid services in Baluchistan in the month of April.

* Actual numbers of arrests / detentions / ** Interventions made by ALAC at police stations to secure the release of PoCs / *** Additionally 50 PoR cardholders were released through court interventions by CRS-ILAC in Baluchistan.

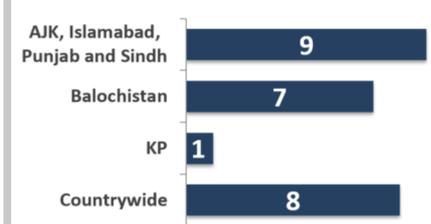
Arrests and detentions by year



Types of arrests and releases

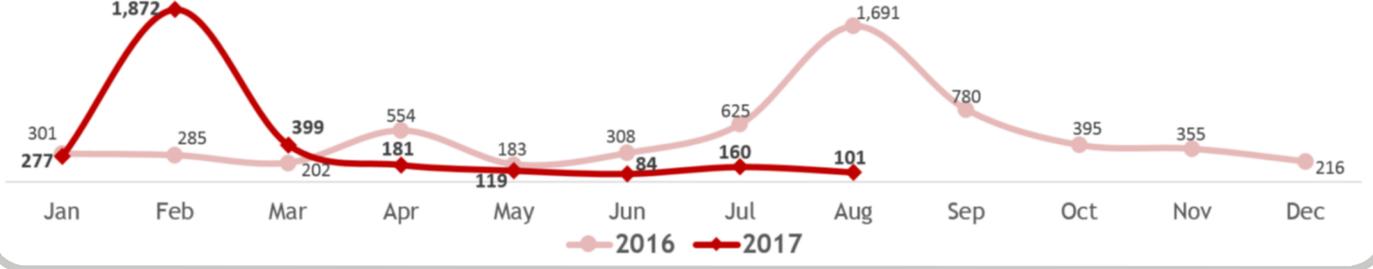


Avg length of detention (days)*



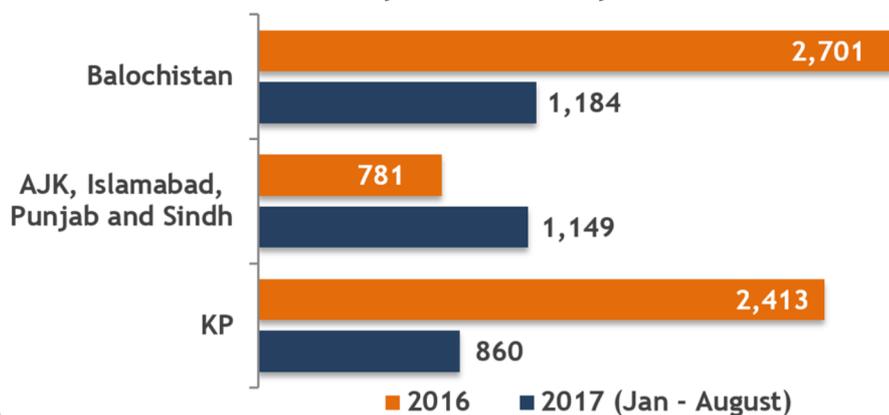
*Weighted proportionally by # of arrests in each province

Arrests and detentions by month

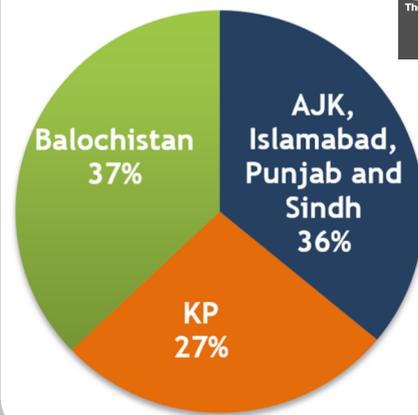




Arrests and detentions by location and year



Arrest/detention locations



Access to legal assistance and legal remedies

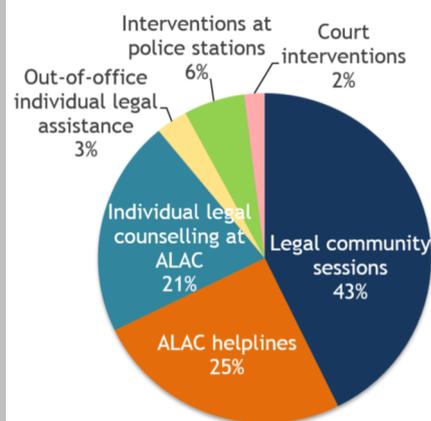
ALAC activities in 2017 include the following: a) provision of legal intervention at police stations upon arrest/detention; b) court representation in the cases of arrest/detention and other issues regarding civil/family/tenancy matters etc.; c) individually facilitated indoor counseling (legal advice) at ALACs and through helplines; d) out-of-court legal assistance; e) legal sessions in the form of legal camps, *shura* meetings and facilitated group discussions; and f) coordination with and training for law enforcement authorities including border officials and the judiciary.

In August, partner staff provided **individual legal counselling** to 795 persons of concern who visited the Advice and Legal Assistance centres as well as legal advice to a total of 1,136 persons of concern through **ALAC helplines**. Birth registration, police harassment, information on repatriation, PoR card modification and registration exercise of undocumented Afghans were the issues of greatest concern observed in the month of August. **Out-of-court/office legal assistance** was provided to 125 persons of concern mostly related to police harassment, PoR card-related issues, drafting rental agreements and affidavits. In addition to court representations for arrest/detention cases under the Foreigners Act/preventive laws, ALAC lawyers also helped refugees to pursue 3 cases related to money, land and tenancy disputes in local courts.

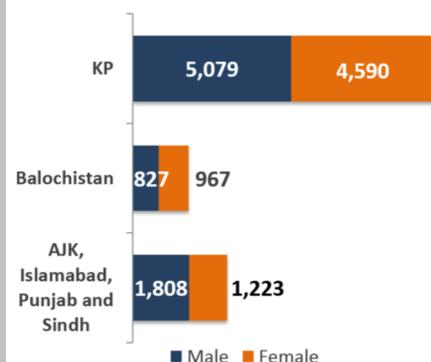
UNHCR and ALAC staff also organized a total of 74 **legal camps and shura meetings** reaching 1,935 participants (45% of whom were women) in the reporting month. 64% of the legal sessions were held in refugee villages and the remaining sessions in urban areas of Pakistan. Through these legal sessions, refugees shared various protection issues affecting their communities. UNHCR partner staff informed refugees of available free legal aid services.

3 training sessions were conducted for LEAs and lawyers in Islamabad and Peshawar during the reporting month attended by 124 persons.

ALAC legal assistance activities for POCs



Legal group participation



UNHCR continues to deploy border monitors at the two official Pakistan-Afghan border crossings at Torkham (KP) and Chaman (Balochistan) in order to identify potential protection issues during border movements.

Refugee-police liaison committees were established in the districts of Mardan, Swabi, Buner and Malakand in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after successful implementation in the districts of Charsadda, Peshawar and Nowshera to enable refugees directly approaching police.

Please note that there are 49 ALAC lawyers countrywide who provide the legal aid/assistance described above (29 in KP, 9 in Baluchistan, 5 in Punjab/AJK, 3 in Sindh and 3 in Islamabad). UNHCR is expanding its legal assistance network through the identification of pro bono lawyers in addition to the existing ALAC legal aid program. UNHCR is working closely with the UNDP Rule of Law in KP on joint-training for police officials.