2023 PAKISTAN FLOW MONITORING OF AFGHAN NATIONALS annual report





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Disclaimer: This document was produced with financial assistance of the Governments of Italy, Canada, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the European Union, the United States Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the aforementioned donors.

Cover photo:

[Shahzad Asad/IOM 2023] Afghan families are taking their household belongings back to Afghanistan through the Torkham border (November 2023).

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ACRONYMS

ACC	Afghan Citizen Card
BCP	Border Crossing Point
BM	Border Monitor
CB-PAHA	Cross-Border Post Arrival Humanitarian Assistance
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
FM	Flow Monitoring
FMC	Flow Monitoring Count
FMR	Flow Monitoring Registry
HoH	Head of Household
IFRP	Illegal Foreigner's Repatriation Plan
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IVAS	Identification Verification Alert System
PKR	Pakistani Rupee
PoR	Proof of Registration
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	US Dollar

DEFINITIONS

DEFINITIONS OF DOCUMENTATION CATEGORIES OF AFGHAN NATIONALS IN PAKISTAN

1. Proof of Registration (PoR) – PoR cards are identification cards issued by the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), with technical support from other stakeholders. PoR cards facilitate access to various services including education, healthcare, banking and property rental. PoR holders can return to Afghanistan but if they then want to enter Pakistan they require a valid Pakistan visa.

2. Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) – ACCs were issued by NADRA, with technical support from other stakeholders, from 2017 to 2018 to undocumented Afghans residing in Pakistan. This card *only* protects from deportation to Afghanistan. ACC holders can return to Afghanistan but if they then want to enter Pakistan they require a valid Pakistan visa. In addition, ACC cards cannot be renewed, and they do not allow the cardholder to register children born after initial registration under it, whereas this is possible for PoR holders.

OTHER DEFINITIONS

Deportation (expulsion) – A formal act or conduct attributable to a State by which a non national is compelled to leave the territory of that State.¹

3. Other types of valid documentation – Any other type of valid documentation that does not fall within the two other categories (PoR card and ACC). For example, individuals of Afghan origin who have a passport with a valid Pakistan visa.

4. Undocumented and invalid documentation – This category includes individuals of Afghan origin residing in Pakistan who: a) do not have a document to stay in Pakistan, b) only have a Tazkira (Afghan national identity card), c) have PoR cards valid up to 2021 or, d) only have an Afghan passport and/or visa that is expired.

Facilitated return (migration) – Regular return (migration) that has been encouraged or supported by State policies and practices or by the direct assistance of international organizations to make the act of migration and residence easier, more transparent and more convenient.²

¹ International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2019). *IOM Glossary (No. 34*). Available <u>here</u> (Publication date: 18 June 2019) ² Ibid.

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

ABOUT FLOW MONITORING (FM)

The International Organization for Migration's (IOM) FM is used to collect information on the volume and basic characteristics of populations transiting during observation hours at selected Border Crossing Points (BCPs).

In Pakistan, FM has been established since 2016 and provides key insights into the overall migration trends of Afghan nationals

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) team and authorities identify strategic locations for the establishment of monitoring locations/points where data collection will take place. IOM's DTM team in Pakistan identified several key transit locations, which are located near entry/exit points. These locations are Torkham (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Chaman, Badini and Bahramcha (Balochistan). Badini

ENUMERATORS AND RESPONDENTS

In 2023, IOM had 14 border monitors (BMs) present at the aforementioned BCPs. In Torkham and Chaman, BMs are located at the exit point of a bus terminal where returnees are awaiting customs clearance. In Badini and Bahramcha. BMs are located within the border area. In Badini, BMs are located 1,200 to 1,300 meters from the zero point, which marks the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Conversely, in Bahramcha, BMs are situated 900 meters from the zero point.

To retrieve information on returnees' profiles and mobility patterns, BMs use a Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR) form to interview heads of households of Afghan families returning to Afghanistan.

LIMITATIONS AND CONSTRAINTS

Data collected represents the situation at specific points of transit during the hours when the border is open for movements and aims to provide a detailed understanding of the volume and characteristics of population flows transiting through the BCPs. FM does not intend to provide a total number of unique transiting populations, but rather to estimate summary population flows and their characteristics. As such, individuals returning to Afghanistan multiple times over an observed period may be captured multiple times.

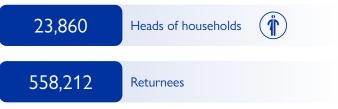
Figure 1. Map of border area with covered BCPs



returning to Afghanistan, as well as an overview of the profiles of Afghan returnees and their mobility patterns, exploring routes, vulnerabilities, demographic and social characteristics. The exercise also helps identifying gaps and priorities in the provision of assistance along migration routes and at destinations.

and Bahramcha are two new BCPs that were added in December 2023 (see figure 1). Since 15 September 2023, the data presented in this report is harmonized with those from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), who also cover Ghulam Khan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).

During 2023, BMs interviewed 23,860 heads of households, while 558,212 Afghan nationals were identified returning to Afghanistan. This is obtained through a household registry with all family members travelling with the head of household, including gender/ age, documentation status and various other breakdowns.



The flow of Afghan returnees is also influenced by various border management measures implemented by Pakistani authorities, as well as incidents such as crossfires, heavy rains, and public protests that lead to partial or complete closure of the border.

It should be 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 household. This will be clearly indicated with a N-statement and the icon used above.

Table 1. Covered BCPs and their location in Pakistan (p	province and district)
---	------------------------

	BORDER CROSSING POINT	PROVINCE	DISTRICT
1.	Torkham	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Khyber
2.	Ghulam Khan	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	North Waziristan
3.	Badini	Balochistan	Killa Saifullah
4.	Chaman	Balochistan	Chaman
5.	Bahramcha	Balochistan	Chagai

Disclaimer: The dotted line represents approximately the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM or United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

SOURCES OF DATA AND PROCESS OF DATA HARMONIZATION

IOM OUTFLOW DATA

DTM Pakistan, UNHCR Pakistan, and IOM Afghanistan's Cross Border Post-Arrival Humanitarian Assistance (CB-PAHA) programme use different methodologies to collect data on various demographic subsets of individuals returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan (outflows). The following flow chart illustrates the relationships between the subsets and how IOM coordinates its various methodologies to develop a robust and comprehensive information management database on return movements.

	Cross-Border Mobility government of pakistan	Through official government sources, DTM Pakistan receives data on total incoming and outgoing travellers, disaggregated by nationality (Afghan, Pakistani and third-country nationals) and documentation status. DTM Pakistan does not use data on incoming travellers for its FM products as it also covers Pakistani nationals and those travelling daily. Data on outgoing travellers is utilized (see step 2), however, only for Afghan nationals who intend to return and live in Afghanistan for an extended period of time.
1	Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR) Iom pakistan	DTM Pakistan collects the number Afghan nationals, both undocumented and ACC holders, returning to Afghanistan via the Badini, Bahramcha, Chaman (Balochistan) and Torkham (Khyber Pakhtunkwa) BCPs. Returnees are classified as Afghans who intend to return and intend to live in Afghanistan for an extended period of time as opposed to those travelling for trade or to visit Afghanistan temporarily. ³ This exercise is referred to as Flow Monitoring Registry (FMR). As part of this exercise, DTM Pakistan collects data from heads of households at the border.
2	Flow Monitoring Count (FMC) government of pakistan (ivas)	Returnees that were not counted by DTM Pakistan during the FMR exercise are added to the dataset through the Government of Pakistan's Identification Verification Alert System (IVAS). In addition, data collected through DTM Pakistan's FMR exercise is triangulated with the figure identified through IVAS which serves as DTM Pakistan's FMC.
3	CB-PAHA (IOM AFGHANISTAN)	IOM CB-PAHA assists undocumented Afghan returnees in reception centres located close to the Chaman and Torkham BCPs on the Afghanistan side of the border. The additional returnees covered by CB-PAHA accounts for those Afghan nationals returning circumventing the customs route, which infrequently occurs. After comparing data collected by DTM Pakistan and CB-PAHA in Afghanistan, DTM Pakistan selects the higher number to include in the dataset based on a daily cross-comparison of both data sources.
4	UNHCR Pakistan Unhcr pakistan	UNHCR in Pakistan also collects the number of Afghan nationals, specifically those holding POR cards and those returning through facilitated return, returning to Afghanistan via the same borders covered by DTM Pakistan as well as Ghulam Khan BCP in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. After comparing data collected by UNHCR and DTM Pakistan, DTM Pakistan selects the higher number to include in the dataset based on a daily cross-comparison of both data sources.
5	Total Afghan Returnees IOM PAKISTAN	After coordination with the different programmes, DTM Pakistan arrives at a total number of Afghan returnees which represents Afghan nationals who returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan through five BCPs, including Badini, Bahramcha, Chaman (Balochistan), Torkham and Ghulam Khan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), and have both documented (PoR and ACC holders) and undocumented status, excluding those travelling for trade or visiting Afghanistan temporarily. The final database is then shared by DTM Pakistan with DTM Afghanistan and UNHCR in Pakistan and Afghanistan to ensure streamlining of return figures. As such, all figures reported by the agencies on both sides of the border are fully harmonized.

³ This is possible due to DTM enumerators being situated at the bus terminal through which all Afghan returnees are processed by immigration authorities.

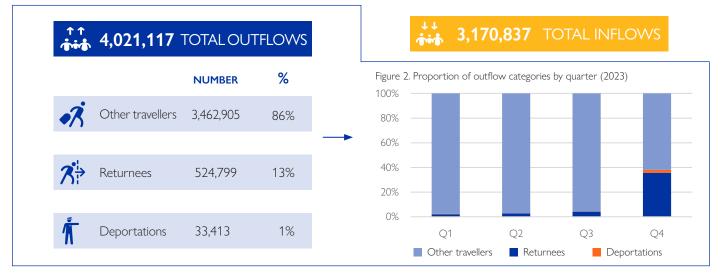
CROSS-MOBILITY FIGURES

IOM Pakistan obtains cross-mobility figures from official government sources, who provide the total number of inflows and outflows, disaggregated by nationality (Afghan, Pakistani and third-country nationals) and documentation status.

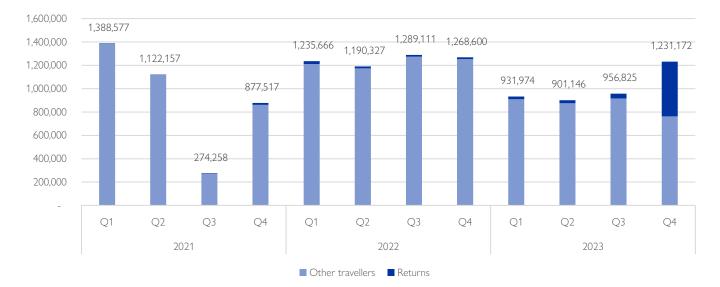
The total outflow figure encompasses the total number of other travellers, supplied by official government sources, the total returns of Afghan nationals (excluding daily travellers), collected by DTM Pakistan, and the total number of deportations. DTM Pakistan does

not utilize the figures for inflows or outgoing other travellers in this report or for further analysis. This is because this data also includes Pakistani nationals, third-country nationals, and daily travellers, whereas this report concentrates on Afghan nationals intending to return and reside in Afghanistan for an extended period.

These numbers are presented here solely for information purposes and to provide context for return figures in comparison to the total inflows and outflows.







Overall, the data for 2023 indicates that total outflows exceeded total inflows by over one million. Among the total outflows, 3,462,905 other travellers were recorded, constituting 86 per cent, while returnees accounted for 13 per cent, totalling 524,799 individuals, and deportation for one per cent or 33,413 individuals.

When looking closer to quarter based results for 2023 (see figure 2) it shows that only a small proportion of outflows were returnees who account for an average of three per cent of total outflows. In Q4, returnees account for an average of 38 per cent, a sharp increase, which is more than tenfold compared to the average of the first

three quarters. This sharp increase coincides with the announcement and enactment of the "Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan (IFRP)".⁴

Comparing the 2023 results, and especially Q4, to previous years (2021 and 2022) (see figure 3) shows a stark contrast of the proportion of returns to the total outflows compared to any other quarter in 2022 and 2023, demonstrating the impact of the IFRP on the return of Afghans who intend to return and live in Afghanistan for an extended period.

⁴ On 3 October 2023 Pakistani authorities formally announced the implementation of the "Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan" ("IFRP"), demanding that all undocumented foreigners residing in Pakistan leave the country by 1 November 2023, or face deportation.

Figure 4. Total outflows and inflows and percentage of returns out of total outflows in 2023



Throughout 2023 (see figure 4), both inflow and outflow numbers remained closely aligned, fluctuating between 300 and 400 thousand individuals. However, a significant shift occurred from September 2023, with the announcement of the IFRP. Subsequently, outflows experienced a notable surge, peaking in November 2023, with an increase of more than 200 thousand individuals following the enactment of the IFRP. During this period, nearly half (46%) of the total outflows comprised Afghan nationals returning to Afghanistan,

contrasting with the typical proportion of Afghan returnees, which usually ranges between one and four per cent of the total outflows. Conversely, total inflows saw a marked decrease from September 2023, reaching its lowest point in November 2023. The IFRP also resulted in border closures for regular travellers and traders, also referred to as "other travellers". This not only impacted return numbers of Afghan nationals but also disrupted the movements of these individuals across the border.



[Shahzad Asad/IOM 2023] Afghan families and individuals awaiting customs clearance at the Chaman border (November 2023).



RETURN FIGURES

In 2023, DTM Pakistan identified 558,212 returns. These returns encompass two categories: returnees, which are Afghan nationals who returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan through five BCPs (see page 5), and have both documented (PoR and ACC holders) and undocumented status, excluding those traveling for trade or visiting Afghanistan temporarily, and deportations. Among the 558,212 returns, 524,799 individuals (94%) were returnees, while 33,413 individuals (6%) were deportations.

Figure 5 illustrates the trend of total returns, returnees, and deportations in 2023. The trend indicates a significant bump starting from September 2023 when the IFRP was announced. Both returns and deportations experience a sharp increase from September onwards, reaching their peak in November 2023, coinciding with the enactment of the IFRP (see also figure 5.1 for this specific period). Before this bump, returnees, and deportations remained relatively stable, with occasional minor fluctuations typically attributed to specific events such as border closures or holidays.



Total returns (returnees + deportations)

		2023	2022
ૠ	Total returns (returnees + deportations)	558,212	74,132
X:	Total returnees	524,799 (94%)	71,155 (96%)
Í	Total deportations	33,413 (6%)	2,977 (4%)

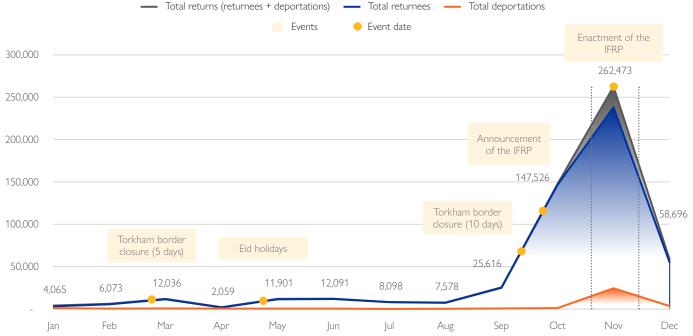
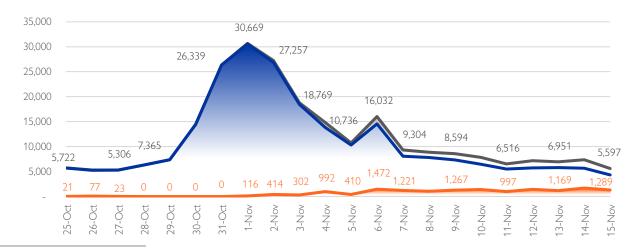


Figure 5.1. Inset graph – Total returns of Afghan nationals between 25 October and 15 November 2023



⁵ As of 15 September 2023, IOM and UNHCR have harmonized their flow monitoring data, therefore, data prior to 15 September 2023 does not include facilitated PoR returns or PoR holders.

DOCUMENTATION CATEGORIES OF AFGHAN RETURNEES

Undocumented/Invalid documents 470,219 individuals	Facilitated PoR returns 24,951 individuals
ACC holders	PoR Holders
16,833 individuals	12,796 individuals

Table 2. Documentation categories of Afghan returnees in 2023

months	TOTAL RETURNS	%	INVALID DOC. UNDOCUMENT- ED	%	ACC HOLDERS	%	FACILITATED PoR RETURNS ⁶	%	PoR HOLDERS⁵	%
January	3,030	100%	2,926	97%	104	3%	-	0%	-	0%
February	5,570	100%	5,023	90%	547	10%	-	0%	-	0%
March	11,402	100%	10,199	89%	1,203	11%	-	0%	-	0%
April	1,709	100%	1,640	96%	69	4%	-	0%	-	0%
May	11,400	100%	10,344	91%	1,056	9%	-	0%	-	0%
June	11,713	100%	9,550	82%	2,163	18%	-	0%	-	0%
July	7,958	100%	6,678	84%	1,280	16%	-	0%	-	0%
August	7,254	100%	6,422	89%	832	11%	-	0%	-	0%
September	24,991	100%	22,777	91%	1,237	5%	660	3%	317	1%
October	146,567	100%	140,862	96%	2,489	2%	2,057	1%	1,159	1%
November	237,967	100%	215,449	91%	4,844	2%	9,388	4%	8,286	3%
December	55,238	100%	38,349	69%	1,009	2%	12,846	23%	3,034	5%
GRAND TOTAL	524,799	100%	470,219	90%	16,833	3%	24,951	5%	12,796	2%

Table 3. Types of invalid documentation/undocumented in Pakistan in 2023

	TYPES OF INVALID DOC./ UNDOCUMENTED	TOTAL	%
1.	No documents	393,811	84%
2.	Tazkira	68,753	15%
3.	Passport with lapsed visa	4,391	1%
4.	Passport but no visa	1,359	0%
5.	Expired PoR card issued in 2010 or earlier	1,225	0%
6.	ACC token holder ⁷	680	0%
7.	GRAND TOTAL	470,219	100%

The vast majority of Afghan returnees are either undocumented or hold invalid documentation, totaling 470,219 individuals or 90 per cent. The remaining categories collectively only constitute 10 per cent, with facilitated PoR (Proof of Registration) returns representing the largest category (5%), followed by Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders (3%) and PoR holders (2%). Throughout the year, undocumented Afghans represent the largest documentation category of returnees, however, by the end of the year (December 2023), the proportion of documented returnees (PoR holders, facilitated PoR returns and ACC holders) had increased slightly.

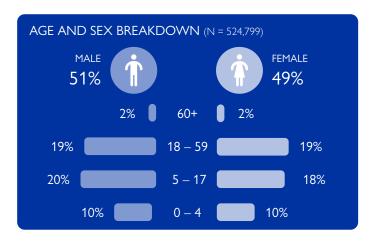
DTM Pakistan and other partners also collect information on the types of invalid documentation or undocumented status. Eighty-four per cent of undocumented Afghans do not possess any type of documentation, while 15 per cent have a Tazkira (Afghan national identity card). One per cent holds a passport with a lapsed visa. Other types of invalid documentation, reported by a limited number of returnees, include having a passport but no visa, possessing an expired PoR card issued in 2010 or earlier, and being an ACC token holder.

⁶ As of 15 September 2023, IOM and UNHCR have harmonized their flow monitoring data, therefore, data prior to 15 September 2023 does not include facilitated PoR returns or PoR holders.

⁷ ACC token holders are Afghans who applied for an ACC but did not collect their card.



DEMOGRAPHICS AND VULNERABILITIES



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VULNERABILITIES (N = 524,799)

The age breakdown reveals that the majority of Afghans returning to Afghanistan consists of individuals between 5 and 17 years of age (38%) and individuals between 18 and 59 years of age (38%). Twenty per cent of returnees were children aged four years and below. Only four per cent were elderly aged above 60. Overall, there are slightly more male returnees than female ones, comprising 51 per cent and 49 per cent respectively.

In 2023, four per cent of returnees were identified as vulnerable. Among these vulnerable individuals, the largest groups include chronically ill persons (40%) and elderly (60+) (32%). Additionally, DTM Pakistan identified persons with a physical disability (PwD; 10%), widowed females (7%), pregnant women (4%), unaccompanied minors (2%) and individuals struggling with drug addiction (2%). Three per cent belong to other vulnerable categories.⁸ In 2023, a total of 148,916 children under the age of 10, who crossed the border into Afghanistan, received polio vaccinations. This figure represents half (50%) of all children under 18 years of age who crossed the border during the same period.





[Shahzad Asad/IOM 2023] Intensive outflow of Afghan families and individuals at the Torkham border (November 2023).

⁸ Other include divorced women and other special cases.



AREAS OF ORIGIN AND INTENDED DESTINATION

AREAS OF ORIGIN AND DESTINATION (N = 23,860) (\uparrow)

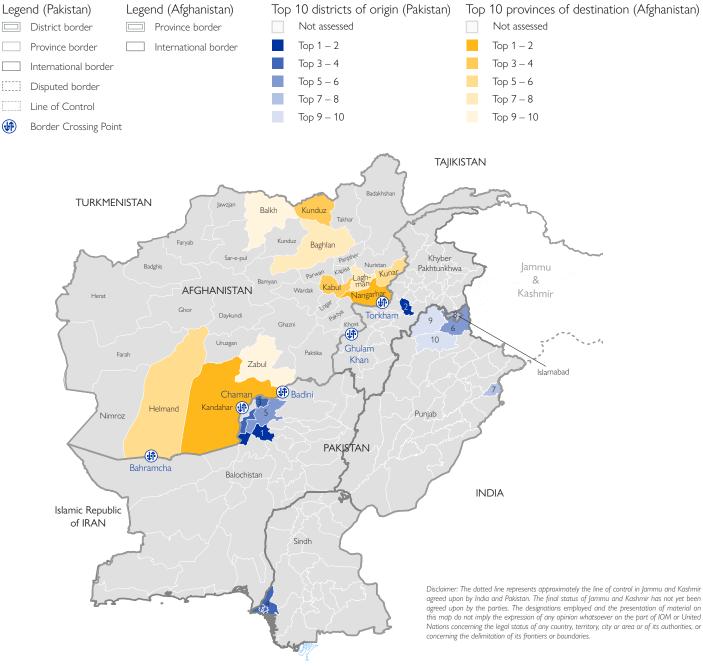


Table 4. Top 10 districts of origin in Pakistan

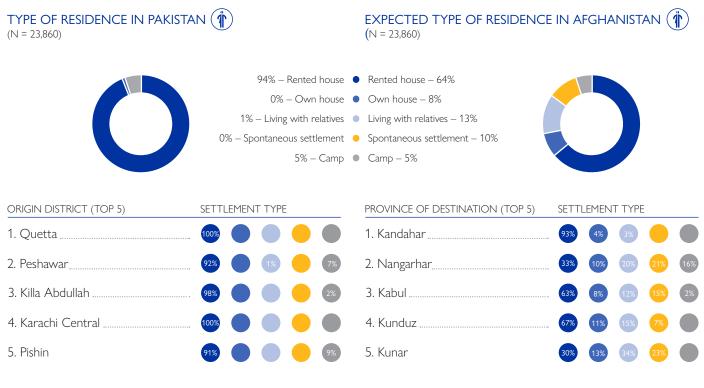
	DISTRICTS OF ORIGIN (TOP 10)	PROVINCE	NUMBER OF RETURNS	%
1.	Quetta	Balochistan	106,060	19%
2.	Peshawar	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	100,478	18%
3.	Killa Abdullah	Balochistan	55,821	10%
4.	Karachi Central	Sindh	44,657	8%
5.	Pishin	Balochistan	27,911	5%
6.	Rawalpindi	Punjab	22,328	4%
7.	Lahore	Punjab	16,746	3%
8.	Islamabad	Islamabad Capital Territory	16,746	3%
9.	Attock	Punjab	11,164	2%
10.	Chakwal	Punjab	11,164	2%

Table 5. Top 10 provinces of destination in Afghanistan

	PROVINCE OF DESTINATION (TOP 10)		
1.	Kandahar	167,464	30%
2.	Nangarhar	161,881	29%
3.	Kabul	83,732	15%
4.	Kunduz	22,328	4%
5.	Kunar	22,328	4%
6.	Helmand	16,746	3%
7.	Laghman	16,746	2%
8.	Baghlan	11,164	2%
9.	Zabul	11,164	2%
10.	Balkh	5,582	1%

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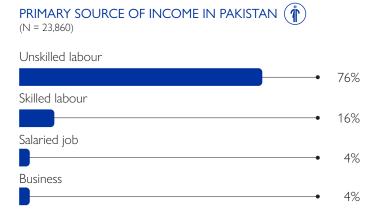
TYPE OF RESIDENCE IN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN



While residing in Pakistan, the highest proportion of respondents reported living in rented houses (94%). Five per cent were living in camps or camp-like settings and one per cent were living with relatives. These results closely mirror those of last year.⁹

When asked about their intended settlement options in Afghanistan, more than half of returnees stated their plan to rent a house upon arrival at their destination (64%). The second most common type of settlement mentioned by returnees was living with relatives (13%). Unlike last year, a higher share of returnees also stated they intend to live in a spontaneous settlement, and five per cent expected to end up in a camp, an option which was not mentioned in the previous year. Lastly, only five per cent reported expecting to live in their own house, marking a sharp decline from last year's figure of 20 per cent.

SOURCE OF INCOME IN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN





The reported sources of income in Pakistan and the anticipated sources of income in Afghanistan largely align. In Pakistan, the majority of respondents reported being employed as unskilled labourers (76%), while in Afghanistan, 81 per cent—a slight increase—expect to work in the same capacity. Sixteen percent were employed as skilled labourers in Pakistan, with 15 per cent expecting to do the

same in Afghanistan. Fewer respondents anticipate working in salaried jobs in Afghanistan (1%) compared to Pakistan (4%), and a similar proportion (4% versus 3%) of returnees were engaged in business in both countries and plan to continue this activity upon returning to Afghanistan.



CONDITIONS DURING TRAVEL

WHAT BELONGINGS ARE YOU TRAVELLING WITH? (1)

(Multiple answers, N = 23,860, can exceed 100%)

Personal belongings	97%
Household items	96%
Cash	88%
Productive assets	55%
Transportation	3%

During the interviews, respondents were asked to report which belongings they were travelling with. Almost all respondents reported bringing personal belongings (97%) and household items (96%). A large majority also brought cash (88%) with them.¹⁰ Other reported belongings were productive assets (55%) and transportation (3%).

 Origin to border
 Border to destination

 77%
 Truck
 79%

 19%
 Pick up
 20%

 4%
 Bus/Minibus
 0%

 0%
 Foot
 1%

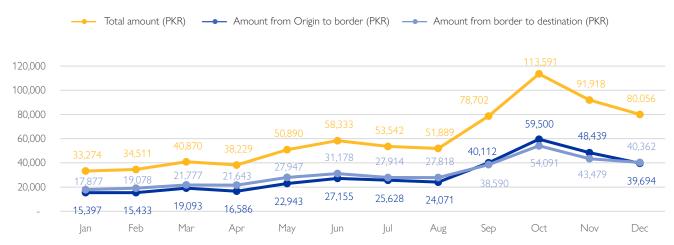
MODE OF TRANSPORTATION (N = 23,860) (\uparrow)

The means of transportation used by returnee families from their origin to the border and from the border to their destination did not differ significantly. The most important mode of transport was a truck (77% and 79%), followed by a pick-up (19% and 20%) and a bus or minivan (4% and 0%). Only one per cent proceeded on foot from the border to their destination.

AMOUNT PAID FROM ORIGIN TO BORDER AND FROM BORDER TO DESTINATION (N = 23,860)



Figure 6. Amount paid from origin to border and from border to destination



Compared to last year, the total travel cost reported by respondents increased threefold, from PKR 28,176 to PKR 90,843. As prices were elevated throughout the year (see figure 6), this surge can be attributed to inflation, particularly in fuel prices. However, from August to September 2023, prices rose even further. This could be

due to the announcement of the IFRP in September 2023, leading to heightened demand for transportation and the utilization of larger transportation modes as returnees needed to relocate their belongings. Prices did not show significant differences between the point of origin to the border and from the border to the destination.

¹¹ Data was originally collected in Pakistani Rupee (PKR). Exchange rates are PKR 281.375 to USD 1 according to the UN Operational Rates of Exchange on 31 December 2023. Available online at: <u>https://treasury.un.org/operational/rates/OperationalRates.php</u>

¹⁰ According to key informant interviews conducted by IOM's protection team, Afghan nationals who returned to Afghanistan during the IFRP were only allowed to take PKR 50,000 (roughly EUR 165 or USD 180) with them to Afghanistan.

REASONS FOR LEAVING PAKISTAN AND FOR DESTINATION

To facilitate a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the IFRP on the reasons for leaving Pakistan and reasons for destination of returnees, this visualization has been divided into two periods: before and after 15 September 2023. IOM and UNHCR have adopted this date as the start of the IFRP and consequently as the cut off date for this visualization, as a noticeable increase in returns was observed from this point onward.¹²

BEFORE 15 SEPTEMBER 2023 (TOP 6) (Multiple answers, N = 23,860, can exceed 100%)

Reasons for leaving Pakistan

Unable to pay house rent 65% Unable to pay household utilities 62% No employment 62% No employment 62% 14% Business/trade reason 9% Salary is too low 38% Reasons for choosing final destination

Availability of assistance in Afghanistan

	91%
Reunion with family/relatives	
•	69%
Improvement in security situation	
•	8%
Business	
•	0%
Return to own house	
•	0%
To get married	
•	0%

Before September 15, 2023, the majority of respondents reported that they decided to leave Pakistan due to their inability to pay house rent (65%) and household utilities (62%). Another significant reason was unemployment in Pakistan (36%). Other reasons, cited by a smaller number of respondents, included fear of arrest (14%), involvement in business/trade (9%), and low salary (3%).

When asked about reasons for destination, almost all respondents emphasized the perception of the availability of assistance in Afghanistan (91%) as an important factor influencing their decision to return. Reunion with family/relatives (68%) was another crucial reason cited by respondents.

AFTER 15 SEPTEMBER 2023 (TOP 6) (Multiple answers, N = 23,860, can exceed 100%)

Reasons for leaving Pakistan

Fear of arrest 90% No employment 23% Communal pressure to return 18% Unable to pay household utilities 6% Unable to pay house rent 6% Forced repatriation

Comparing data before and after 15 September 2023, it is primarily the reasons for leaving Pakistan that have undergone significant changes since the announcement of the IFRP. Notably, the fear of arrest has increased drastically from 14 per cent to 90 per cent. Simultaneously, respondents also report increased pressure to return from the communities where they reside in Pakistan (18%). Additionally, five per cent reported forced repatriation, a reason not cited during the period before 15 September 2023. Unemployment remains an important reason for respondents to return, cited at Reasons for choosing final destination

Reunion with family/relatives

		92%
Availability of assistance in Afghanistan		
	•	49%
Improvement in security situation		
	-•	8%
To obtain official nationality		
	-•	4%
Returning to own house		
)	-•	2%
Promised a job by someone in Afghanistan		
	•	1%

23 percent, and the inability to pay household utilities and house rent are still reported, albeit at a much lower rate compared to the period before 15 September 2023.

Reasons for destination have not changed too drastically; however, instead of the availability of assistance, reunion with family and relatives now emerges as the primary reason, followed by the availability of assistance in Afghanistan and improvement in the security situation. Other reasons were reported by a lower number of respondents.

¹² IOM and UNHCR also used this date to start harmonization of their flow monitoring data.

EXPECTED CONDITIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

FORESEEN CHALLENGES IN AFGHANISTAN (Multiple answers, N = 23,860, can exceed 100%)



During the interviews, a large majority of respondents reported finding income opportunities (91%), arranging shelter (88%) and reintegrating into a new city (78%) as the most important challenges they foresee upon return in Afghanistan.



[Shahzad Asad/IOM 2023] DTM enumerator interviewing returnee at the Chaman border (November 2023).











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