

The Islamic Republic of Iran is currently host to one of the largest and most protracted refugee populations in the world, the majority of whom are Afghan refugees. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, first opened its office in Iran in 1984 and has since maintained an uninterrupted field presence countrywide. UNHCR's main government counterpart in Iran is the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs (BAFIA) of the Ministry of Interior. UNHCR also collaborates with other government ministries and organizations, as well as local and international NGOs and other UN agencies, to help ensure that all refugees have covered their basic needs and can access services. UNHCR works with refugee communities and assists the most vulnerable. Through the Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), UNHCR works with the government to support the inclusive refugee policies, in particular in health and education.

POPULATION OF CONCERN

In view of widespread instability in Afghanistan, as part of its protection mandate, UNHCR continues to advocate for an open and accessible asylum system for all. Some among the undocumented population may have international protection needs, particularly as the situation deteriorates in Afghanistan, for which they need to be properly screened and identified. Meanwhile, UNHCR continues to advocate for the extension of temporary protection and documentation to this group, in particular the most vulnerable, who are also indirectly supported through the existing inclusive education and health programmes put in place by the Iranian Government and supported by UNHCR.

2.1 M
undocumented
Afghans

311,000
Passport with
valid visa

275,000
Afghan family
passport holders



800,000
Afghan & Iraqi refugee
card holders

out of which
780,000
are Afghans &
20,000
are Iraqis

RECEPTION

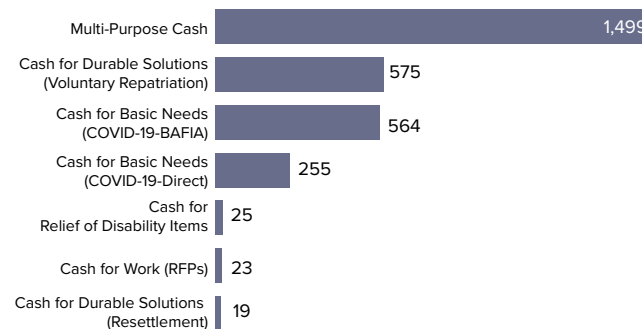
In the first six months of 2021, **8,889** individuals contacted UNHCR more than one time (18,059 approaches), out of which 2,130 were newly registered in ProGres. The large majority of them were refugees (*Amayesh* card holders 97%, asylum-seekers 2% and other of concern 1%). In addition to Afghan nationals approaching UNHCR for support, some Iraqis and other nationalities also contacted the offices.



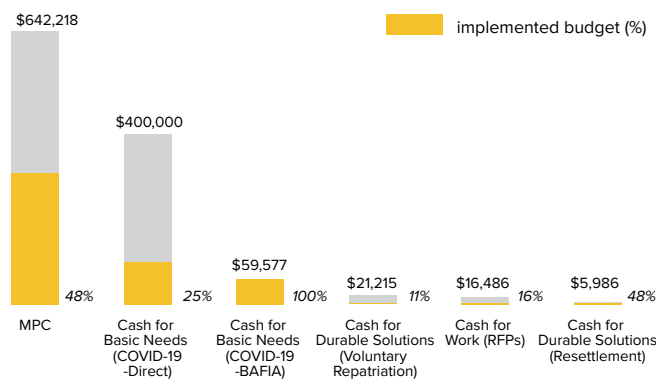
CASH BASED INTERVENTIONS

11,641 individuals (2,960 households) in total received cash assistance from UNHCR. Due to different vulnerabilities, some households received cash assistance more than one time.

CBI BENEFICIARIES BY ASSISTANCE TYPE



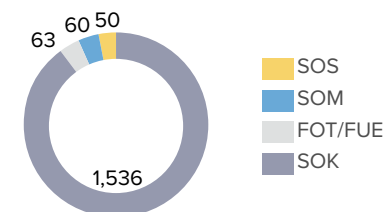
BUDGET BY ASSISTANCE TYPE



COMMUNITY-BASED PROTECTION

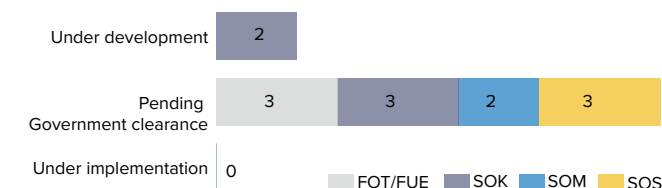
Despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic, UNHCR continued to engage with PoCs remotely, including by conducting participatory data collection exercises and conducting awareness raising sessions.

REFUGEES ENGAGED IN AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES



In the first half of the year, UNHCR Field and Sub-Offices developed community-based projects in collaboration with PoCs and local authorities. In order to be implemented, these projects need to receive clearance from our central government counterpart. The projects cover topics such as stress management and mental health during the pandemic, awareness raising and distribution of hygiene kits, virtual sports competitions for children, support to children engaged in child labor and positive parenting.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS



PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

In order to address the mental health needs of refugees approaching our offices, UNHCR Iran has contracted one Psycho-Social Counselor (PSC) per office (exl. one office), to provide part-time individual and group counselling services to PoCs in need.

93
Psychosocial support beneficiaries



CHILD PROTECTION (CP)

Protection Risks for children from vulnerable families continue to be reported across the country. Number of cases with CP/GBV claims is concerning, including school drop-outs, child labour, forced/early marriage, physical assaults and domestic violence.

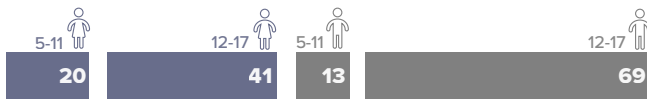
The new Nationality Law: 8000 applicants have so far filed applications to receive Iranian nationality, out of which, Shenanameh (birth certificates) have been issued to 1,401 children born to Iranian mothers and foreign fathers.

Education: Reports on lower school enrolment and higher drop-out after lockdown and school closure continues for Q2. Particularly affected are children living in vulnerable and large families, children with disabilities, children living in remote areas and children with lack of access to internet and electronic devices for remote learning. Distribution of 21,500 tablets is still to be rolled out.

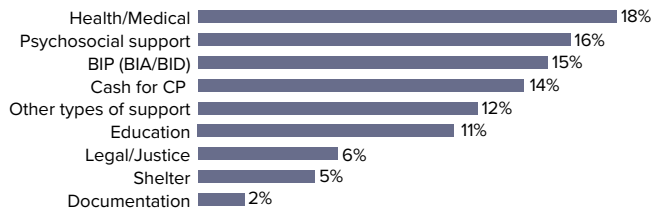
School enrolment 2021: The Iranian Government has issued a circular for enrolment of foreign national children, stating that all children, regardless of their legal status, can be registered and enrolled in schools. Different interpretations and approaches to this circular are however observed, creating challenges in some provinces for enrolment of undocumented children.

Community Based Projects: 5 out of 11 Community Based Projects which were submitted to BAFIA in May are directly targeting children and youth.

143
reported child at risk



TYPES OF SERVICES PROVIDED/REFERRALS



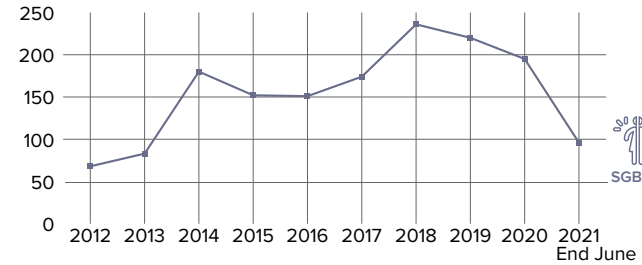
GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

UNHCR records data for GBV incidents directly reported by the victims. Cultural sensitivities around GBV and fear of retaliation may have a bearing in the low number of incidents accounted for.

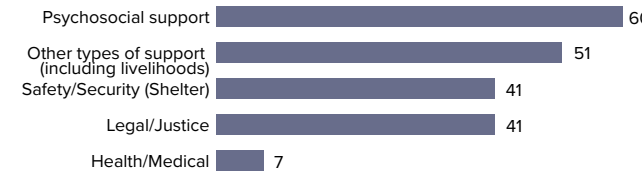
96
reported SGBV survivors



TREND: REPORTED SGBV SURVIVORS



SGBV RESPONSE



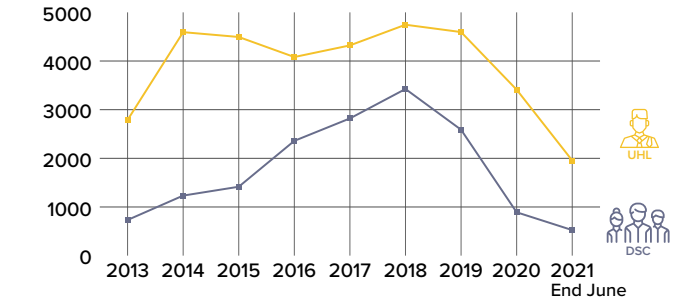
LEGAL SERVICES

In the first six months of 2021, family law matters constituted the majority of the cases that UNHCR Hired Lawyers (UHLs) supported, followed by criminal matters and civil & financial matters.

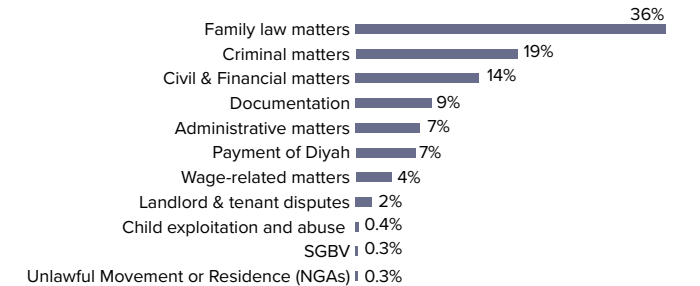
Family disputes, followed by financial disputes and wage-related disputes were the three most frequent areas that dispute settlement committees (DSCs) intervened on. Although refugees have full access to Iranian courts, in principle, the DSCs offer an alternative dispute resolution mechanism to complement judicial processes by finding amicable solutions in civil matters involving refugees.

525 PoCs supported through Dispute Settlement Committees (DSCs)
1955 PoCs supported by UNHCR Hired Lawyers (UHLs)

TREND: UHL & DSC CASES



UHL TYPES OF CASES

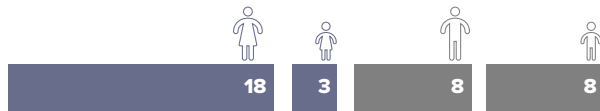


RESETTLEMENT

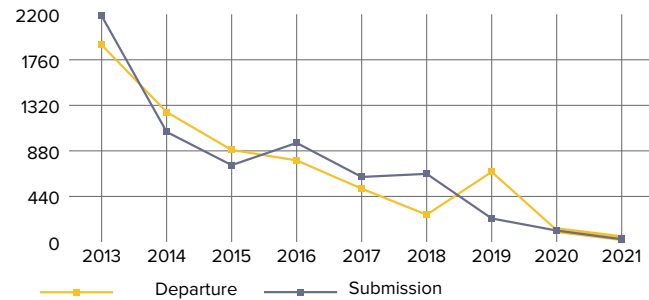
By end June 2021, UNHCR Iran has received no RST quota yet. Using the countries unallocated quota, the office submitted 4 cases/7 individuals to Sweden, 3 cases/8 individuals to Norway and 3 cases/11 individuals to Finland through HQ. During this period, 3 cases/6 individuals were accepted by Sweden, 3 cases/6 individuals by Norway, 1 family of 4 individuals by New Zealand, as well as 6 cases/19 individuals by Iceland. Resettlement departures gained momentum. In the first half of 2021, 4 cases/8 individuals departed to Sweden, 1 case of 2 individuals left for Norway, 2 cases/9 individuals departed to UK, and 3 cases/18 individuals left for New Zealand.

26 submitted to the hosting countries for consideration

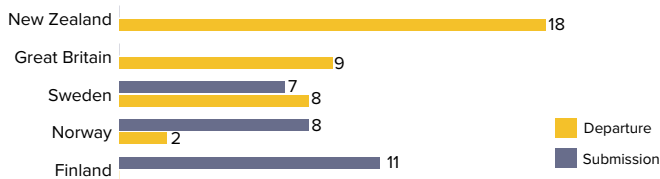
37 departed to the hosting countries



TREND: RESETTLEMENT



SUBMISSION AND DEPARTED COUNTRIES

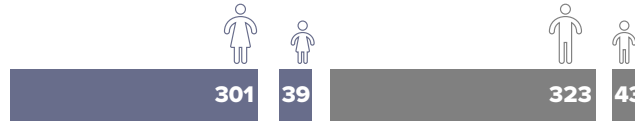


VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

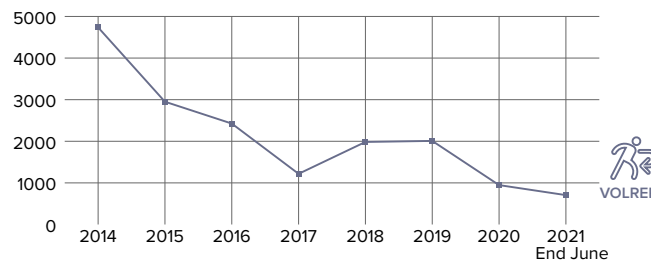
In the first six months of 2021, 704 Afghan refugees (573 cases) voluntarily repatriated, with an increase in trends compared to the same period in 2020. Considering the size of the Afghan population in Iran, the overall number of registered refugees returning to Afghanistan remains very low. During this time, there were two Iraqi refugees, who voluntarily repatriated to Iraq. 64% (454 individuals) of Afghan returnees voluntarily repatriated with the intent of obtaining an Afghan passport and Iranian visa to pursue higher education in Iran.

704 Afghan refugees voluntary repatriated (including students)

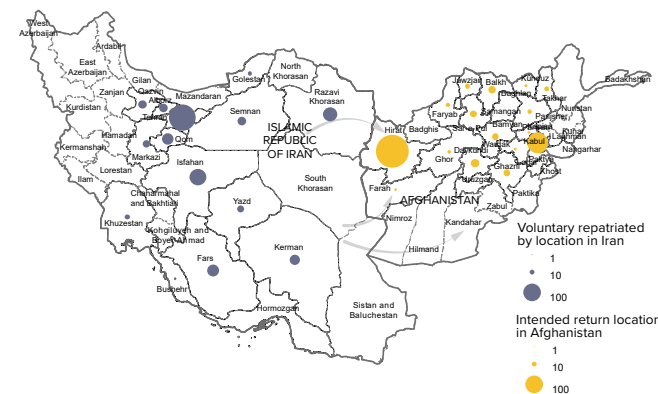
2 Iraqi refugee voluntary repatriated



TREND: VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION



REPATRIATED BY LOCATION IN IRAN & INTENDED DESTINATION IN AFGHANISTAN



ARREST, DETENTION & DEPORTATION (ADD)

During the reporting period 17 cases/28 individuals were reported to UNHCR. "Crossing border to Turkey" was the main reason of arrest, followed by "Not having Amayesh card" and "Travelling without LP". Afghans without valid documentation are at risk of being arrested and detained. Amayesh Card holders must obtain a Laissez-Passer (travel permit) from BAFIA authorities for traveling outside their designated province of residence.

28 individuals

TREND: ADD

