

Since the 1979 Soviet invasion and the subsequent waves of violence that have rocked Afghanistan, millions of Afghans have fled the country, seeking safety elsewhere. The Islamic Republic of Iran boasts 5,894 km of borders. Most of it, including the 921 km that are shared with Afghanistan, are porous and located in remote areas. According to the Government of Iran, some 2000-2500 Afghans arrive in Iran every day. UNHCR Iran does not have access to border points and thus is unable to independently monitor arrivals or returns of Afghans. Afghans who currently reside in Iran have different statuses: some are refugees (Amayesh card holders), other are Afghans who possess a national passport, while other are undocumented. These populations move across borders in various ways.

780,000

Amayesh Card Holders (Afghan refugees¹)

In 2001, the Government of Iran issues Amayesh cards to regularize the stay of Afghan Refugees in the country as refugees. Each year, refugees have to renew their Amayesh cards. However, more recently arrived Afghans do not receive an Amayesh card. The Government of Iran is in charge of refugee status determination and UNHCR can advocate for a handful of refugees to receive amayesh cards each year.

2.1-2.25 M

undocumented Afghans

Undocumented is an umbrella term used to describe various groups of foreign nationals residing in Iran including: those with an invalid passport and invalid Iranian visa; those who lost their Amayesh status for different reasons; those who hold a type of document, for example Tazkara, but no legal residence for Iran; and those who are not in possession of any type of document.

275,000

passport holders

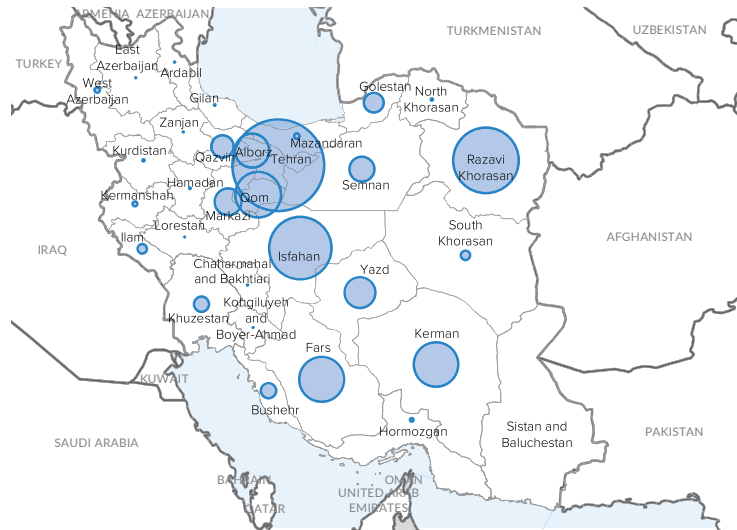
The Comprehensive Regularisation Plan (CRP) introduced in 2010 allowed undocumented Afghans to register with the government of Iran, and receive an Afghan passport and a visa ("family passport"). The visas of those participating in the CRP have been extended at different intervals since 2012, often following high level visits by the government of Afghanistan.

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voluntarily repatriated in 2021

In March 2020, UNHCR suspended its VolRep activities as a preventive measure to reduce exposure of refugees, host communities and staff to COVID-19. In May 2020, UNHCR partially resumed VolRep activities from its Field Unit in Dogharoun, in keeping with health and security measures, to assist refugees who have opted to return to Afghanistan.

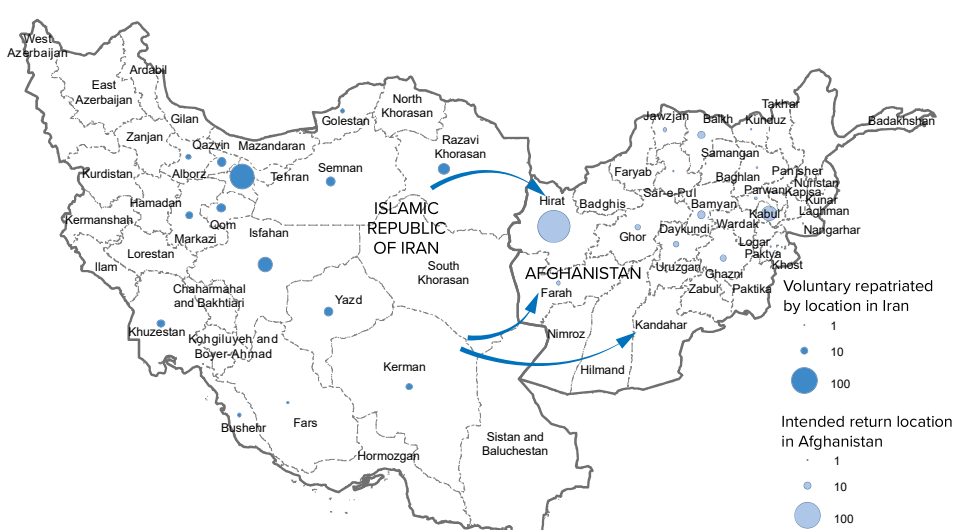
REFUGEE POPULATION PER PROVINCE



*This map shows the geographic distribution of refugees in Iran. The map uses the proportions from the 2015 Amayesh registration applied to data from 2020.

Disclaimer: the boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

REPATRIATED BY LOCATION IN IRAN & INTENDED DESTINATION IN AFGHANISTAN IN 2021



¹[Afghan "prima facie" refugees. There has not been a prima facie decision or statement by the GRI on prima facie recognition from this group. Technically Amayesh is a "temporary residency permit" and it does not specifically afford refugee status. According to the data received from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in October 2020, on which consultations are ongoing, 800,000 refugee card holders reside in Iran, 780,000 of which are Afghans and 20,000 Iraqis..

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN

In 2020, displacement due to ongoing conflict and natural disasters continued to drive humanitarian needs in Afghanistan. Almost **380,000 people have left their homes in 2020 due to fighting**. Many of these people remain displaced across the country, as conflict and poverty prevent them from returning to their areas of origin.

2,993,000

IDPs due to conflict as of end of 2019

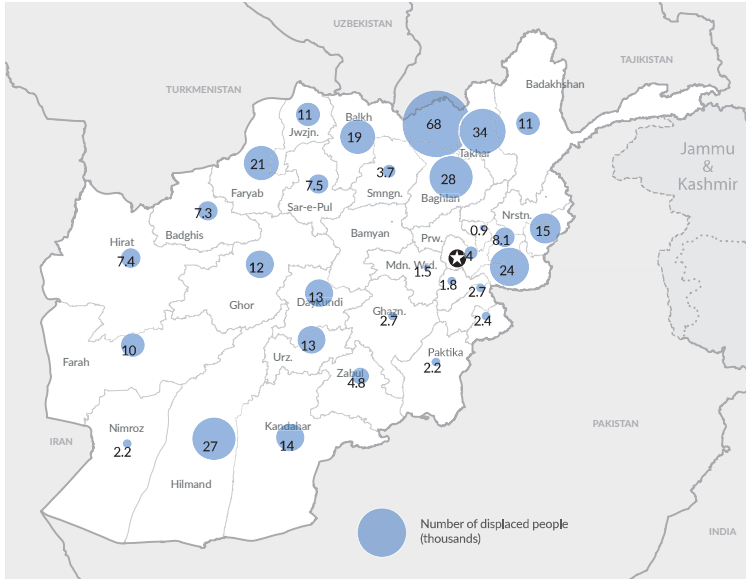
The 2020 Humanitarian Needs Overview estimates that close to a million people on the move will need humanitarian assistance by the end of the year.

380,000

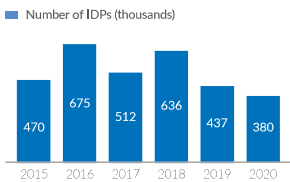
Afghans displaced internally in 2020

59% of newly displaced Afghans are children under 18

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE BY PROVINCE OF ARRIVAL

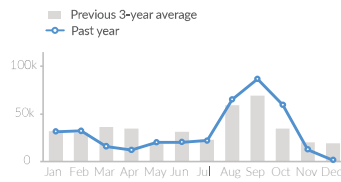


Past six years



*2018 number also includes people displaced due to drought and other factors

Monthly trends



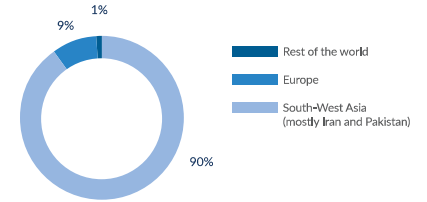
ONWARD MOVEMENT OF AFGHANS

In January 2021, Afghans were the second most common citizenship to claim asylum in Europe (3,900 first-time claims), after Syrians (10,400 claims). In November 2020, 61% of Afghan asylum claimants in Europe were granted international protection, the highest level in 2020. In Oct and Nov, Afghan children made up nearly half of all asylum applications by unaccompanied minors in Europe.

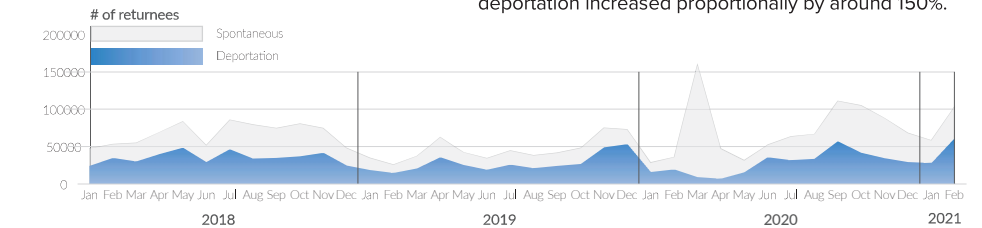
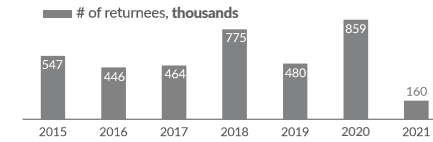
3,000,000

Afghans outside of Afghanistan

This number includes only Afghan refugees and asylum seekers



RETURN OF UNDOCUMENTED AFGHANS FROM IRAN

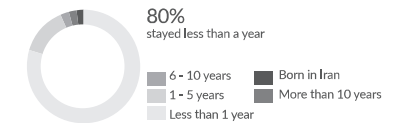


160,000

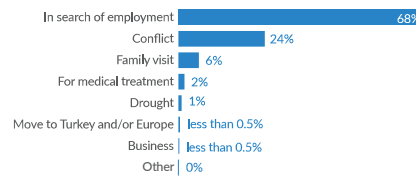
Undocumented returnees in 2021

The number of undocumented Afghans who have returned to Afghanistan since the beginning of 2021 increased by more than 150% compared to the same period in 2020. Both spontaneous return and deportation increased proportionally by around 150%.

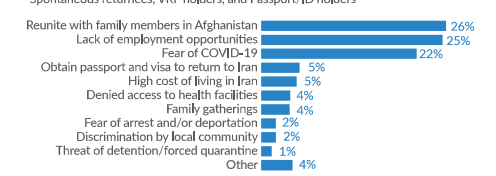
RETURNEES BORDER MONITORING UNHCR AFGHANISTAN



Reasons of entry to Iran



Top reasons of return to Afghanistan*



Sources: Refugees in Iran - GIRI (2020); Voluntary Repatriation - UNHCR Iran (Feb 2021); Afghans outside of Afghanistan - UNHCR Refugee Data Finder as of 5 Nov; Internally displaced Afghans due to conflict and violence in 2019 - IDMC; UNHCR Factsheet "Onward Movements of Afghan Refugees and Migrants toward Europe" (Feb 2021); undocumented returnees from Iran from 2018 to Mar 2021 - IOM Afghanistan Return of Undocumented Afghans reports (4 Mar 2021); UNHCR Afghanistan Border Monitoring Report - UNHCR Afghanistan (Feb 2021); internally displaced people in Afghanistan - OCHA Afghanistan "Snapshot of Population Movements (January to December 2020)" as of 25 Jan. The numbers are subject to change as more information becomes available. Updated: 23 March 2021. Contact: Farha Bhojroo, Communications Officer, bhojroo@unhcr.org.