UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

UNHCR and legal partner's staff conducting a Shura meeting in Jathlan, Mirpur

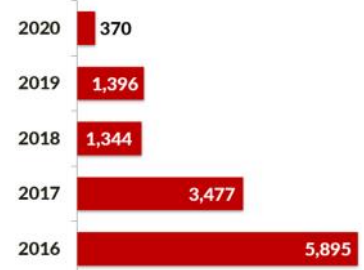| Legal Assistance	Arrest & Detentions	Interventions	Releases
15,874	**370**	**280**	**369**

Key Issues of Interest

Nine Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALAC) are operational in the main refugee hosting areas of Pakistan's four provinces and provide free legal support to persons of concern (PoCs). Eight of these centers are run by UNHCR's partner, SHARP, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Sindh, Punjab and Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), while one is run by SEHER in Balochistan, another UNHCR's partner.

In August 2020, UNHCR and its partners provided legal assistance to a total of **1,831** PoCs. During the month, UNHCR and its partners intervened at police stations for **81** arrested/detained PoCs and secured the release of all. In the majority of the cases, UNHCR and its partners managed to obtain the release of the arrested PoCs before they were formally charged by the law enforcement agencies. Most of them were released within 24 hours. In addition, ALAC partners represented **2** PoCs in courts who had been charged under the Foreigners Act (dealing with unauthorized stay of foreigners) and other preventive laws (allowing preventive detention of person acting in a manner prejudicial to the integrity, security and defense of the country and public order) subsequently resulting in their release by the orders of the courts.
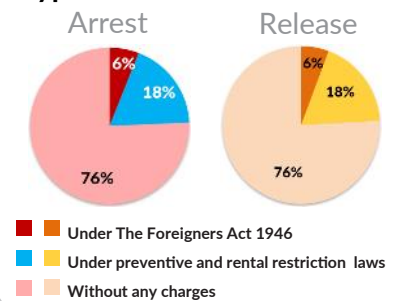
ALAC teams and the Ministry of SAFRON continue to take proactive steps to mitigate the risk of detention, including enhanced advocacy, pre-emptively intervening at police stations to prevent arrests and enhancing the response capacity of partners. UNHCR has developed and disseminated additional awareness raising material on legal assistance programs available for PoCs (including ALAC posters, brochures & use of social media).

When compared with August 2019 (54 Ind), there has been a increase of **54%** in arrest and detention in August 2020 (83 Ind). It is deemed that the substantial increase in the number of arrests and detention is linked with the expiry of the PoR cards. UNHCR highly appreciates Pakistan's generosity towards refugees and welcomes Government of Pakistan's (GoP) decision on consistent extension of Proof of Registration (PoR) cards until now. The validity of the last extension was until 30 June 2020. UNHCR hopes that the cards will be extended beyond June 2020. In the meantime, it will continue to disseminate the interim Government notification on non-harassment of the PoCs notification/s among the law enforcement agencies and refugee communities through UNHCR staff and its partner organizations.
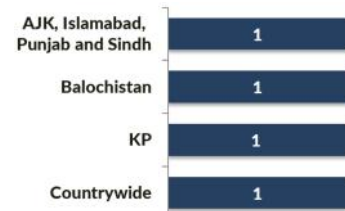
Arrest and Detentions by Years

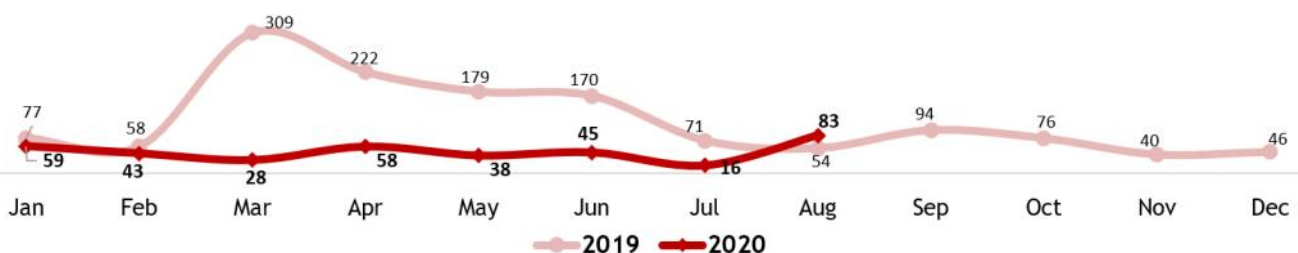| Year	Count
2020	370
2019	1,396
2018	1,344
2017	3,477
2016	5,895

Types of Arrests and Releases

Arrest: 6%, 18%, 76%
Release: 6%, 18%, 76%

- Under The Foreigners Act 1946
- Under preventive and rental restriction laws
- Without any charges

Avg Length of Detention (days)*

Region	Days
AJK, Islamabad, Punjab and Sindh	1
Balochistan	1
KP	1
Countrywide	1

*Weighted proportionally by # of arrests in each province

Arrest and Detentions by Months

2019: Jan 77, Feb 58, Mar 309, Apr 222, May 179, Jun 170, Jul 71, Aug 54, Sep 94, Oct 76, Nov 40, Dec 46
2020: Jan 59, Feb 43, Mar 28, Apr 58, May 38, Jun 45, Jul 16, Aug 83

— 2019 — 2020

Arrest and Detentions by Location and Year/Month

Balochistan: 57 (2019), 23 (Jan-Aug, 2020)
AJK, Islamabad, Punjab & Sindh: 402 (2019), 94 (Jan-Aug, 2020)
KP: 937 (2019), 253 (Jan-Aug, 2020)

Legend: 2019 ■ Jan-Aug, 2020
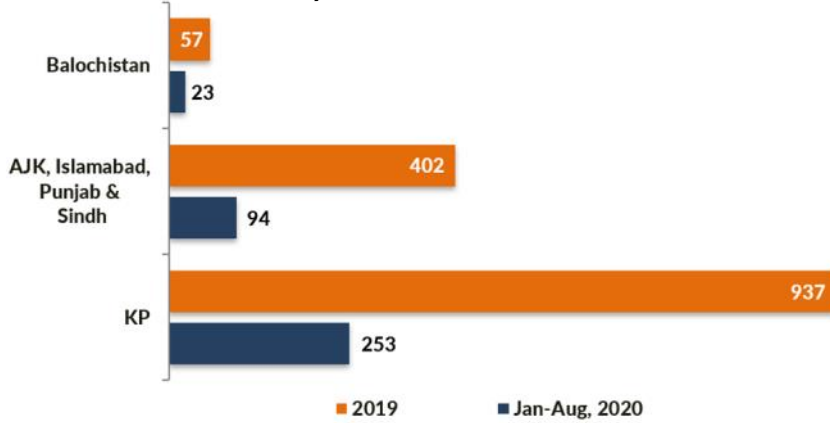
Arrest/Detention Locations

Balochistan 6%
AJK, Islamabad, Punjab & Sindh 26%
KP 68%
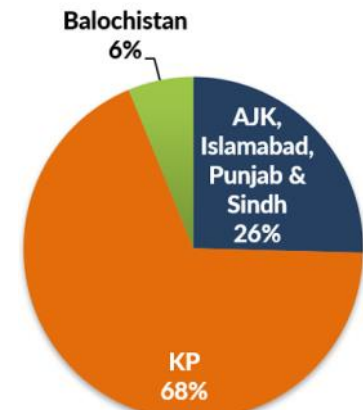
Access to Legal Assistance and Legal Remedies

Advice and Legal Aid Centre (ALAC) activities in 2020 include the following:
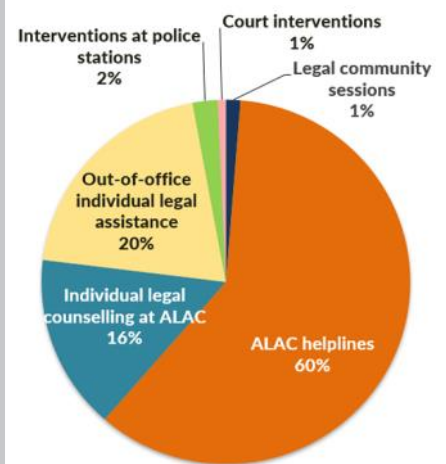
a) provision of legal intervention at police stations upon arrest/detention; b) court representation in the cases of arrest/detention and other issues regarding civil/family/tenancy matters etc.; c) individually facilitated counseling (legal advice) at ALACs and through helplines; d) out-of-court legal assistance; e) legal sessions in the form of legal camps, *shura* meetings and facilitated group discussions; and f) coordination with and training of law enforcement authorities including border officials and the judiciary.

In August, partner's staff provided **individual legal counselling** to **228** PoCs who visited the Advice and Legal Aid Centres as well as legal advice to a total of **957** PoCs through **ALAC helplines**. Birth registration, police harassment, information on repatriation, PoR card modifications, asylum applications, and financial concerns in the wake of COVID-19 were the issues of greatest concern observed during the reporting period. **Out-of-court legal assistance** was provided to **417** PoCs, mostly related to police harassment, PoR card verifications, rental agreements and affidavits.
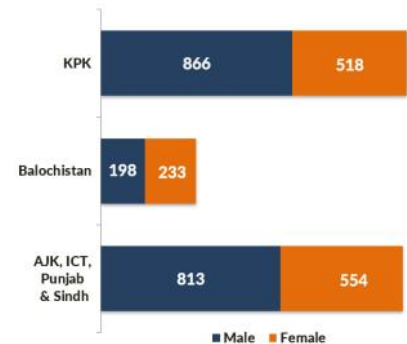
ALAC staff have been calling refugee community representatives to inform them about the emerging situation due to COVID-19 pandemic situation. ALAC teams made **620** calls to refugee communities in the area of responsibility of the Country Office in Islamabad during the reporting month. Communities were advised to comply with the measures taken by the local and provincial administrations and any restrictions imposed by them to control the spread of COVID-19. ALAC staff maintained a proactive approach throughout the period.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic, only eight legal camps were organized in refugee village and urban areas of KP, Balochistan and Punjab by UNHCR and ALAC staff during the reporting month, 144 community members attended the session. The sessions were conducted with all the pandemic preventive measures in place. During the reporting month, no workshop for civil society and government officials was conducted due to COVID-19 outbreak in the country.

ALAC Legal Assistance Activities for POCs

Interventions at police stations 2%
Court interventions 1%
Legal community sessions 1%
Out-of-office individual legal assistance 20%
Individual legal counselling at ALAC 16%
ALAC helplines 60%

Legal Camp Participation

KPK: 866 (Male), 518 (Female)
Balochistan: 198 (Male), 233 (Female)
AJK, ICT, Punjab & Sindh: 813 (Male), 554 (Female)

Legend: ■ Male ■ Female

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

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

There are 33 ALAC lawyers countrywide who provide the legal aid/assistance described above (20 in KP, 2 in Balochistan, 5 in Punjab/AJK, 3 in Sindh and 3 in Islamabad/AJK).

UNHCR's legal assistance network is further augmented by *pro bono* lawyers' network in addition to the existing legal aid program.