

## UNHCR Pakistan Monthly Protection Trends Reporting Concerning Afghan Refugees | December 2017

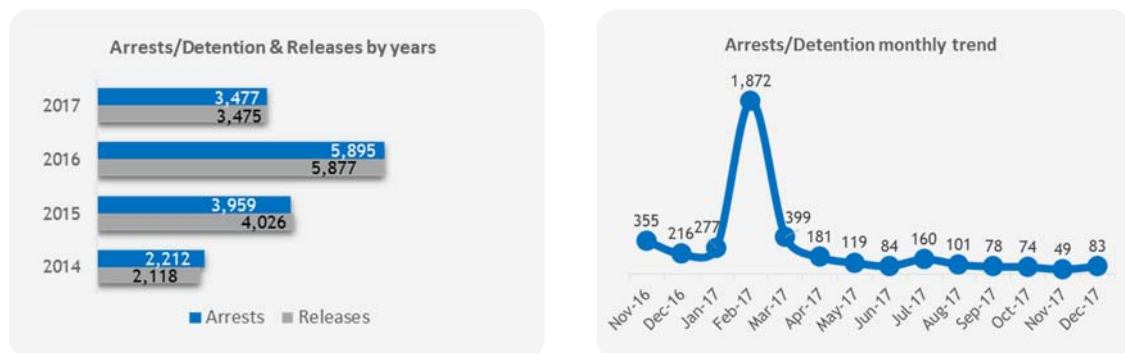
In order to monitor push and pull factors influencing the Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan Refugees, UNHCR Pakistan compiles a monthly note to inform key stakeholders of emerging trends and to raise formally and consistently any protection concerns that may arise.

### Trends

The Proof of Registration (PoR) cards for Afghan refugees expired on 31 December 2017. On 3 January, the Federal Cabinet extended the validity of the cards for one month only pending submission of a return plan from SAFRON. Uncertainty regarding the PoR card extension among the refugee communities is a matter of great concern and will affect nearly 1.38 million registered Afghan refugees in Pakistan who face an uncertain future concerning their continued stay. UNHCR is actively advocating with the authorities to extend the PoR cards and provide further protection.

Voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees is currently on pause for the winter break. The repatriation will recommence on 1 March 2018.

The documentation of undocumented Afghans in Pakistan is ongoing. So far 665,000 Afghans have submitted their details to receive Afghan Citizen Card (ACC). The process is expected to continue till January 2018.



### Summary of Events

#### 1. Arrests & Detention

In December, 83 PoR card holders were arrested compared to 49 in November. This shows a significant increase (69%) in the numbers of arrests and detentions. The increase is attributed to search operations following the terrorist attack on Agriculture University hostel in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Most of the PoR cardholders arrested were released without being formally charged through timely Advice and Legal Aid Centers (ALAC) interventions while a few refugees who were charged under Section 107/151 of the Criminal Procedures Code and were released through court interventions by the ALAC legal team.

#### 2. Evictions/ Eviction Notices

Residents of Berari and Ichrian refugee villages were asked to vacate their refugee villages by 15 December, however, the authorities did not take any action against the residents after the expiry of the deadline. The two refugee villages are close to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). UNHCR has been advocating for extension in the deadline so that the refugees could be relocated in a planned and dignified manner to locations of their choosing in Pakistan. Efforts continue to find for alternative arrangements for the refugees, including relocation to other refugee villages or to urban areas in Pakistan.