

# MOBILITY DYNAMICS AT AFGHANISTAN'S BORDERS

FLOW MONITORING QUARTERLY REPORT 2: APRIL-JUNE 2024  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)



GLOBAL DATA INSTITUTE  
DISPLACEMENT  
TRACKING MATRIX



## INTRODUCTION

Frequent movement at the borders with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan have been influenced by a variety of factors over the past few decades. Afghan nationals not only seek economic opportunities, international protection and safety in these countries, but often visit family or participate in short-term travel for health and other reasons<sup>1</sup>. Recently, policies and statements by officials in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan have impacted movements to and from Afghanistan. In late 2023, officials in both countries called for the expulsion of undocumented foreigners, the majority of whom are Afghan nationals, which led to spikes in returnee numbers towards the end of the year. Later, in mid-April this year, inflows rose again when a possible second phase of Pakistan's "Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan (IFRP)" was announced in media reports. While the government of Pakistan did not end up implementing this second phase in mid-April, there were new announcements for restarts at the end of June. In response, discussions and high level advocacy are currently taking place regarding the extension of documentation for Afghan nationals in Pakistan. The timeline of this report covers the initial media reports of the second phase restart until the official announcement.

IOM Afghanistan re-launched its DTM Flow Monitoring (FM) activity at the beginning of 2024 to provide critical insights into current mobility dynamics at Afghanistan's borders. Flow Monitoring is designed to track the scale and characteristics of human mobility along the borders, including volume, intended destinations, reasons for movement, and intended lengths of stay. **From April to the end of June 2024, DTM counted 858,170 individuals entering Afghanistan, 532,854 leaving Afghanistan, and interviewed 81,292** regarding their reasons for movement and intentions. The following report provides findings from DTM's Flow Monitoring exercises for the second quarter of 2024, examining trends and profiles among inflow and outflow groups to inform better targeted response mechanisms. DTM was able to expand Flow Monitoring to five more crossing points in this quarter compared to last quarter. Operations at new crossing points were started at various times throughout the reporting period, which include Abu Nasr Farahi, Dak, Baramcha, Angor Ada, and Pathan. As a result the total flows figures in this report do not necessarily represent the total flows at these crossing points for the entirety of the reporting period. Additionally, all assessed border points fall into two categories: those connected to the National Highway, or "main" crossing points, which include Islam Qala, Milak, Spin Boldak, and Torkham, and those not connected to the National Highway, which include the five new border points and Ghulam Khan. Analyses throughout the report will reflect the differences between these types of crossing points.

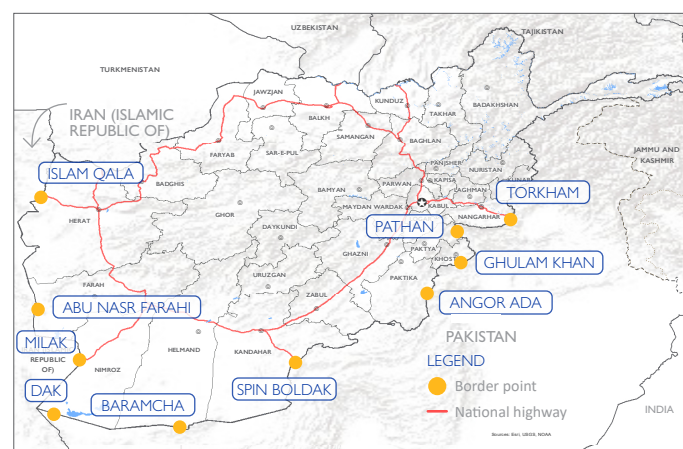
The report is structured in four sections. The first section, "Cumulative Flow Trends," is linked to DTM's Flow Monitoring Counting exercise. The remaining three sections are linked to DTM's Flow Monitoring Surveys exercise.

## METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

As of the end of June 2024, DTM operates at ten key border points with the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRN) and Pakistan (PAK) to conduct two interlinked Flow Monitoring exercises. Flow Monitoring Counting (FMC) is a headcount of all individuals entering or leaving Afghanistan (including returnees) to gauge flow volume. The Flow Monitoring Survey (FMS) is a survey of randomly selected Afghan national individuals or groups entering or leaving Afghanistan to understand the profiles, motivations, and vulnerabilities of the target population. FMC requires DTM field staff to count all individuals entering and leaving Afghanistan at targeted border points during active hours every day to have an accurate picture of daily inflow and outflow volumes. Field staff also record how many individuals are males over five years old, females over five years old, males under five years old, and females under five years old. The FMS tool is used to interview incoming and outgoing individuals, capturing details on migration profiles and intentions. Individuals or groups of Afghan nationals are randomly selected for interview by field staff at the border crossing points and aim to interview as many as possible throughout the working day (as opposed to being given a quota based on representative sampling). In groups where children are present, their parent or an accompanying adult answer on their behalf. FMC and FMS are conducted simultaneously at each selected border point every day.

FMS interviews were conducted at border crossing points with respondents while they were traveling. As a result, information gathered relies on the answers and perceptions of respondents in transit, with a degree of variability due to limited measures of verification and time allowances. Additionally, certain indicators may be under- or over-reported due to the subjectivity and perceptions of participants (especially "social desirability bias" – the documented tendency of people to provide what they perceive to be the "right answers to certain questions"). These factors should be taken into consideration when interpreting findings.

MAP 1: FLOW MONITORING POINTS AS OF 30 JUNE 2024



DISCLAIMER: This map is for illustration purposes only. The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the International Organization for Migration.

1 See page 1 in the [first quarterly report](#) for a more detailed background on cross-border mobility in Afghanistan





## CUMULATIVE FLOW TRENDS

During this quarter, DTM was able to count just under 1.5 million individuals entering or leaving Afghanistan via ten of its border points with the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, which is around half a million more individuals than last quarter. Accounting only for the four main border points, which have been assessed since the initiation of the Flow Monitoring activity, inflows have increased by around 30 per cent from the first to the second quarter, while outflows have increased by around 19 per cent. Movements were briefly affected by media announcements in mid-April signaling the re-starting of Pakistan's IFRP, leading to a slight increase in inflows, but the restart was postponed. Movements may also have been affected by continuous push back of Afghan nationals from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Demographic trends during this quarter are consistent with those from last quarter. Flows at the border with the Islamic Republic of Iran remained heavily dominated by males over five years old, while flows with Pakistan were slightly more diverse. Considering the general segregation of labour markets,<sup>1</sup> this may be related to flows to the Islamic Republic of Iran being more economically motivated compared to those with Pakistan, which more frequently included movements related to family, according to FMS data.

Temporal trends showed that flows from the Islamic Republic of Iran tend to be highest in the first half of the week before dropping off sharply on Fridays. Flows from Pakistan, on the other hand, were higher toward the end of the week and were lowest on Mondays (see Chart 3 below). Inflows from the Islamic Republic of Iran were consistently higher than outflows, while inflows and outflows were more equivalent at the border with Pakistan. It is important to note that these trends represent the flows at the ten assessed crossing points and do not include data from the entirety of Afghanistan's borders. As a result, the current data may not account for the entire outflow volume of Afghanistan.

For information on flow trends and profiles on weekly basis, the Flow Monitoring Weekly Snapshots can be found on the [DTM website](#) in English, Dari, and Pashto. Additionally, the interactive Flow Monitoring Dashboard, which allows users to filter information on trends and profiles by date and crossing point depending on their needs, can be found at [this link](#). DTM has also generated interactive maps on inflow and outflow pathways and returnee presence in the Flow Monitoring [Story Map](#).

TOTAL INFLOW: 858,170		TOTAL OUTFLOW: 532,854	
IRN INFLOW: 520,579	PAK INFLOW: 337,591	IRN OUTFLOW: 275,623	PAK OUTFLOW: 257,231

CHART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN

INFLOW LEGEND: ● Male >5 yrs old ● Female >5 yrs old ● <5 yrs old  
OUTFLOW LEGEND: ● Male >5 yrs old ● Female >5 yrs old ● <5 yrs old

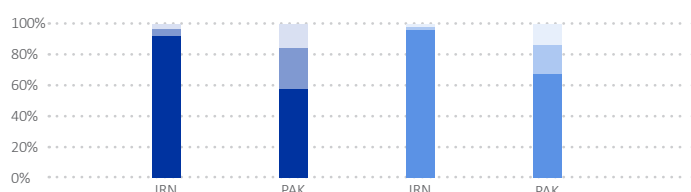


CHART 2: WEEKLY INFLOW TRENDS

Average inflow number for each day of the week

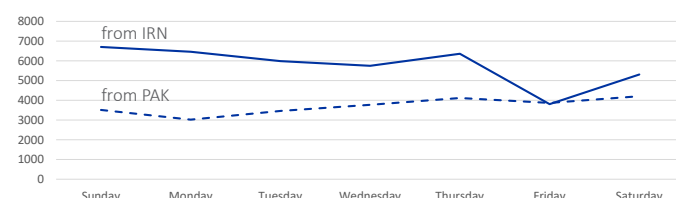


CHART 3: INFLOW & OUTFLOW TRENDS TO AND FROM THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN SINCE JAN 2024

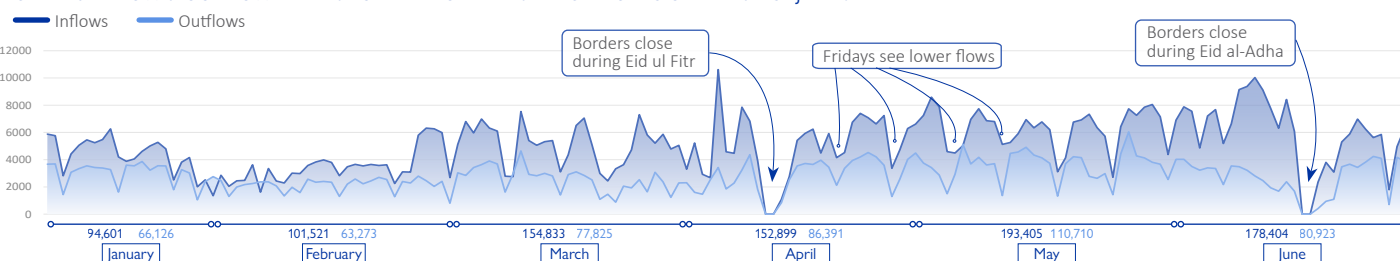


CHART 4: INFLOW & OUTFLOW TRENDS TO AND FROM PAKISTAN SINCE JAN 2024



<sup>3</sup> "Women and men migrant workers: Moving towards equal rights and opportunities." International Labour Organization. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@gender/documents/publication/wcms\\_101118.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@gender/documents/publication/wcms_101118.pdf)



## MOBILITY DYNAMICS: THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

### INFLOWS

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 31,861

MALE RESPONDENTS: 69%

FEMALE RESPONDENTS: 31%

### REASONS FOR MOVEMENT

Deportation declarations and bans against Afghan nationals in the Islamic Republic of Iran in late 2023<sup>1</sup> continue to be reflected in the reasons for movement among incoming respondents in the second quarter of 2024, similarly to the first quarter. Deportation is the most common reason for returning to Afghanistan (56%), followed by voluntary or spontaneous return (46%), and economic reasons (39%)<sup>2</sup>. Voluntary or spontaneous return can represent both coming back to live in Afghanistan after living abroad, or returning to Afghanistan after a short trip abroad. Economic reasons most likely refer to return after finishing employment in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Deportation was more common at Islam Qala and Milak crossing points compared to Abu Nasr Farahi crossing point, where voluntary or spontaneous return was cited by almost all respondents (96%). Abu Nasr Farahi likely sees more short-term circular movements across the border; 83 per cent of respondents reported traveling for family-related visits. The overall rate of those citing that they felt unsafe in the Islamic Republic of Iran as a reason for movement increased by seven per cent from last quarter (18% to 25%).

Starker differences emerged during this quarter between reasons for movement among male and female respondents compared to last quarter, where the differences were marginal. For example, females were 10 per cent more likely than males to report that they felt unsafe in the Islamic Republic of Iran (32% compared to 22%) and were also more likely to cite economic reasons (45% compared to 36%). Meanwhile, male respondents cited deportation and family-related visits more often than females (58% versus 51% and 11% versus 5%, respectively).

Over half (61%) of respondents reported having stayed a year or longer (**long-term**) in the Islamic Republic of Iran, while 21 per cent reported staying over 3 months to a year (**medium-term**), and 18 per cent reported staying less than 3 months (**short-term**). While over half of those coming through Islam Qala and Milak had stayed long-term in the Islamic Republic of Iran, however, the majority of those entering through Abu Nasr Farahi had only stayed less than one year, further confirming the shorter-term mobility characteristics of the crossing point. Long-term stays in the Islamic Republic of Iran were most common among those who reported feeling unsafe as a reason for movement (81%) and those traveling for economic reasons (78%). Family-related visits and health-related travel were linked to being least likely to have stayed long-term (41% and 39%, respectively).

Overall, over half of respondents answered “I do not know” when asked how long they intend to stay in Afghanistan upon return

(56%). This proportion drops to 23 per cent when considering individuals entering through Abu Nasr Farahi only, while the proportion of individuals who report intentions to stay in Afghanistan short-term increased from six per cent overall to 54 per cent at Abu Nasr Farahi only. Uncertainty regarding planned length of stay was highest among those traveling because they felt unsafe in the Islamic Republic of Iran (83%) and for economic reasons (84%). Pushback campaigns such as those initiated in late 2023 may play a role in the high level of uncertainty reported by respondents, especially those participating in longer-term movements who plan to move back to the Islamic Republic of Iran sometime in the future.

CHART 5: REASONS FOR MOVEMENT<sup>2</sup>

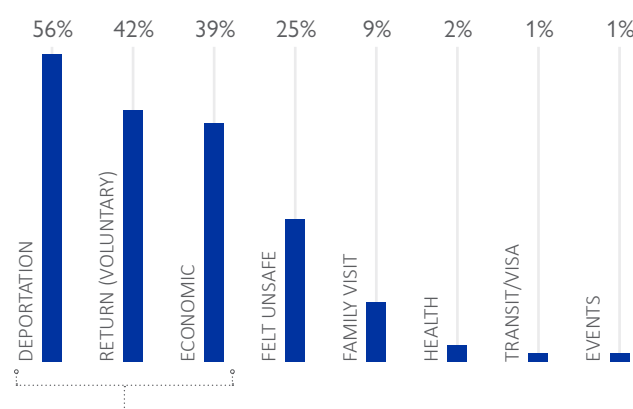


TABLE 1: TOP 3 REASONS BY LENGTH OF STAY

		TOP 3 REASONS FOR MOVEMENT		
		1. DEPORTATION	2. RETURN (VOLUNTARY)	3. ECONOMIC
LENGTH OF STAY IN IRN	Short-term	24%	10%	8%
	Medium-term	22%	20%	14%
	Long-term	54%	70%	78%
PLANNED LENGTH OF STAY	Short-term	2%	9%	1%
	Medium-term	1%	2%	1%
	Long-term	0%	0%	1%
	Indefinitely	43%	27%	14%
	Do not know	53%	62%	84%

1 Afghans Banned From 16 Provinces In Iran As Forced Exodus Continues. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. 4 December 2023. <https://www.rferl.org/a/iran-afghans-banned-provinces/32713320.html>

2 Questions on reasons for movement allowed respondents to choose multiple answers. As a result, percentages may exceed 100%.

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION

While half of respondents reported carrying an Afghan identification card (Tazkira), any other documentation was uncommon among those entering from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Sixteen per cent reported holding an Amayesh card (Foreign Nationals Temporary Residence Card), which allows Afghan nationals to live and apply for a work permit in a designated province for a certain period of validity in the Islamic Republic of Iran,<sup>1</sup> but only two per cent reported carrying valid visas. Less than one per cent of respondents reported holding a Hoshmand card, a smart ID card that allows foreign nationals access to services, including banks, and travel outside of the Islamic Republic of Iran.<sup>2</sup> Forty-one per cent of respondents did not carry any Afghan or Iranian documentation.<sup>3</sup>

Almost all those holding Amayesh cards had stayed long-term in the Islamic Republic of Iran, while those holding passports and visas had stayed short- or medium-term. Additionally, the majority of those entering through Abu Nasr Farahi carried valid passports or visas. Shorter-term movements are more often linked with possession of travel documents, a pattern also observed in the last quarter. Valid passport and visa holders are also more likely to report intentions to stay in Afghanistan short-term. At the same time, those with Amayesh cards or no documentation at all are most likely to plan to stay indefinitely. Accordingly, reasons linked with shorter-term movements, like family visits, health-related reasons, or events, were correlated with higher possession of passports and visas. Notably, however, the possession of a valid passport did not necessarily indicate possession of a valid visa for the Islamic Republic of Iran, with valid visa holders only making up around 23 per cent of valid passport holders.

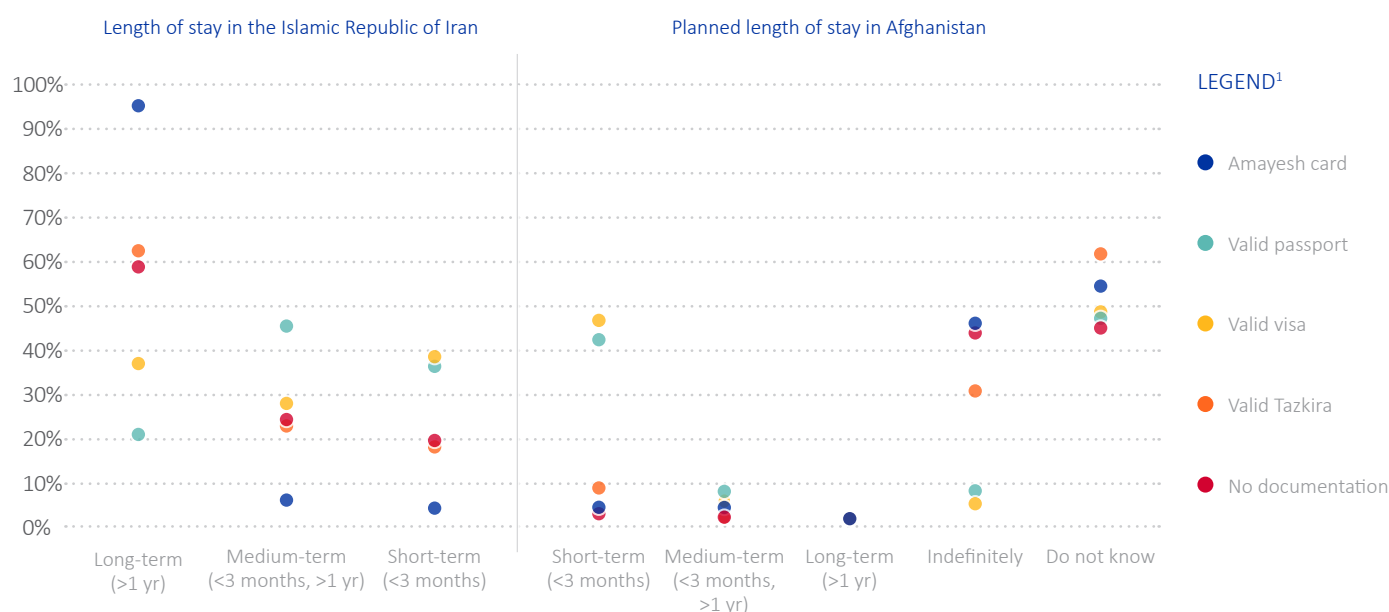
Accordingly, reasons correlated with longer-term movements, were more often correlated with possession of an Amayesh card or no documentation. Holding an Amayesh card was slightly higher among those who felt unsafe in the Islamic Republic of Iran (18%) and economically-motivated movements (20%), compared to deportations (12%), who were most likely to be carrying no documentation at all (51%). Some individuals (78 in total) reported both carrying a valid visa and having been deported. DTM enumerators noted that some deported respondents were even carrying work permits, emphasizing the Islamic Republic's severe deportation measures.

The rate of being completely undocumented was the same between male and female respondents (41%), but female respondents were more likely to possess Amayesh cards and male respondents were more likely to possess a valid passport.

TABLE 2: DOCUMENTATION BY SEX OF RESPONDENTS

DOCUMENTATION		
AMAYESH CARD	21%	13%
HOSHMAND CARD	0%	0%
VALID PASSPORT	5%	12%
VALID VISA	1%	3%
TAZKIRA	50%	51%
NO DOCUMENTATION	41%	41%

CHART 6: DOCUMENTATION TYPES BY LENGTH OF STAY ABROAD AND PLANNED LENGTH OF STAY



1 "Are you a person that UNHCR Iran can support?" UNHCR. <https://help.unhcr.org/iran/en/how-can-i-seek-asylum-in-iran/are-you-a-person-that-unhcr-iran-can-support/>.

2 Country Analysis: Iran. ACAPS. <https://www.acaps.org/en/countries/iran#>.

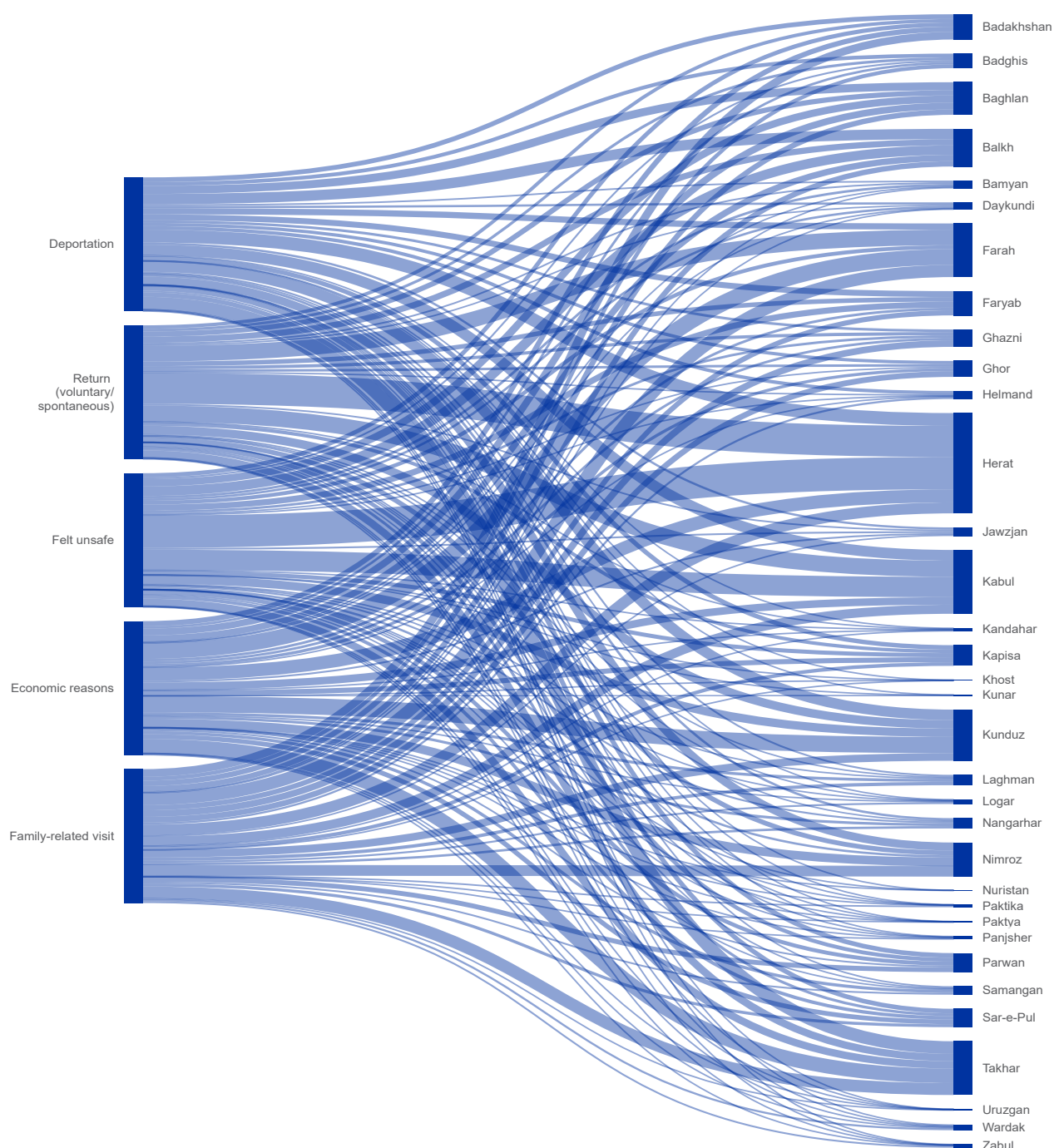
3 At some border crossings, children under 7 years old who are accompanied by other adult family members are permitted to cross without documentation.

## DESTINATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

The primary destination among surveyed individuals coming from the Islamic Republic of Iran is Herat province, which can be at least partially attributed to Herat being one of the major economic centers in Afghanistan as well as the border province where Islam Qala, the busiest crossing point on that border, is located. At Islam Qala, respondents' primary destinations are Herat (27%) and Kabul (14%). Respondents at Milak crossing point, on the other hand, have more diverse intended destinations. A fifth of respondents reported heading across the country to the northeast provinces of Kunduz and Takhar,

while only half that proportion plan to stay in the local border provinces of Farah and Nimroz (where Milak is located). This may be attributed to the relatively low population of Farah and Nimroz compared to the northeastern provinces,<sup>1</sup> as well as a potential corridor of economic migration to the Islamic Republic of Iran from the northeast via Milak crossing point. Abu Nasr Farahi, on the other hand, sees almost no variety in respondents' intended destinations, with 99 per cent choosing to stay in Farah, where the crossing point is located.

CHART 7: DESTINATION PROVINCES BY REASONS FOR MOVEMENT



<sup>1</sup> Afghanistan: Province Dashboard. World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/data/interactive/2019/08/01/afghanistan-interactive-province-level-visualization>.



## OUTFLOWS

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 7,872

MALE RESPONDENTS: 85%

FEMALE RESPONDENTS: 15%

### REASONS FOR MOVEMENT

Reasons for movement among individuals leaving Afghanistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran were heavily concentrated in economic motivations (66%) and family-related visits (30%), with small percentages also dedicated to events/tourism (13%), health reasons (8%), and traveling to the place of residence (7%)<sup>1</sup>. These proportions have stayed largely consistent since the first quarter of 2024. Declining population growth and a sizeable labour demand has motivated the migration of Afghan nationals to the Islamic Republic of Iran as supplementary workforce for decades, which, along with other drivers of migration, has created diaspora communities that motivate family visits such as the ones reported by respondents.<sup>2</sup> Respondents interviewed at all three crossing points all reported their final destination as the Islamic Republic of Iran; none indicated an intention to travel to a third country.

Larger discrepancies between male and female respondents and their reasons for migration existed among outgoing migrants compared to incoming ones. Female respondents were much more likely to be traveling for family visits, health-related reasons, events, or returning to their country of residence compared to male respondents, while male respondents constituted three fourths of the respondent cohort traveling for economic reasons (74%) compared to 15 per cent of female respondents. Individuals leaving for economic reasons are slightly more diverse this quarter than last, when male respondents made up almost 100 per cent of respondents leaving for economic reasons. DTM enumerators report that female respondents who cite economic reasons for movement do so primarily because they are accompanying husbands who will do work in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as opposed to female respondents going to do work themselves.

More than a third (40%) of respondents had never left Afghanistan prior to being interviewed. However, those going for an event or a family visit were more likely to be leaving Afghanistan for the first time (68% and 63%) compared to those going for education or economic reasons (31% and 28%). Additionally, those going for event reasons or visiting family were more likely to plan short-term stays in the Islamic Republic of Iran (86% and 71%) compared to those going for economic reasons (12%), who were more likely to plan medium-term stays (69%). Neither group had a large percentage of individuals planning to stay long-term and virtually no respondents planned to stay abroad indefinitely. Movements at Abu Nasr Farahi and Milak crossing points were more economically motivated compared to those at Islam Qala (85% and 76% versus 46%, respectively), which had higher percentages of those traveling for family visits (46%). The top three provinces of origin were Herat, Farah, and Ghazni.

### TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION

In stark contrast to incoming individuals, almost all outgoing individuals to the Islamic Republic of Iran reported holding a passport and visa. Notably, 29 per cent of outgoing respondents did not possess a Tazkira this quarter, an increase of 18 per cent in respondents not holding official Afghan IDs from last quarter. Most of those without a Tazkira were exiting through Abu Nasr Farahi. Around 80 per cent of respondents exiting through Islam Qala or Milak carried a Tazkira.

CHART 8: REASONS FOR MOVEMENT<sup>1</sup>

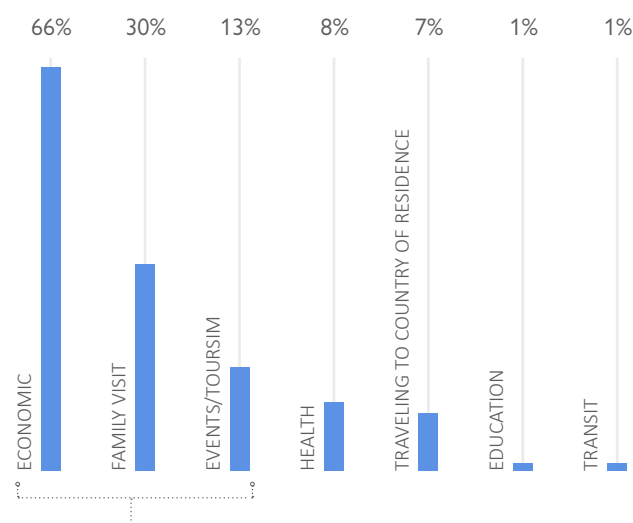


TABLE 3: TOP 3 REASONS BY LENGTH OF STAY

		1. ECONOMIC	2. FAMILY VISIT	3. EVENTS/TOURISM
LENGTH OF STAY IN AFG	Short-term	21%	13%	6%
	Medium-term	26%	8%	9%
	Long-term	25%	16%	17%
	Never left Afg before	28%	63%	68%
PLANNED LENGTH OF STAY	Short-term	12%	71%	86%
	Medium-term	69%	18%	10%
	Long-term	3%	1%	0%
	Indefinitely	0%	0%	0%
	Do not know	16%	10%	4%

<sup>1</sup> Questions on reasons for movement allowed respondents to choose multiple answers. As a result, percentages may exceed 100%.

<sup>2</sup> D'Souza, Shanthie Mariet. An Iranian Reversal on Afghan Refugees The Diplomat. 14 November 2023. <https://thediplomat.com/2023/11/an-iranian-reversal-on-afghan-refugees>.





## MOBILITY DYNAMICS: PAKISTAN

### INFLOWS

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 26,151

MALE RESPONDENTS: 69%

FEMALE RESPONDENTS: 31%

### REASONS FOR MOVEMENT

Following the announcement of the Government of Pakistan's "Illegal Foreigner's Repatriation Plan" and a wave of unprecedented waves of returnees in late 2023, media reports and speculation about a potential resumption of the repatriation process, targeting primarily Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, led to another bump in inflow volumes around mid-April (see page 1). Later that month, the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the repatriation process had not yet begun and that the validity of 1.3 million PoR cards for Afghan returnees had in fact been extended up to June 30. However, the speculation may have still had an effect on reasons for movement for people entering from Pakistan; "feeling unsafe in my location in Pakistan" was cited as a reason for movement by just over double the proportion of respondents in this quarter compared to last quarter (19% versus 8%). Those who reported feeling unsafe had almost always crossed through Torkham or Spin Boldak crossing points, the two largest assessed crossing points on the border with Pakistan and the only two connected to the National Highway. Like last quarter, however, the most common reason for travel was voluntary or spontaneous return (74%), followed by family-related visits (32%)<sup>1</sup>. Economic reasons and family-related visits were the most prominent reasons among individuals crossing through crossing points not connected to the National Highway (both 39%).

Differences between reasons for movement among male and female respondents were more notable in this quarter than the last. In the first quarter of 2024, the only major difference between male and female respondents was that females were 12 per cent more likely than males to have felt unsafe in the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this quarter, female respondents were more likely to cite both traveling for voluntary or spontaneous return (84% versus 69% among males) and feeling unsafe in Pakistan (31% versus 14% among males), while male respondents more often reported family-related visits (34% versus 29% among females) and economic reasons (11% versus 5% among females).

Those arriving from Pakistan were more likely to have stayed abroad short-term compared to those arriving from the Islamic Republic of Iran (36% versus 18%). This emphasizes the unique mobility dynamics at each border, wherein movements to and from Pakistan are more frequent and shorter-term compared to movement to and from the Islamic Republic of Iran, which tend to be longer-term except for at crossing points that are not connected to the National Highway, like Abu Nasr Farahi. Nevertheless, the most common length of stay among respondents arriving from Pakistan was over one year (46%), though this was far less common among those crossing at points not connected to the National Highway (12%). Notably, 100 per cent of those who cited feeling unsafe in Pakistan as a reason for movement reported having stayed abroad long-term.

Uncertainty regarding planned length of stay in Afghanistan was high among those crossing at "main" crossing points (65%) than the other crossing points (26%). News like that of potential repatriations in mid-April likely contribute to returning Afghan nationals' uncertainty about the future and the potential to remigrate to Pakistan eventually. Those travelling for economic reasons, education, or events, were generally more definitive about desires to stay only medium-term (62% among those who reported economic reasons) or short-term in Afghanistan (77% and 73% among those who reported education or events, respectively).

CHART 9: REASONS FOR MOVEMENT<sup>1</sup>

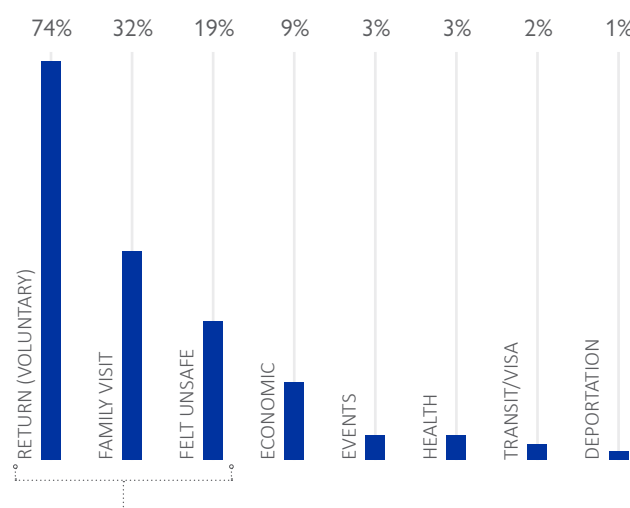


TABLE 4: TOP 3 REASONS BY LENGTH OF STAY

		1. RETURN (VOLUNTARY)	2. FAMILY VISIT	3. FELT UNSAFE
LENGTH OF STAY IN PAK	Short-term	8%	42%	0%
	Medium-term	10%	21%	0%
	Long-term	81%	37%	100%
PLANNED LENGTH OF STAY	Short-term	8%	16%	0%
	Medium-term	4%	17%	0%
	Long-term	0%	1%	0%
	Indefinitely	19%	13%	35%
	Do not know	68%	53%	64%

<sup>1</sup> Questions on reasons for movement allowed respondents to choose multiple answers. As a result, percentages may exceed 100%.



## TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION

Documentation rates were higher among incoming respondents from Pakistan compared to incoming respondents from the Islamic Republic of Iran. A little less than a quarter of respondents held no documentation at all, while 62 per cent possessed a Tazkira, 30 per cent a valid passport, 25 per cent a valid visa, and ten per cent a Proof of Residence (PoR) card<sup>1</sup> or something similar. Notably, while inflow from Pakistan experienced a brief increase following rumors of repatriation campaigns targeting ACC holders in mid-April, only two per cent of respondents actually held ACC cards in this quarter. This underlines the impact of these announcements on all Afghan nationals, regardless of documentation status.

Similarly to trends seen among inflows from the Islamic Republic of Iran, those holding valid passports and visas were more likely to have stayed short-term in Pakistan, while those without any documentation or holding PoR cards (or similar documentation) were more likely to have stayed long-term. Those crossing at border points not connected to the National Highway often only possessed a Tazkira, while those crossing at Torkham and Spin Boldak were more likely to be completely undocumented, holding passports and visas, or holding a PoR card. Uncertainty regarding length of stay in Afghanistan was highest among those holding PoR cards (85%), while passport and visa holders were the most likely to be definitive about planning to stay short-term (30% and 32%, respectively).

Those traveling for reasons related to family-visits, events, and educations were most likely to possess a passport or visa. Those traveling for economic and health reasons, however, often only held a Tazkira (83% and 86%, respectively). These may be part

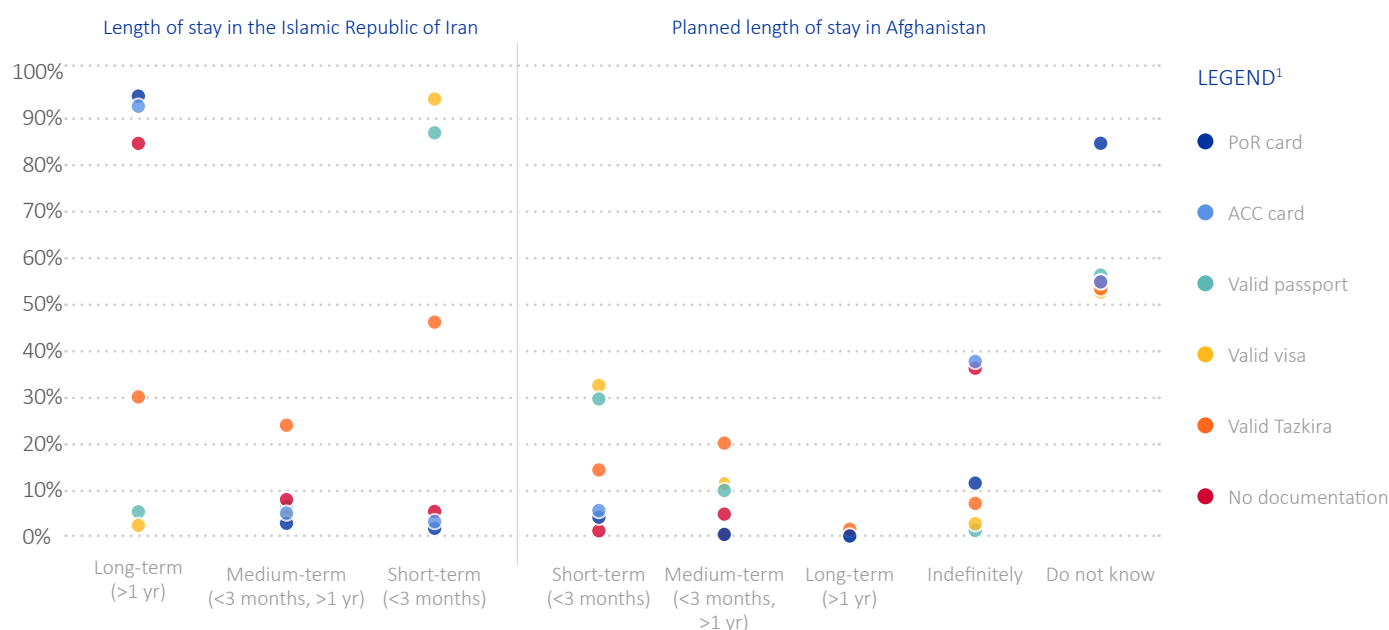
of circular movements for the purpose of medical tourism, for which Pakistan is the most popular destination for Afghans<sup>2</sup>, and participation in seasonal or short-term work related to agriculture or construction in the spring season. Possession of PoR cards is most common among those moving because they felt unsafe in Pakistan (17%) and voluntary or spontaneous returns (14%), a portion of whom are likely returnees who were living in Pakistan, hence were able to register for a PoR card.

Male respondents were more likely than female respondents to hold passports, visas, and Tazkiras, but female respondents were more likely to hold PoR cards or something similar (16% versus 8%). Still, female respondents were more than twice as likely as male respondents to be completely undocumented (39% versus 16%).

TABLE 5: DOCUMENTATION BY SEX OF RESPONDENTS

DOCUMENTATION		
POR CARD	16%	8%
ACC CARD	2%	2%
VALID PASSPORT	15%	36%
VALID VISA	13%	30%
TAZKIRA	45%	69%
NO DOCUMENTATION	39%	16%

CHART 10: DOCUMENTATION TYPES BY LENGTH OF STAY ABROAD AND PLANNED LENGTH OF STAY



<sup>1</sup> This also includes VRF and Partnerslip cards.

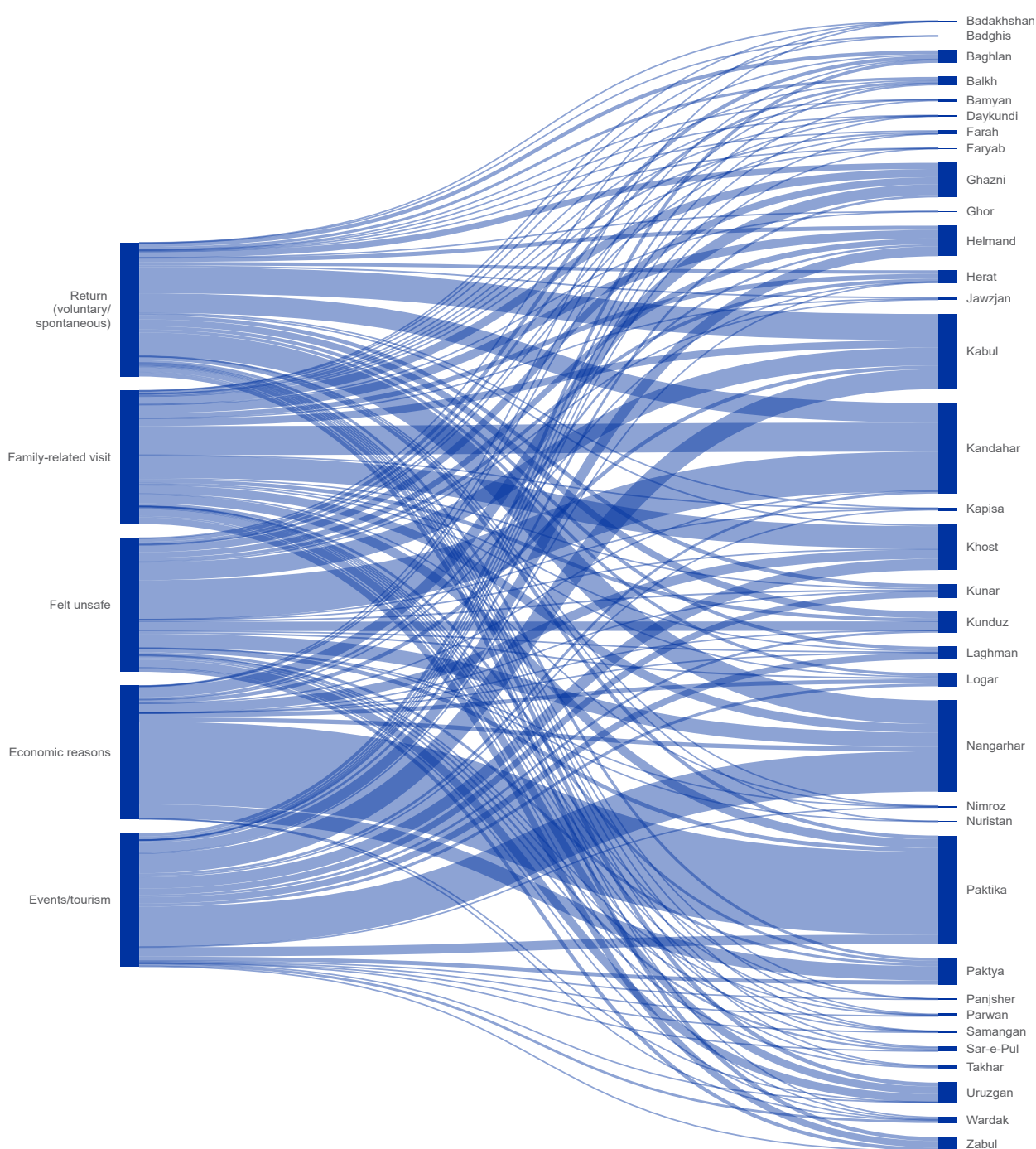
<sup>2</sup> Hakimi, Hameed and Dr. Price, Gareth. Reconnecting Afghanistan: Lessons from Cross-Border Engagement. Chatham House. 8 July 2019.

## DESTINATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

Primary intended destination provinces for respondents are mainly the border provinces hosting the crossing point at which they entered Afghanistan. At Spin Boldak crossing point, a little over a third of all respondents intend to go to Kandahar; at Angor Ada, 82 per cent intend to go to Paktika. At Ghulam Khan crossing point, equal percentages of respondents (44% each) intend to go to Khost, where Ghulam Khan is located, and Paktika, the neighboring province. Torkham crossing point see the largest proportion of respondents intend to go to Nangarhar (32%), where Torkham is located, but a close second is Kabul (29%), the capital of the country. Torkham is also the closest international crossing point to Kabul that is also connected to the

main highway. Destination provinces can be linked to reasons for movement by observing which motivations are most common at each crossing point. For example, the majority of those crossing at Torkham and Spin Boldak cite voluntary or spontaneous return as a reason for movement (88% and 99%). As a result, most of those who cited voluntary or spontaneous return intend to go to Nangarhar, Kabul, or Kandahar. Exceptionally, however, while much of Ghulam Khan's respondent composition includes economic movement, though those traveling for economic reasons are more dominantly going to Paktika province (61%) compared to Khost province (7%), where Ghulam Khan is located.

CHART 11: DESTINATION PROVINCES BY REASONS FOR MOVEMENT





## OUTFLOWS

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS: 15,408

MALE RESPONDENTS: 79%

FEMALE RESPONDENTS: 21%

### REASONS FOR MOVEMENT

Reasons for movement among individuals leaving Afghanistan to Pakistan were mainly family-related visits (49%) and health reasons (44%), with smaller percentages also dedicated to events/tourism (23%), economic reasons (10%), and traveling to the place of residence (7%)<sup>1</sup>. The diaspora, which is currently estimated at 3.7 million Afghan nationals in Pakistan, is a main driver for family-related visits.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Pakistan is considered one of the most popular destinations for Afghan medical travelers despite higher costs for treatment. In particular, the Pakistani city of Peshawar across from Nangarhar province, which hosts a large number of Afghan diaspora after the Soviet invasion in 1979, sees high volumes of Afghans seeking medical treatment.<sup>3</sup> While reasons for movement were mainly consistent from last quarter to this quarter, traveling for events was 13 per cent more common in this quarter, perhaps due to Eid occurring in April and June. Virtually all respondents interviewed at the border with Pakistan reported their final destination as Pakistan; a few individuals' final destination was the Islamic Republic of Iran. Female respondents leaving to Pakistan were more likely to be traveling for family related reasons (58%) compared to male respondents (46%), while male respondents constituted almost the entirety of the respondent cohort traveling for economic reasons (97%).

Over a third of respondents had never left Afghanistan prior to being interviewed (37%). This proportion stayed relatively consistent among respondents going for different reasons, with only those traveling to their country of residence (moving to Pakistan, in this case) being slightly less likely to have left the country before (23%). Regardless of their reason for movement, most students, workers, medical tourists, and family visitors intended to stay in Pakistan for less than three months, emphasizing the frequency of short-term movements around the Pakistan border compared to the border with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The most common provinces of origin are Nangarhar, Kabul, and Khost. Much of the outflow from Nangarhar and Kabul come from Torkham border point, while much of the outflow from Khost comes from Ghulam Khan. Kandahar province is the fourth most common origin province, mainly driven by outflows at Spin Boldak crossing point.

### TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION

In contrast to incoming individuals, most individuals leaving for Pakistan reported holding a passport and visa (77%) or a Tazkira (81%). Two thirds of those not carrying a visa crossed at Ghulam Khan, the busiest assessed crossing point not connected to the main highway while nearly all of those carrying a valid visa crossed at Torkham or Spin Boldak.

CHART 12: REASONS FOR MOVEMENT<sup>1</sup>

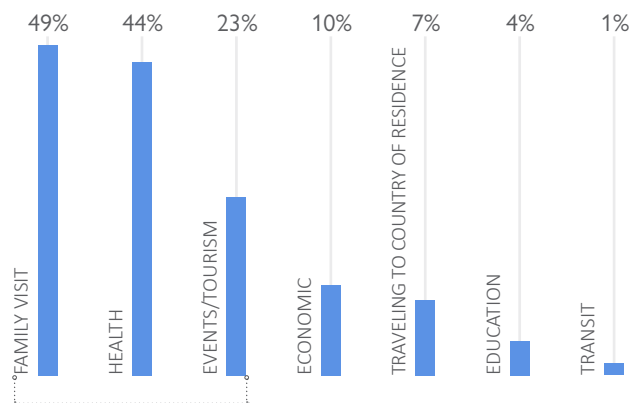


TABLE 6: TOP 3 REASONS BY LENGTH OF STAY

		1. FAMILY VISIT	2. HEALTH	3. EVENTS/TOURISM
LENGTH OF STAY IN AFG	Short-term	25%	19%	18%
	Medium-term	18%	13%	12%
	Long-term	24%	24%	31%
	Never left Afg before	33%	43%	39%
PLANNED LENGTH OF STAY	Short-term	66%	85%	70%
	Medium-term	13%	2%	2%
	Long-term	1%	0%	0%
	Indefinitely	0%	0%	0%
	Do not know	20%	13%	28%



Photo: Temporary camp accommodating Afghan returnees near Torkham border crossing. © IOM 2024/NOORI Sayed Nazir

<sup>1</sup> Questions on reasons for movement allowed respondents to choose multiple answers. As a result, percentages may exceed 100%.

<sup>2</sup> Regional Refugee Response Plan for Afghanistan Situation 2023. UNHCR.

<sup>3</sup> Hakimi, Hameed and Dr. Price, Gareth. Reconnecting Afghanistan: Lessons from Cross-Border Engagement. Chatham House. 8 July 2019.





## MOBILITY DYNAMICS: CONCLUSION

- The number of inflows and outflows increased since last quarter. When accounting only for the four main border points, since they are the only one that have been monitored during the entirety of both quarters, inflows increased by around 30 per cent while outflows increased by around 19%. It is important to note that these trends only account for crossing points monitored by DTM, meaning they may not account for the entire inflow and outflow volumes of Afghanistan. Larger increases were expected, however, following reports of the resumption of repatriation processes by Pakistan in mid-April. While the repatriation process did not, in fact, resume during this quarter, inflows still spiked slightly around mid-April.
- Most of the increase in both inflow and outflow volumes is motivated by movement at the border with the Islamic Republic of Iran. When accounting only for the four main crossing points, inflows from the Islamic Republic of Iran saw a 32 per cent increase from last quarter compared to 23 per cent from Pakistan. Similarly, outflows to the Islamic Republic of Iran saw a 26 per cent increase while those from Pakistan saw a 14 per cent increase.
- Similarly to last quarter, inflows and outflows to and from the Islamic Republic of Iran were dominated by men (>90%), while inflows and outflows to and from Pakistan saw more diversity (around 60% adult males) according to the FMC. These proportions remained consistent throughout the first six months of 2024 among assessed crossing points. For a month-by-month breakdown on sex demographics, see Annexes 1 through 4 on page 12.
- Reasons for movement stayed largely consistent between this quarter and last quarter. Inflows from the Islamic Republic of Iran were mainly motivated by deportation, voluntary or spontaneous return, and economic reasons. Inflows from Pakistan were mainly motivated by voluntary or spontaneous return and family visits. Feeling unsafe at the place of origin was also a prominent factor for those coming from both countries. Additionally, outflow reasons to the Islamic Republic of Iran were more economically motivated, while reasons to go to Pakistan were more motivated by family visits, health reasons, and events. The persistence of these trends concerning reasons for travel reinforce the distinction between movement types on either border: short-term movements are generally more common along the border with Pakistan while long-term movements are more common along the border with the Islamic Republic of Iran. Notably, however, long-term movements are also more common and the main crossing points that connect to the National Highway, while shorter-term movements are more common at crossing points not connected to the National Highway.
- Compared to last quarter, there were larger differences among male and female respondents regarding their reasons for movement, particularly among respondents entering Afghanistan from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Most notably, female respondents were more likely to cite economic reasons compared to male respondents (45% compared to 36%), even though among outgoing respondents to the Islamic Republic of Iran, male respondents make up the majority of those moving for economic reasons. However, the rate of female respondents who are leaving Afghanistan to the Islamic Republic of Iran for economic reasons increased by nearly 15 per cent this quarter. DTM enumerators noted that many of these women cited economic reasons because they were travelling with husbands or male family members who planned to work in the Islamic Republic of Iran, as opposed to the women themselves traveling for work.
- Those participating in longer-term movements were more likely to cross at main crossing points, while crossing points not connected to the National Highway were dominated by shorter-term movements. This trend is also linked to documentation type. DTM was able to collect more detailed data regarding documentation in this quarter, adding options for respondents who possessed long-term residential documentation like Amayesh, Hoshmand, PoR, or ACC cards. Findings showed that respondents carrying these documents, as well as undocumented respondents, were more likely to have used main crossing points and participated in longer-term movements to and from Afghanistan. Meanwhile, those holding travel documents (passports and visas) were more likely to have used other crossing points and participate in shorter-term movements.

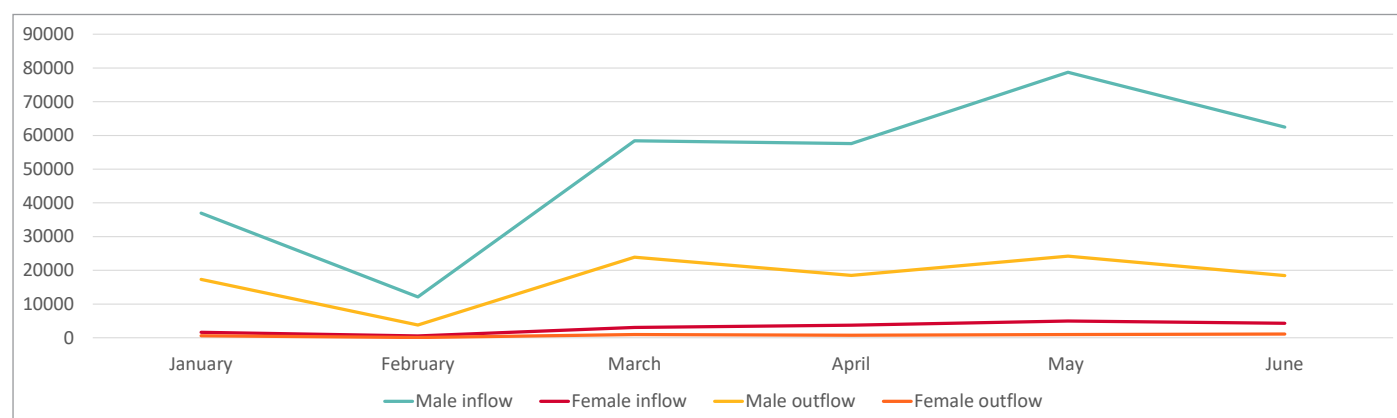
## EXPECTATIONS

- Movements for reasons such as work, family, and health are expected to stay relatively stable for the following quarter. However, movements related to deportation and voluntary return may be affected by shifts in political and security contexts in Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, or Pakistan. On the Pakistan side, discussions to extend the validity of PoR card holders have taken place as well as advocacy for the extension of ACC holders by IOM.

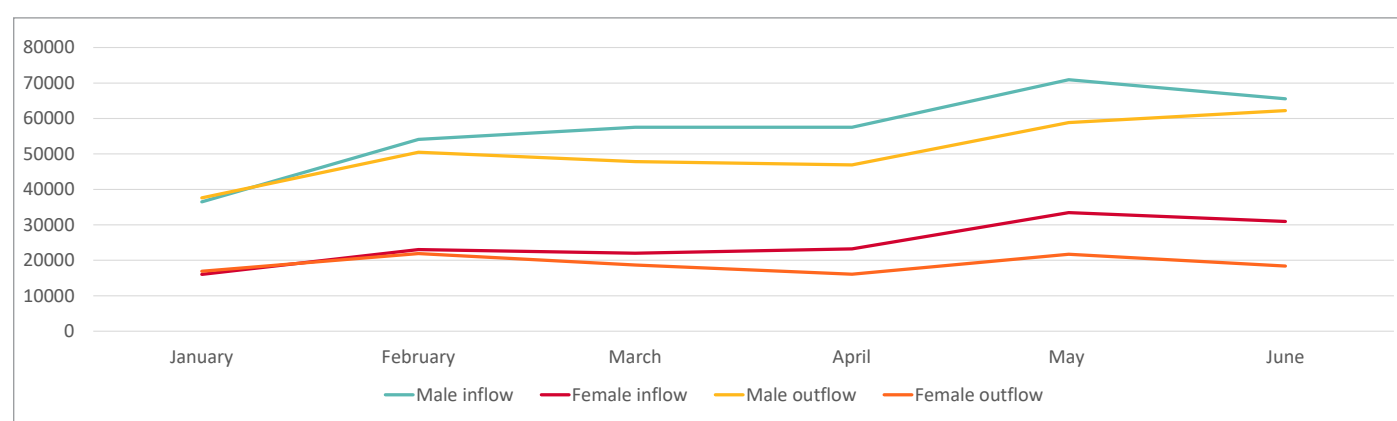


## ANNEXES

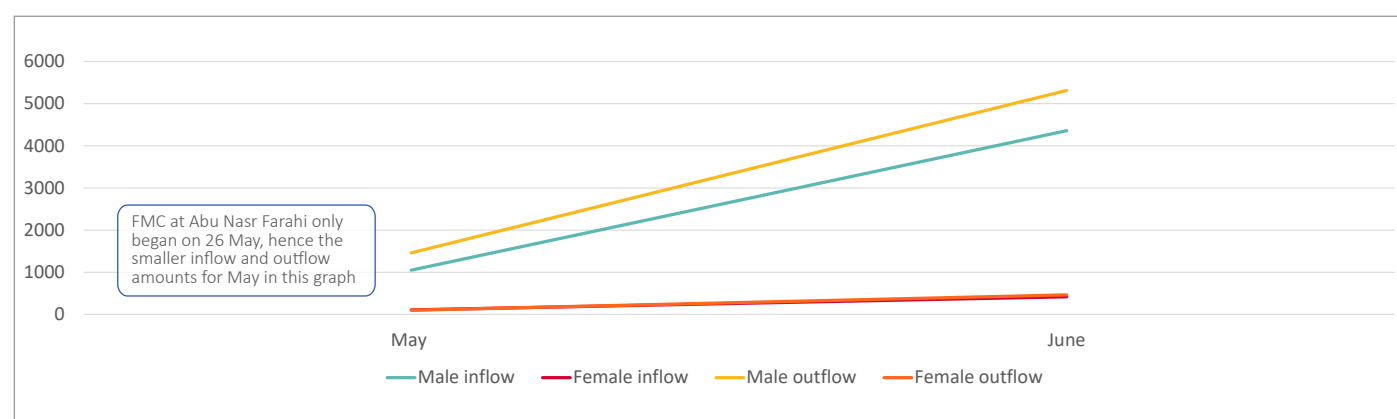
### ANNEX 1. DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN AT MAIN CROSSING POINTS<sup>1</sup> WITH THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



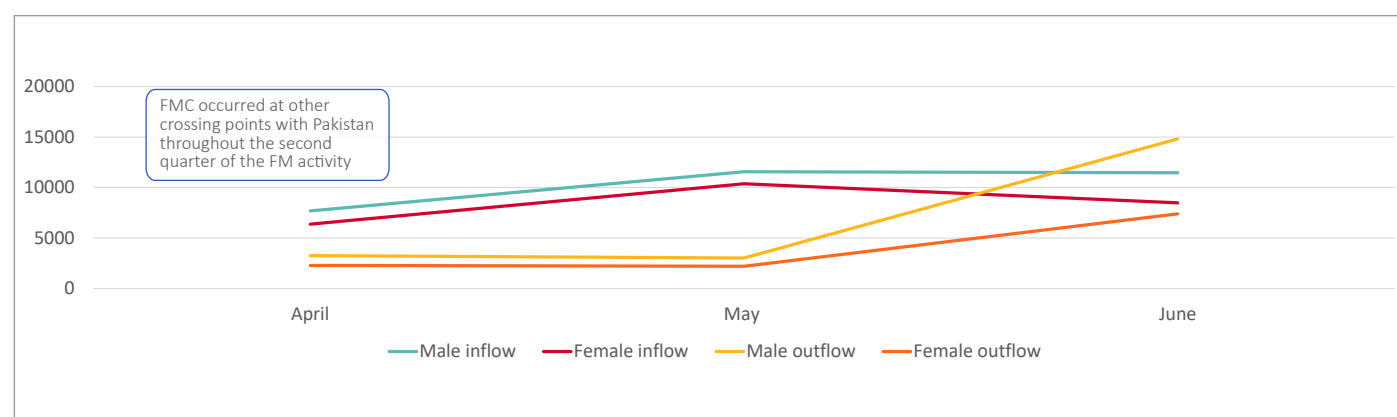
### ANNEX 2. DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN AT MAIN CROSSING POINTS<sup>1</sup> WITH PAKISTAN



### ANNEX 3. DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN AT OTHER CROSSING POINTS<sup>1</sup> WITH THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



### ANNEX 4. DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN AT OTHER CROSSING POINTS<sup>1</sup> WITH PAKISTAN



<sup>1</sup> Four out of the ten total assessed crossing points are “main” crossing points, meaning connected to the National Highway: Islam Qala, Milak, Spin Boldak, and Abu Nasr Farahi. The six “other” crossing points are not connected to the National Highway.