

# PAKISTAN

## FLOW MONITORING OF UNDOCUMENTED AFGHAN MIGRANTS

### SUMMARY REPORT 2022

REGIONAL EVIDENCE FOR MIGRATION ANALYSIS AND POLICY (REMAP)  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)  
DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX (DTM)



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### Disclaimer

This report was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union (EU) and the Government of Italy. This report is part of the outputs under the EU-funded project “Displacement Tracking Matrix Regional Evidence for Migration Analysis and Policy (DTM REMAP)”. The objective of DTM REMAP is to strengthen the evidence-based formulation and implementation of humanitarian and development policy and programming on migration and forced displacement in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq and Pakistan through the use of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the work do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

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In 2022, human mobility between Pakistan and Afghanistan was affected by a complex interplay of economic, political, security and health-related factors. These factors also depended on a range of internal and external circumstances.

The security situation in both Pakistan and Afghanistan remained a significant factor in determining the mobility of travellers between the two countries in 2022. Ongoing conflict and political instability in Afghanistan have created an environment in which cross-border violence and terrorist threats are prevalent, which led to frequent border closures and travel restrictions. This makes it challenging for individuals to move freely across the border.

Flow Monitoring is a component of IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) methodology, which is used in Pakistan to assess the flows of migrant groups and individuals at transit locations in two official border crossings between Pakistan and Afghanistan: the Torkham and Chaman border crossings. At these locations, information on the numbers, socio-economic profiles and vulnerabilities of undocumented Afghan returnees and Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holder returnees is collected, analyzed and regularly disseminated through bi-weekly and quarterly reports.

This yearly summary report, in addition to bi-weekly and quarterly reports, aims to contribute to a better understanding of return movements of undocumented Afghan returnees by conducting more in-depth analysis on the data that was collected in 2022.

The report is structured into two main sections. The first section provides a detailed description of the methodology used in the study, including information about the research method, sampling process, and any limitations encountered during the data collection process.

The second section of the report presents the findings of the data collected in 2022, which is further divided into six subsections. The first subsection presents the demographics and socio-economic profiles of the undocumented Afghan returnees, providing insights into their age, gender, and economic status.

The second subsection focuses on the specific documentation statuses of the returnees, providing a comprehensive overview of their legal status in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The third subsection explores the reasons cited by returnees for their decision to return to Afghanistan, both in terms of push factors (the reasons for leaving Pakistan) and pull factors (the reasons for returning to Afghanistan).

In the next subsection, the travel conditions of the returnees are examined, including their mode of transportation and the challenges they faced during the journey.

The fifth subsection provides insights into the type of settlement that Afghan nationals were living in while in Pakistan, as well as their settlement preferences and priorities in Afghanistan.

Finally, the last subsection looks into the most commonly reported areas of origin (in Pakistan) and destination (in Afghanistan) among the returnees, providing valuable insights into the patterns of migration and settlement among Afghan nationals.

# II. KEY FINDINGS

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According to the analysis, the number of undocumented Afghans returning from Pakistan has increased significantly, nearly threefold, in comparison to 2021. This rise in returns can be attributed to the significant geopolitical changes that took place in Afghanistan between 2021 and 2022. The data also shows that the number of undocumented Afghans leaving the country was higher in the last quarter at Torkham border and in the first quarter at Chaman border. This increase in undocumented returnees is mostly due to the relaxation of border restrictions compared to the previous year.



# 1. METHODOLOGY

## 1.1 Research and Sampling Method

The report is based on data collected in 2022 through the Flow Monitoring (FM) methodology. FM is a component of IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), which was developed to track the flows of groups and individuals through key points of origin, transit and destination. The purpose of FM is to provide regularly updated information on the scale of population flows and profiles of mobile populations.

The FM exercise in Pakistan provides key insights into the overall return migration trends of undocumented Afghan migrants, as well as an overview of the situation of Afghan returnees and their mobility patterns, exploring routes, vulnerabilities, demographic and social characteristics. The exercise also helps to identify gaps and priorities in the provision of assistance along migration routes and upon destination.

The DTM team and authorities on the ground identify strategic locations for the establishment of monitoring locations/points where data collection will take place. IOM’s DTM team in Pakistan identified two key transit locations at Torkham and Chaman border points, which are located near entry/exit points. DTM teams collect data on daily basis at the selected official border crossing to gather information on Afghan returnees and provide analysis through bi-weekly, quarterly and yearly reports.

These surveys collect information on the number, demographic breakdown, vulnerabilities, migration intentions, reasons for migration and nationality of migrants.

In 2022, DTM identified 74,132 undocumented Afghan returnees at two border crossings. However, it may not reflect the total number of undocumented Afghan returnees. For this study, only the head of household or representative of the family were interviewed. This means that the number of interviews conducted by the enumerators is lower than the number of returnees recorded by DTM. In 2022, border monitors interviewed 5,860 respondents.

To reduce potential biases, data quality checks are rigorously conducted by the team during the data collection, pre-processing and analysis phases.

## 1.2 Limitations

As this analysis is only based on data collected at the Torkham and Chaman border crossings, the data should not be generalized, and may not represent a full picture of inter- and intra-regional migration in the country.

It should be also noted that most of the visualizations are only representative for the respondents to the survey as interviews were only conducted with the head of the family. This will be clearly indicated in the visualization/question with an asterisk (\*).

Finally, It is important to note that the flow in undocumented Afghan returns and departures is also influenced by various border management measures implemented by Pakistani authorities, as well as incidents such as cross-fires, heavy rains, and public protests that led to partial or complete closure of the border.

TOTAL AFGHAN RETURNEES FROM PAKISTAN TO AFGHANISTAN



74,132

Undocumented migrants returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan

TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS











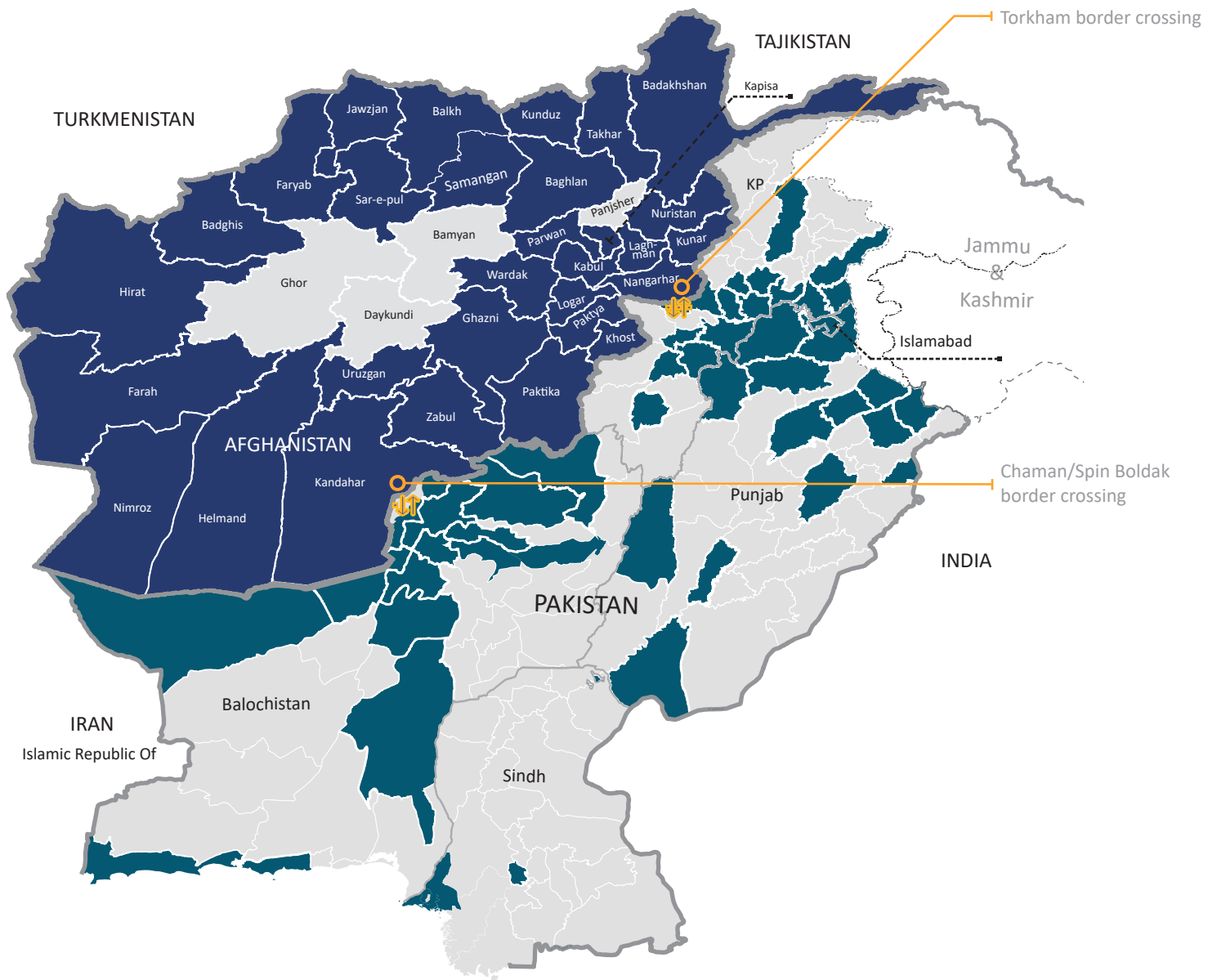
5,860

Respondents to the flow monitoring survey in 2022

**PROVINCE AND DISTRICT MAP OF AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN**

**Legend**

-  International border
-  Province border
-  Line of control
-  Disputed border
-  District border
-  Provinces of intended destination (Afghanistan)
-  Origin district of returnees (Pakistan)
-  District without returnees (in Pakistan) and non-intended province of destination (in Afghanistan)



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## 2. KEY FINDINGS

### 2.1 Demographics and socio-economic profiles

The survey comprises face-to-face interviews carried out in 2022 with 5,860 heads and representatives of the households at the Torkham and Chaman border crossings. Overall, 74,132 undocumented returnees were reported to have crossed the two borders, out of which 37,447 were female and 36,685 were male. Additionally, border authorities facilitated the return of 1,740 individuals due to the lack of legal documentation to remain in Pakistan. Therefore, information concerning these 1,740 individuals is not included in the report analysis.

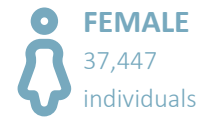
In 2022, a significant number of Afghan migrants returned to their home country through the Chaman and Torkham border crossings, with 84 per cent (62,082 individuals) returning through Chaman and 16 per cent (12,050 individuals) returning through Torkham. The higher outflow at the Chaman border can be attributed to the fact that customs duty is imposed on the luggage of outgoing families, while in Chaman, this customs duty is exempted. The returning population was evenly split between genders, with 49 per cent male and 51 per cent female. Interestingly, there was a slight difference in the gender ratio at each border crossing, with Torkham having 48 per cent male and 52 per cent female.

It is important to note that the returning population was influenced by various border management measures implemented by Pakistani authorities, as well as incidents such as cross-fires, heavy rains, and public protests. This information highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of migration, as well as the various factors that can influence migration patterns.

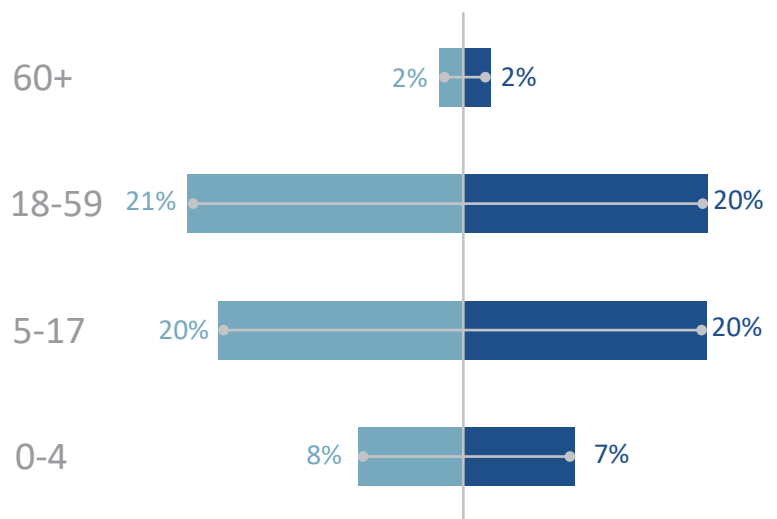
The average household size was eight people. The highest proportion of returnees were between 5 and 17 years of age (41%), followed by adults between the age of 18 and 59 (40%) and children under 5 years old (15%).

**74,132**

UNDOCUMENTED  
RETURNEES



### POPULATION PYRAMID OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES



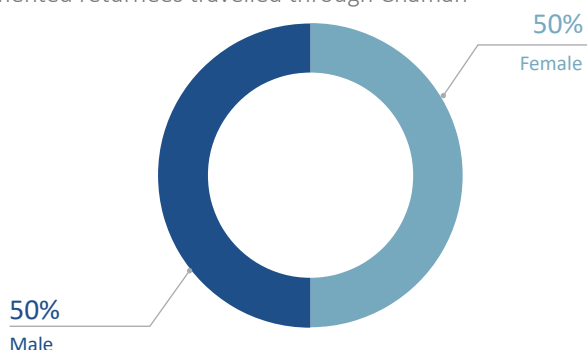
Average household size among respondents

### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES BY BORDER CROSSING

Chaman

**62,082**

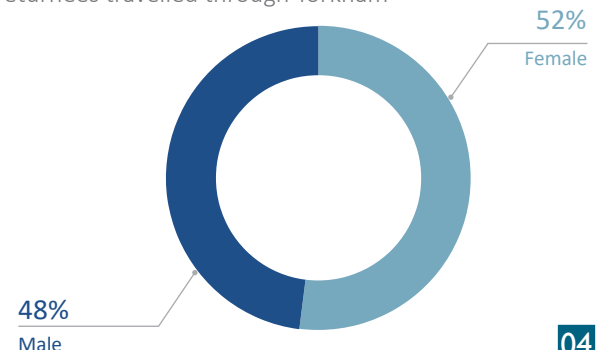
Undocumented returnees travelled through Chaman



Torkham

**12,050**

Undocumented returnees travelled through Torkham



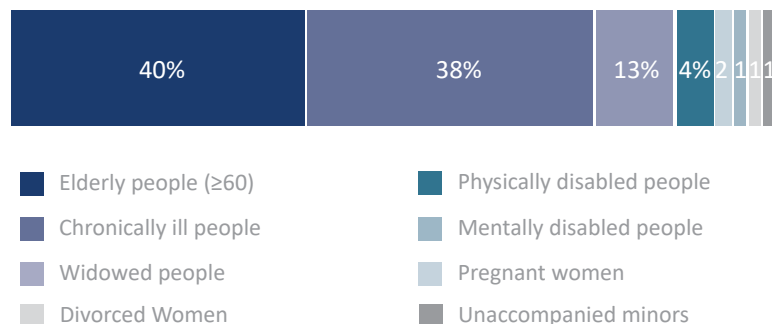
The data analysis at both borders indicates that the returnees categorized as vulnerable persons decreased from 9 per cent in 2021 to 8 per cent in 2022. The top three vulnerable groups were elderly people (40%), chronically ill people (38%) and widowed people (13%). The top three compositions found in 2021 were elderly people (41%), chronically ill people (35%) and widowed people (12%).

Based on data analysis, it was found that 100 per cent of the respondents were employed during their time in Pakistan. This figure represents a slight increase from the previous year's statistic of 99 per cent. Among the respondents, the majority (59%) reported being employed as daily wagers, followed by skilled labor (26%), and 13 per cent was active in business. Only a small percentage of respondents reported working for a salaried jobs (2%).

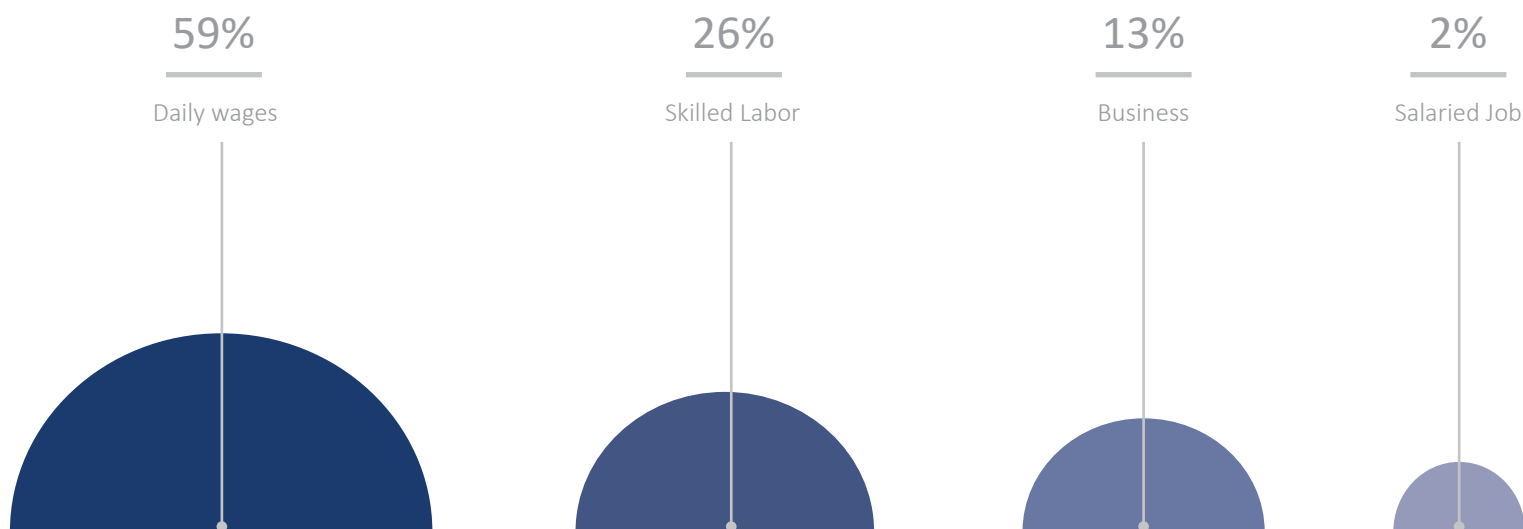
## VULNERABILITIES OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEEES

8%

Vulnerable  
undocumented  
returnees

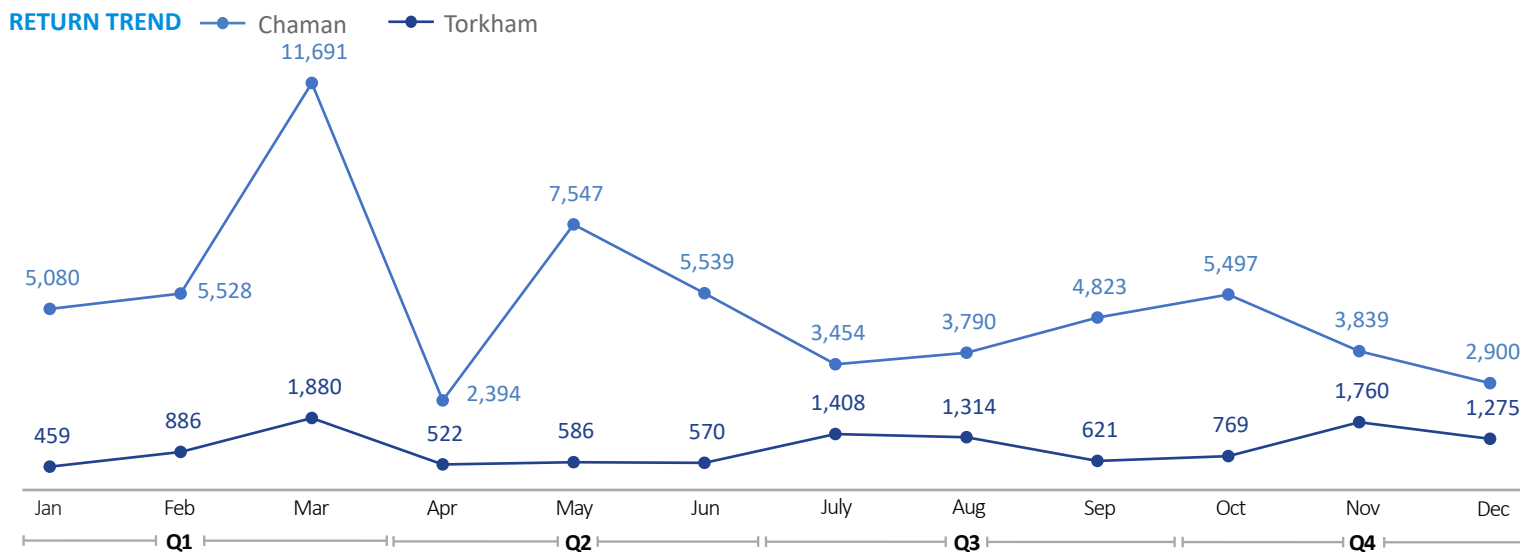


## TYPE OF OCCUPATION OF RETURNEEES\*



\*This question was only answered by the head or representative of the family.

## MONTHLY RETURNEEES TREND





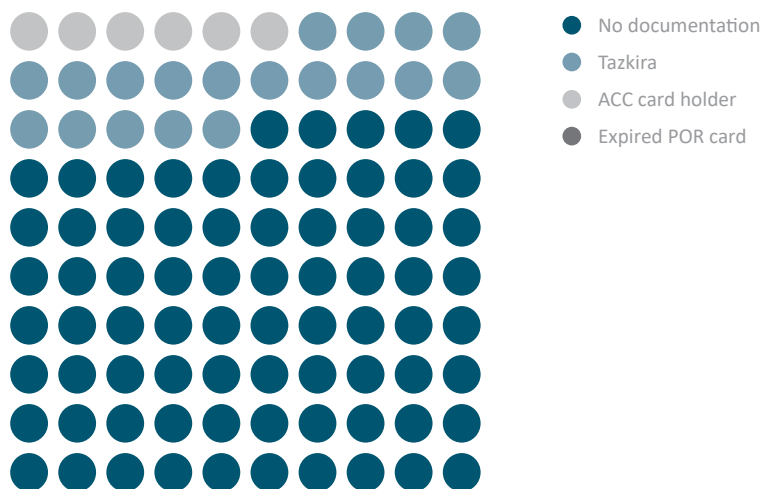
## 2.2 Documentation status

Seventy-five per cent of the returnees recorded by DTM in Pakistan in 2022 did not possess any legal documentation, which is four per cent lower than in 2021. The remaining 25 per cent were made up of Afghan returnees with some sort of documentation, including a Tazkira (Afghan National Identification Card), an Afghan Citizenship Card (ACC) or an expired Proof of Registration (PoR) Card. Among returnees with documentation, returnees with a Tazkira represented the largest group (19%). The second largest group were returnees with an ACC card (6%). Returnees with expired PoR cards, ACC tokens (proof of registration) and expired visas consisted of less than one per cent of the total returnees in 2022.

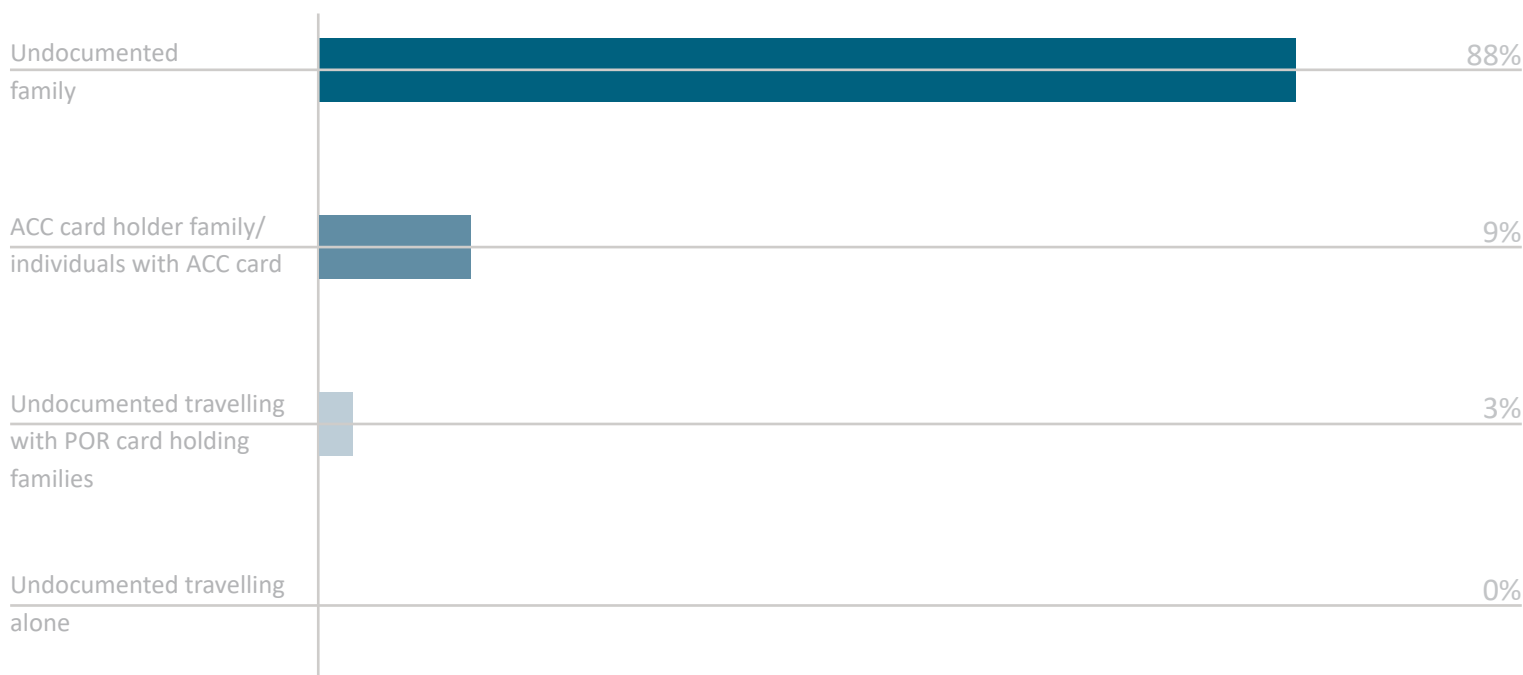
At the family level, undocumented families made up the largest group (88%), followed by families or individuals with ACC card (9%) and undocumented individuals travelling with documented families (3%). There were only five undocumented individuals who were travelling alone.

## DOCUMENTATION STATUS OF AFGHAN RETURNEES

**75%** Of respondents had no documentation



## DOCUMENTATION STATUS OF UNDOCUMENTED FAMILIES\*



\*This question was only answered by the head or representative of the family.

## 2.3 Reasons and drivers of return

This section analyses the reasons for Afghan nationals returning to Afghanistan by examining both the pull and push factors that contributed to their decision to leave Pakistan.

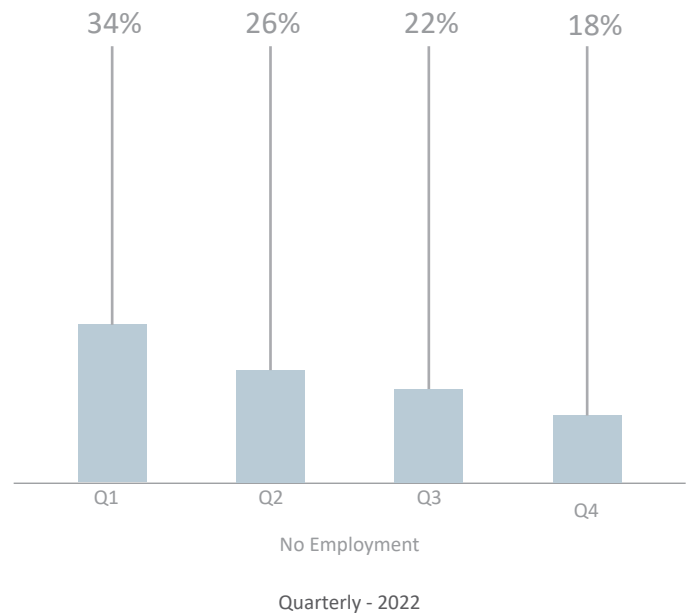
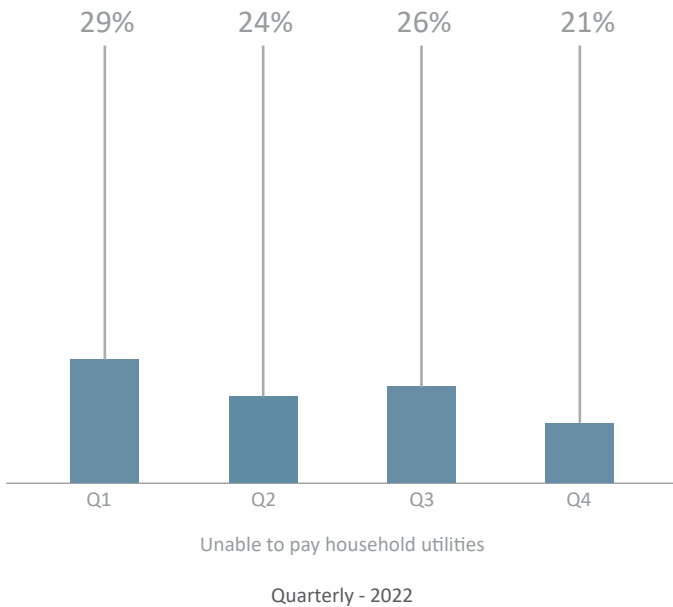
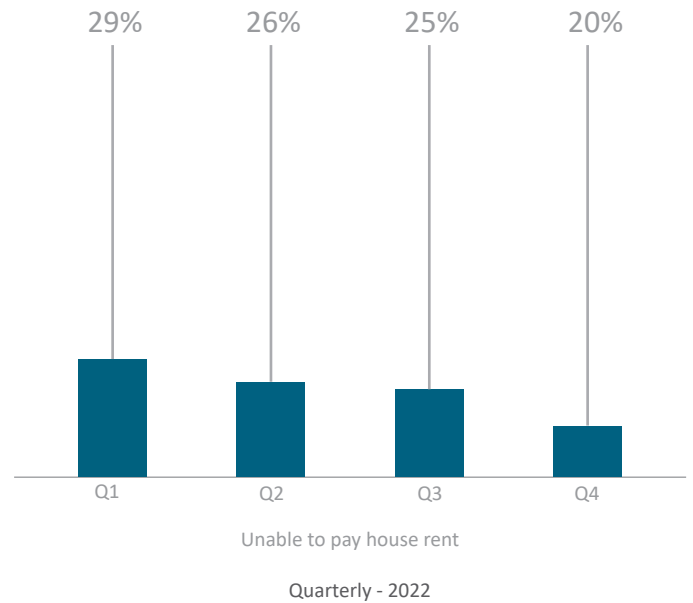
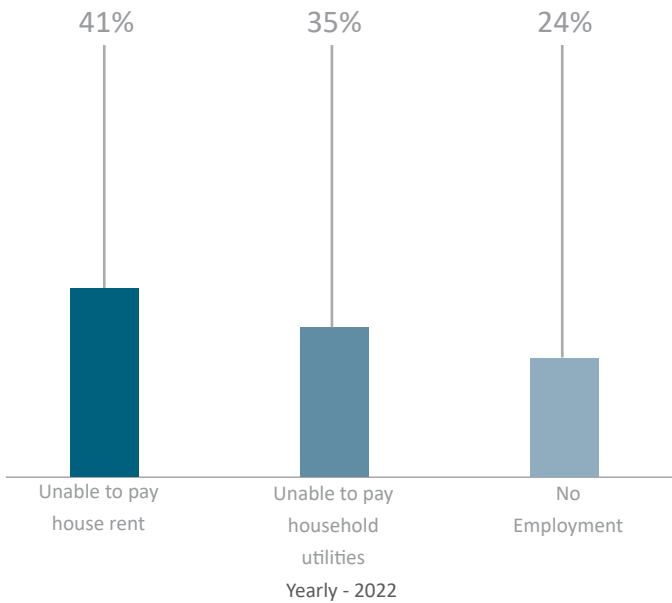
In terms of push factors, 41 per cent of returnees interviewed by DTM reported that the inability to pay house rent was the primary reason that drove them to leave Pakistan. An additional 35 per cent indicated that they returned because they were unable to pay for household utilities in Pakistan.

Lack of employment opportunities was also a significant factor, cited by 24 per cent of returnees.

Regarding pull factors, the availability of assistance in Afghanistan was cited by 58 per cent of the respondents as the reason for their return. Thirty-nine per cent of returnees cited the reunion with family and relatives as the primary reason that encouraged them to return to Afghanistan. Only three per cent of the respondents wanted to return because of improvements in the security situation in Afghanistan.

### MAIN REASONS FOR RETURNING TO AFGHANISTAN OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES\* (multiple answers possible)

#### Push factors (top 3 answers only)

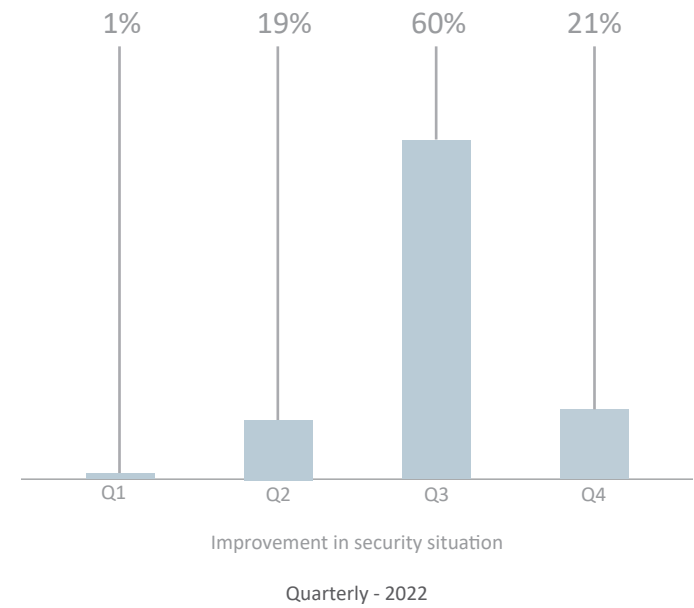
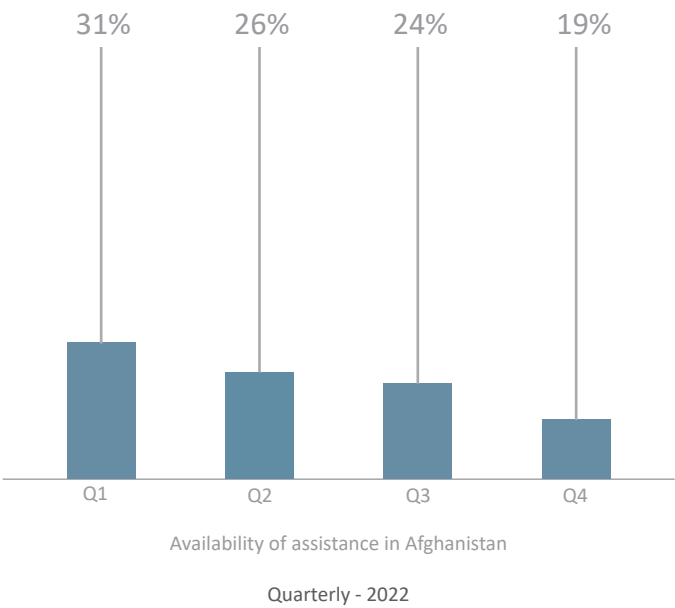
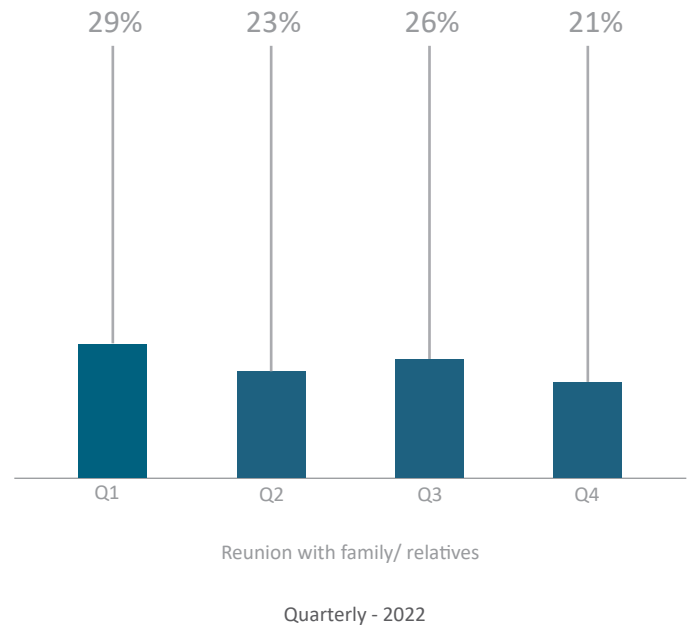
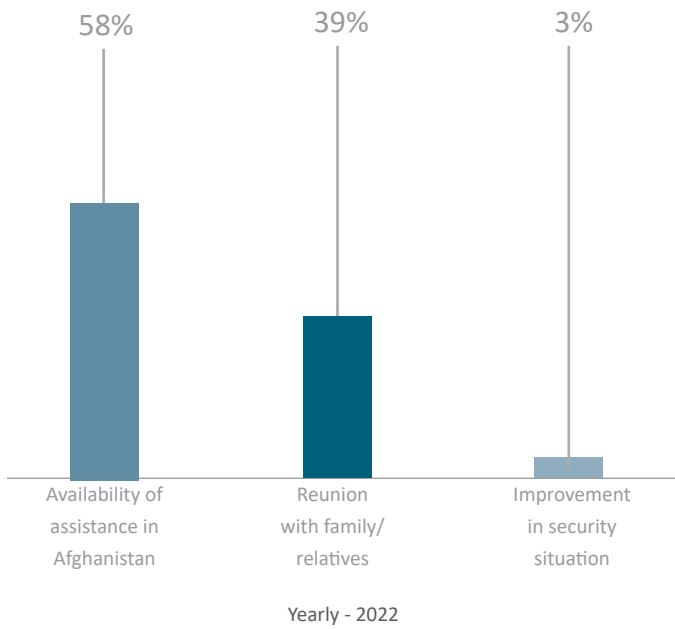


\*This question was only answered by the head or representative of the family.



MAIN REASONS FOR RETURNING TO AFGHANISTAN OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES\* (multiple answers possible)

Pull factors (top 3 answers only)



## 2.4 Travel conditions

The transportation methods used by families returning from Pakistan to the border and from the border to their destination in Afghanistan remained consistent across both journeys. This year, the majority of families utilized trucks (54%) as their primary mode of transportation, followed by pickups (44%) and buses (2%). In 2021, the most popular forms of transportation were trucks (51%), pickups (33%), and buses (16%).

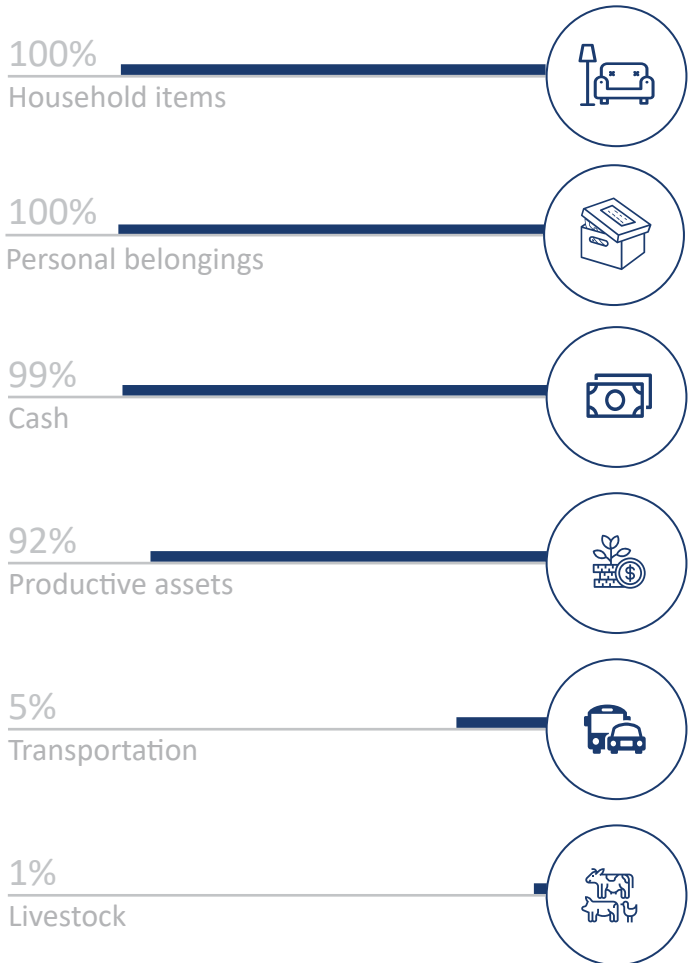
According to the interviews conducted, the average total cost for transportation from the origin district in Pakistan to the destination district in Afghanistan was estimated at 28,176 PKR (equivalent to USD 126) per family. The average cost of travel from the individual's place of origin in Pakistan to the border point was estimated at 13,245 PKR per family, while the cost from the border point to the destination in Afghanistan was estimated at 14,931 PKR per family.

The cost of travel is directly proportional to the distance between the origin district in Pakistan and the border point, as well as the distance from the border point to the destination in Afghanistan. Additionally, the type of transportation vehicle used also affects the cost of transportation. Larger vehicles generally cost more to use for transportation.

It was found that the lowest transportation cost recorded in Pakistan was from various areas of Killa Abdullah to Chaman border point, which cost 2,000 PKR. Meanwhile, the highest cost was from Chakwal to Torkham border point, which was 85,000 PKR. Similarly, in Afghanistan, the lowest transportation cost was from Torkham border point to various areas of Nangarhar, which cost 2,000 PKR, while the highest cost was from Torkham border.

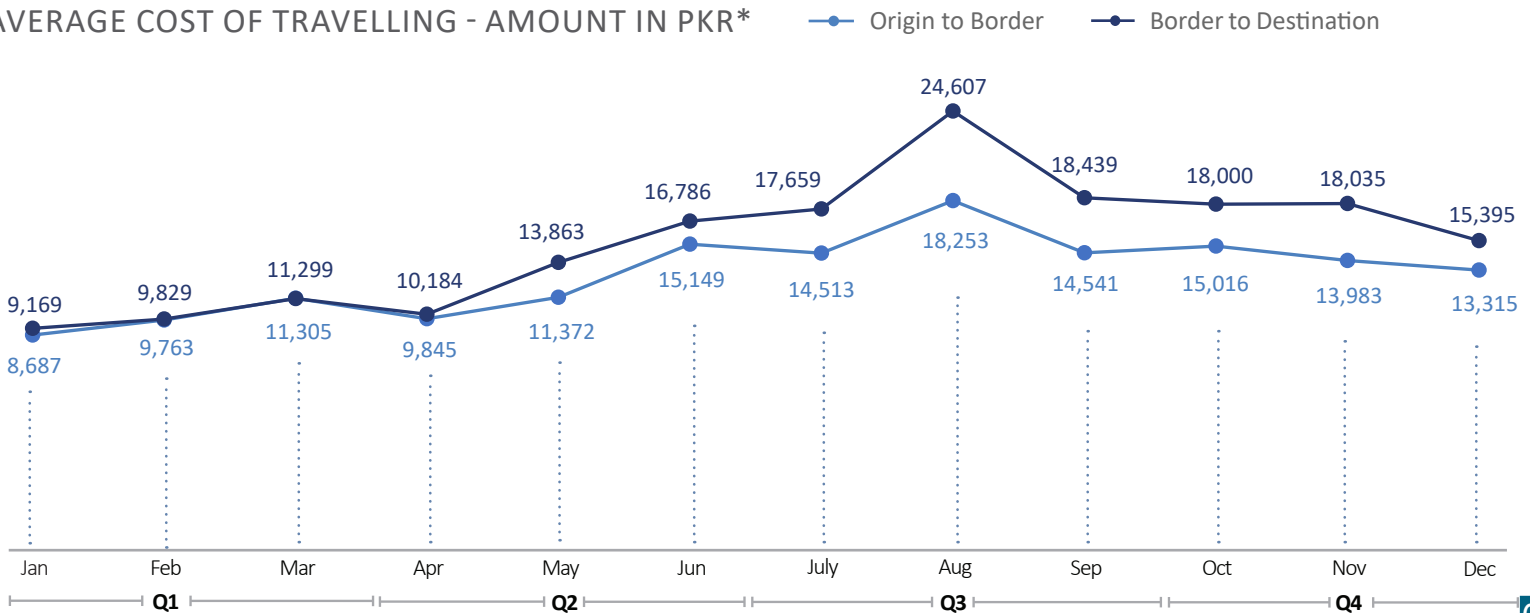
## GOODS BROUGHT BACK TO AFGHANISTAN\*

(multiple answers possible)



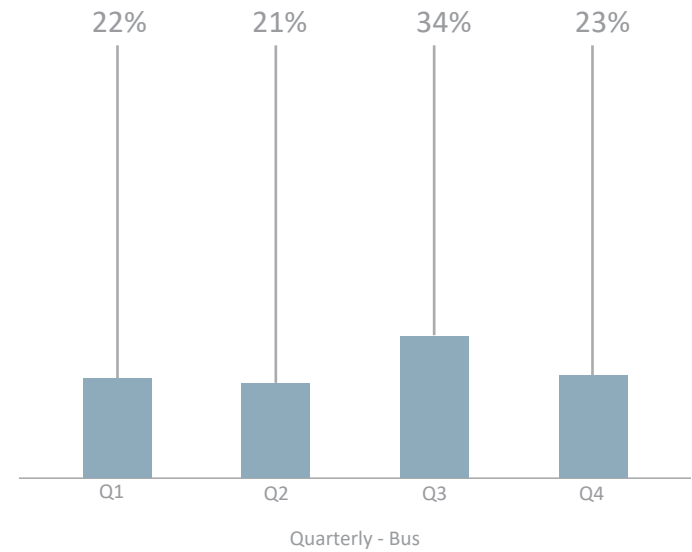
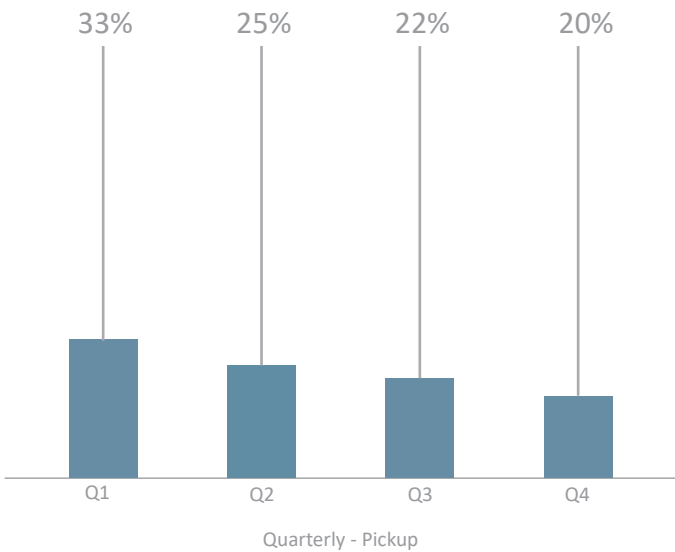
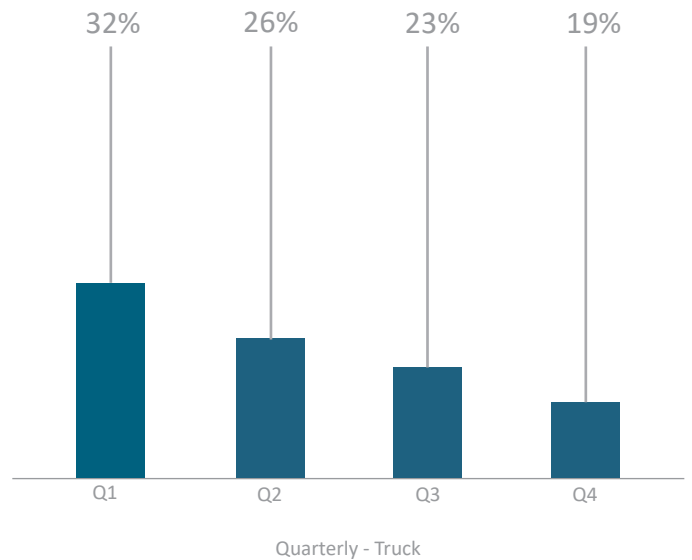
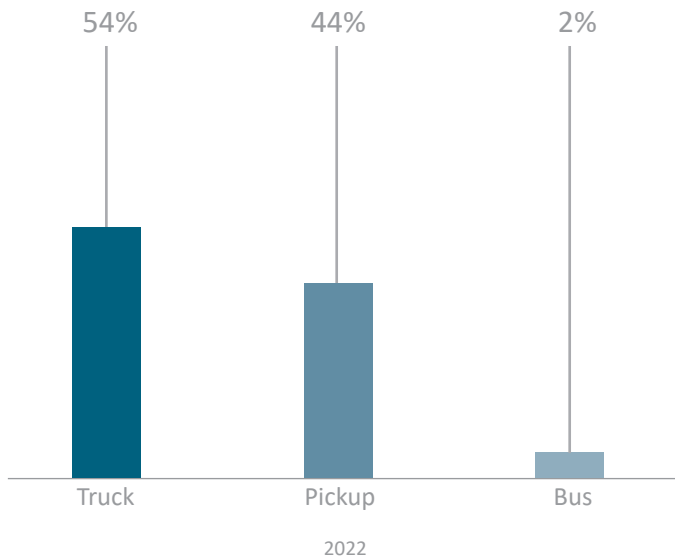
\*This question was only answered by the head of the family.

## AVERAGE COST OF TRAVELLING - AMOUNT IN PKR\*



\*\*Exchange rates are 224.05 PKR to 1 USD according to the UN Operational Rates of Exchange in December 2022.

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES\*










## 2.5 Type of settlement and settlement priorities

While residing in Pakistan, the highest proportion of respondents reported living in rented houses (90%). Nine per cent were living in camps or camp-like settings and 1 per cent was living with relatives. Rented houses were also the most reported type of settlement in 2021 (96%). Other types of settlements reported in 2021 were residing with relatives in Pakistan and residing in temporary settlements.

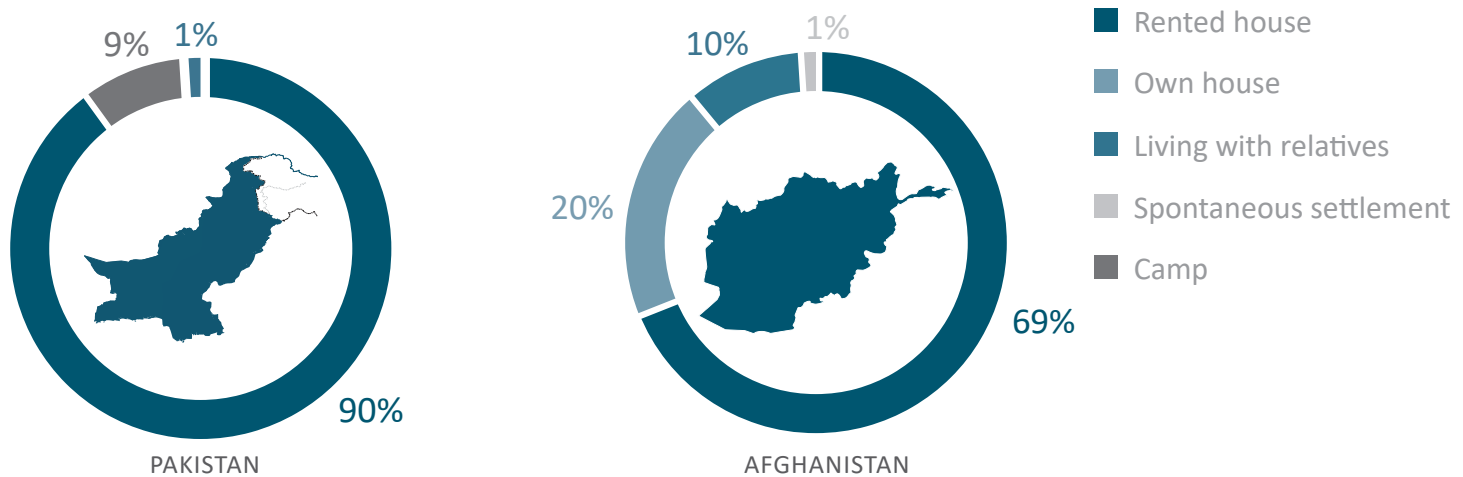
When asked about their intended settlement options in Afghanistan, more than half of returnees stated their plan to rent a house upon arrival in their city of destination (69%). This represents an increase of eight per cent compared to 2021. The second most common type of settlement mentioned by returnees in 2022 was living in their own houses (20%), which experienced a decline of thirteen per cent compared to the 2021 figure. Another option mentioned by returnees in 2022 was to stay with their relatives (10%), representing a five per cent increase from the previous year.

During the interviews, the returnees expressed that they had distinct priorities for resettling in Afghanistan. All of the respondents intended to relocate to a new city and secure a livelihood, looking for new jobs, and 73 per cent of them prioritizing finding suitable shelter. Other crucial settlement priorities mentioned by returnees included access to education (5%), medical care and health facilities (5%), availability of clean drinking water (5%), and addressing security challenges (1%).

### SETTLEMENT PRIORITIES OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES\* (multiple answers possible)

	Resettle in a new city	100%
	Arrange for livelihood	100%
	Income opportunities	100%
	Arrange for shelter	73%
	Education	5%
	Availability of medicine and health facilities	5%
	Availability of clean drinking water	5%
	Security challenges	1%

### TYPE OF SETTLEMENT IN PAKISTAN AND EXPECTED TYPE OF SETTLEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES\*



\*This question was only answered by the head of the family.

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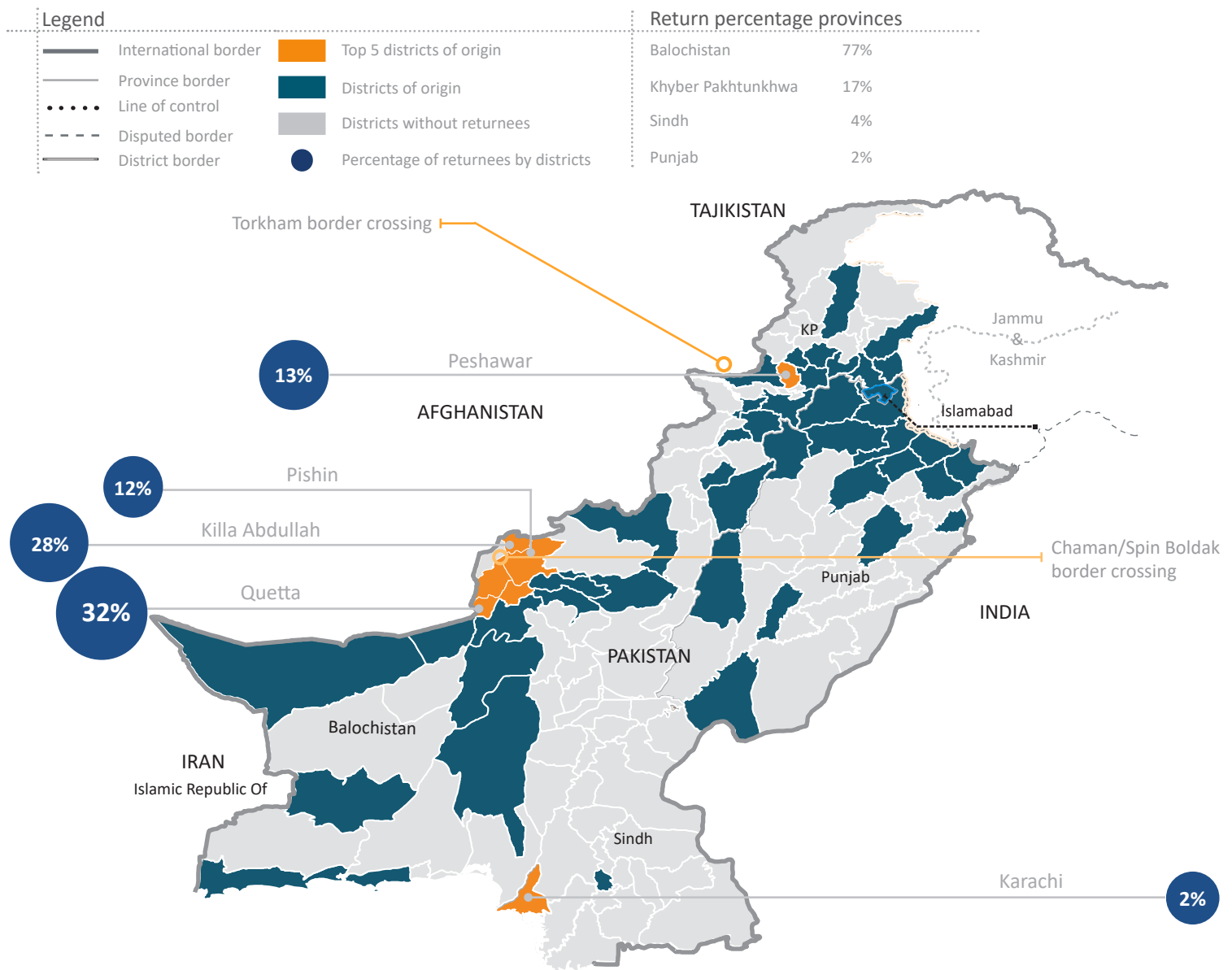
## 2.6 Areas of origin and destination

In 2022, returnees reported living in four provinces in Pakistan prior to their return to Afghanistan: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh. Few returnees were also living in Islamabad and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The highest number of returnees in 2022 departed from Balochistan (77%), followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (17%), Sindh (4%) and Punjab (2%). In 2021, Balochistan recorded the highest percentage of returnees at 72 per cent, followed by KP at 15 per cent. Sindh and Punjab had lower percentages of returnees, at 10 per cent and three per cent respectively. The reported low number of returnees recorded at the Torkham border crossing can be

attributed to the fact that authorities imposed a customs duty on the luggage of undocumented families who were leaving the country. In most of the cases, these families were unable to pay the customs duty which resulted in more mobility at Chaman as compared to Torkham border crossing. At the district level, the top five districts of origin in Pakistan were Quetta (32%), Killa Abdullah (28%), Peshawar (13%), Pishin (12%) and Karachi (2%).

The mobility of people at both border crossing points was disrupted intermittently due to various factors such as changes in border crossing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), security challenges, public protests, and heavy rainfall.

### PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS OF ORIGIN IN PAKISTAN OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEEES

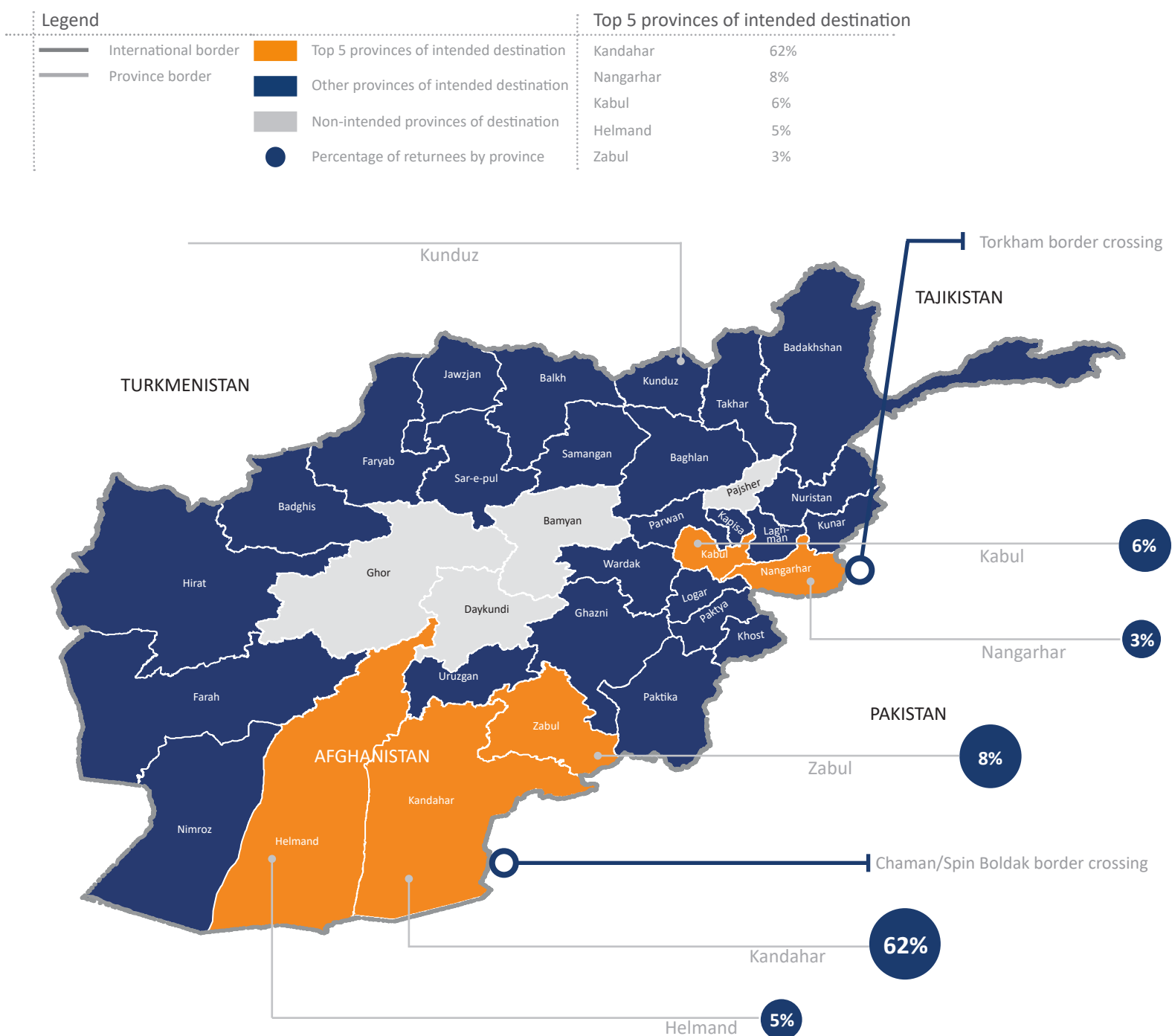


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INTENDED DESTINATION IN AFGHANISTAN OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES (Top 5 answers)

More than half of returnees (62%) in 2022 reported that Kandahar was their province of intended destination in Afghanistan. Four other major provinces of intended destination of returnees were Nangarhar (8%), Kabul (6%), Helmand (5%) and Zabul (3%). This trend is almost similar

to the previous year. In previous year most intended destination was Kandahar (63%), followed by Nangarhar (13%), Kunduz (5%), Kabul (4%) and Helmand (3%).



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