UNHCR AFGHANISTAN

BORDER MONITORING REPORT

JANUARY- JUNE 2024



UNHCR scales up presence at official border crossings and encashment centers as tens of thousands of Afghans arrive from Pakistan Returnee/Deportee Encashment Center in Jalalabad, Nangarhar, Afghanistan. © UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production

67,600
Inflow & Outflow Monitoring Interviews

60,250
89%

7,350
11%

BACKGROUND

- UNHCR's border monitoring seeks to assess people's access to "the right to return" and map potential protection risks and human rights violations faced across official crossing points. UNHCR conducts inflow and outflow monitoring interviews at both individual and household levels across all eight official crossing points, including Afghanistan's borders with Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. UNHCR's inflow and outflow monitoring interviews select respondents using a systemic sampling approach, which can generate representative samples with a fixed skipping interval. The interval is determined by the average arrivals of previous week. In addition, UNHCR conducts border monitoring Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) at unofficial crossing points.
- This report presents the findings of outflow and inflow border monitoring interviews conducted with Afghans by UNHCR's partners, Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), The Welfare Associate for the Development of Afghanistan (WADAN), Watan Social and Technical Services Association (WSTA), and Women for Afghan Women (WAW) at eight official crossing points, along with discussions with KIIs in around 50 unofficial crossing points between 1 January – 30 June 2024.
- UNHCR Afghanistan in consultation with UNHCR operations in Iran, Pakistan and Tajikistan and UNHCR Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific (RBAP) revised its border monitoring tools to capture information in line with the emerging protection context in the region. The new tools were deployed in all crossing points as of 1 May 2024. Furthermore, in early 2024, UNHCR received reports through KIs about pedestrian inflow and outflow movements via *Abu Nasr-i-Farahi* crossing point (Farah province) bordering with Iran; and *Turghondi* crossing point (Herat province) bordering with Turkmenistan. In view of these developments, UNHCR plans to expand its border monitoring activities at these two locations.
- UNHCR's border monitoring is protection centric, and seeks to evaluate the triggers, intentions and motives behind Afghan cross-border movements. It assesses access to territory and "the right to seek asylum", while also identifying barriers impeding the movement of individuals who may be in need of international protection. Between 1 January – 30 June 2024, **67,596** outflow and inflow monitoring interviews were conducted, involving **60,250** male and **7,346** female respondents. Given that a significant portion of those crossing the border were men, the majority of interviews were conducted with male respondents. At unofficial crossing points, interviews were primarily conducted with male key informants due to the remote locations and challenges in identifying female key informants.
- Despite the challenges with access of UNHCR and partners female staff, UNHCR and UNHCR partners conducted interviews with female respondents in separate interview areas, which allows to capture protection concerns reported by female respondents (**11% or 7,346 respondents**). In 2023, the female sample size was 11% i.e., 17,406 interviews have been conducted among a total of 165,376 respondents.

UNHCR AFGHANISTAN

2024 CROSS BORDER MONITORING

Outflow Monitoring

27,379 AFGHANS

7,390 families

25,637 93.6%

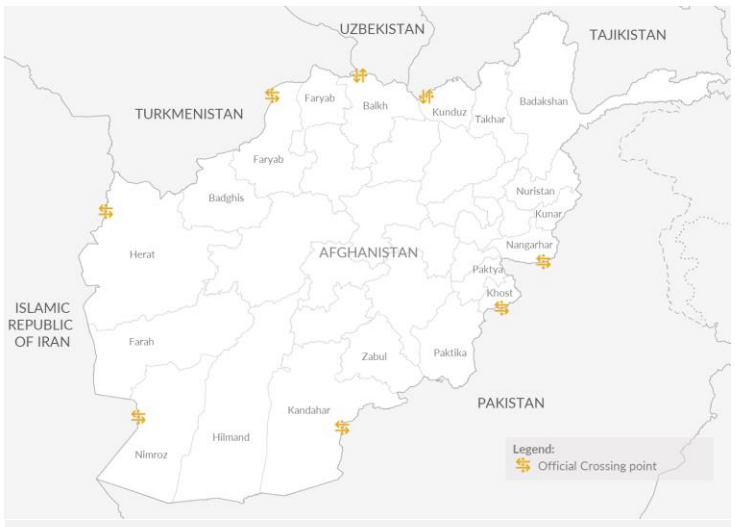
1,742 6.4%

SUMMARY FINDINGS

- **27,379** Afghans (**25,637** males and **1,742** females) were interviewed prior to their departure to Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. This includes **18,852 interviews** with single individuals and **7,390 interviews** with the families including **195 with families headed by a female**, and **1,137 interviews** with medical cases. **59 percent** of the respondents were 18-34 years old, **39 percent** were 35-59 years old, **one percent** 12-17 years old, and **one percent** were 60 and above.
- UNHCR border monitoring partners conducted **461 KIIs**. A large majority (**90 percent**) of Afghans are fleeing Afghanistan to Iran via unofficial crossing points. Those interviewed mentioned having entered irregularly into Pakistan, and while these figures have historically been very low (below **1 percent**), the trend has risen to **18 percent** in 2023 and **19 percent** during the first six months of 2024. Furthermore, according to accounts by witnesses the majority of unofficial crossings are used by minority groups. Respondents shared many challenges encountered during their movement, ranging from a scarcity of portable water, food, healthcare, privacy, accommodation, transportation hurdles, physical and verbal harassment, extortion, robbery, etc. Additionally, some reported that they sustained severe injuries during flight including burns, broken body parts, wounds. They also faced risks such as trafficking and ill-treatment from smugglers. Of particular concern were the vulnerabilities faced by children, pregnant / lactating women, medical patients, and elderly individuals, who were especially at risk.
- Capturing reasons of movement during border monitoring interviews is complex at both official and unofficial crossings points. During the interviews at the official crossing points, Afghans are presented with a list of reasons (including protection reasons) they can select from. Respondents name different reasons for moving from Afghanistan, some mention persecution and/or violation of their rights being the primary reason. Others underline fear of arbitrary arrest/detention, ban on female education and lack of livelihood opportunities as their main reasons for departure and some are moving to access improved quality of life or family unification. However, these interviews are conducted in Afghanistan, which makes it difficult for responses, particularly those in need of international protection, to express their concerns. For unofficial crossings, the data is collected through the key informants who may be less at risk, expressing second-hand reasons for Afghans leaving the country. It is essential not to overlook the ongoing human rights violations in the country. While Afghans may initially prioritize immediate needs for survival, a comprehensive assessment of their international protection needs remains imperative for Afghan asylum seekers. UNHCR also considers Afghan women and girls to be likely in need of international refugee protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention, given the stringent measures imposed by the DfA. See Guidance Note on the International Protection Needs of People Fleeing Afghanistan. In the first six months of 2024, 948 respondents in family groups with women and girls crossed to Iran which decreased by 34% as compared to 1,489 respondents who went to Iran in family groups with women and girls during the same time last year. Similarly, a total of 6,279 respondents in family groups went to Pakistan which is 49% lower as compared to 12,192 respondents in family groups went to Pakistan during the same period in 2023.
- **64 percent** of respondents who travelled to Iran and **7 percent** to Pakistan cited that they experienced feelings of stress affecting their day-to-day life mainly due to economic hardship, food insecurity, uncertainty about future, health problem, ban on education for females, tension in the community, child labor, and unavailability or lack of access to services.
- The outflow movement from Afghanistan to Pakistan via official crossing points declined notably following the announcement made by the Pakistani Government on 3 October 2023, regarding the "Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan" (IFRP) to repatriate foreigners without valid documents, primarily consisting of and estimated 1.3 Afghans. Following the announcement, the government of Pakistan only allowed Afghans in possession of valid passport and visa to travel to Pakistan via Spin Boldak. "One document (passport/visa) regime" has been introduced in Torkham prior to the announcement of IFRP. So far in 2024, the outflow movement from Afghanistan to Pakistan via official crossing points remains similar to the trends recorded since October 2023. Only Afghans in possession of valid passport and visa can travel to Pakistan. However, the monitoring teams observed a slight increase in the number of outflow movements to Pakistan via unofficial crossing points i.e. an average of **5,000** people **on a weekly basis during the first six months of 2024** vs an average of **5,000 – 6,000** people **on a weekly basis during 2023** (further details in page nine below).

Barriers to leaving Afghanistan:

- The Afghan National Passport Office is responsible for distributing national passports. However, due to a substantial backlog and persistent demand for passports, the waiting time is lengthy (over one year). Recently the General Directorate of Passport in Kabul opened three new passport distribution sites in Kabul. Each center should serve 2,000 applicants daily. According to the head of passport office in Kabul, the overall capacity for passport distribution, both in the capital and the provinces, has been increased to 12,000 passports per day.
- Since last quarter of 2023 and so far in 2024, the DfA increased patrols near unofficial points which is reportedly aimed to prevent the movement of people to Iran particularly minority groups.
- The "mahram" (the male chaperone) requirement that prevents women/girls from travelling abroad unless accompanied by a male chaperone (husband, father, brother, son) continues to be in place in Afghanistan. This approach is a particular challenge for females with medical issues, female students who managed to secure enrolment in universities abroad including scholarships and other vulnerable women and girls to leave the country.
- Challenges have been reported by the interviewed individuals in obtaining a visa for the neighboring countries such as lengthy waiting time and for a Pakistani and Iranian visa and suspension of visa processing by the diplomatic missions present in Afghanistan i.e., Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, India, Turkey, and the Russian Federation.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. 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 been yet agreed upon the parties.

Pendular movements trends

- UNHCR partners, undertaking border monitoring, report pendular movements between Afghanistan and Iran and Pakistan. The outflow respondents (**27,379 including male and female)** who are traveling to Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan are Afghans with national passports. They reported staying in both Iran and Pakistan for approximately a month, usually in accommodations provided by relatives. Within the respondents (**10,714**) who wanted to travel to Iran, **47 percent** reported it was their second time visiting the country, while **28 percent** mentioned it was their third time. A small percentage (**5 percent**) mentioned they went to Iran more than three times, while the remaining **20 percent** stated it was their first time traveling to Iran. Conversely, **84 percent** of respondents (**16,190**) who travelled to Pakistan reported multiple visits. Among them, **31 percent** mentioned it was their second visit, **40 percent** stated it was their third visit, and **13 percent** mentioned that they went to Pakistan more than three times, while the remaining **16 percent** mentioned it was their first time traveling to Pakistan. This trend differs slightly from the 2022 and 2023 findings. During 2023, **73 percent** of the respondents traveling to Iran and **88 percent** to Pakistan, reported multiple visits while **26 and 12 percent** respectively, stated it was their first visit to Iran and Pakistan. In 2022, around **51 percent** of respondents traveling to Iran reported multiple visits, while **49 percent** stated it was their first time. For those traveling to Pakistan, **84 percent** reported multiple visits, with **16 percent** stating it was their first time visiting. However, this represents a subset of those traveling to Iran and Pakistan as more than half of those fleeing to Iran are undocumented, based on the information collected at unofficial crossing points.
- In April/May 2024, UNHCR received anecdotal information about circular movement of Afghans particularly those who returned/deported from Pakistan after the implementation of IFRP. In view of this, since 15 June 2024, new questions have been included in the outflow monitoring tools used at official and unofficial crossing points to monitor the circular movements to Pakistan and Iran. Below are the preliminary findings collected from a small number of respondents.
  - In June 2024, the monitoring teams conducted a total of **2,372** outflow monitoring interviews with Afghans who went to Pakistan. Out of **2,372** respondent, **1 percent (or 23 respondents, who went to Pakistan via Torkham crossing point)** confirmed that they have returned/deported from Pakistan after the announcement of IFRP in October 2023, but they are traveling to Pakistan for the second/third time. This means that these respondents have obtained a passport and Pakistani visa and traveling back to Pakistan because the officials only authorize individuals in possession of valid passport and vista to travel to Pakistan.
  - **3 percent (or 79 respondents)** indicated that they observed that a number of Afghans including their relatives and community members who returned/deported post October 2023 due to IFRP, went back to Pakistan for a second/third time. The top five reasons of departure, reported by the respondents, includes multiple reasons:
    - Economic challenges (lack of livelihood opportunities and poverty) and the ban on female education and work in Afghanistan.
    - To access a better life.
    - Some also mentioned that their relatives went back to Pakistan to travel to another (third) country, while some of them left Afghanistan due to the loss of property, discrimination, natural disasters, land/property disputes, fear of arbitrary arrest/detention.
- The same questions have been posed to a total of **38 Key Informants** that were interviewed in June. Out of 38, **two KIs** (in Dak crossing point in Nimroz province) stated that they observed movement of **few individuals** including their relatives/community members crossing into Pakistan for the second/third time, after their return to Afghanistan post October 2023 due to IFRP. One KI said he witnessed that small number (**1-10 individuals**) are going back to Pakistan, while one KI was not able to provide a number. As provided by the KIs, these individuals went back to Pakistan due to multiple reasons:
  - To avoid the ban of females accessing education and work.
  - Lack of livelihood, basic services in Afghanistan.
  - Drought/natural disaster in Afghanistan.
  - To travel to another (third country).
  - To visit family members and for business purposes.
- It is worth noting that Dak crossing point is the main hub for irregular movements to Pakistan/Iran including for local residence of Nimroz (and Dak area) who are engaged in daily business. People traveling from Dak crossing point are first moving to Pakistan. Some remains in Pakistan while some continue their journey to Iran.
- The border monitoring teams continue to closely monitor these trends.



A disabled returnee men and his family departing to his destination Kandahar, Afghanistan © UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production

UNHCR AFGHANISTAN

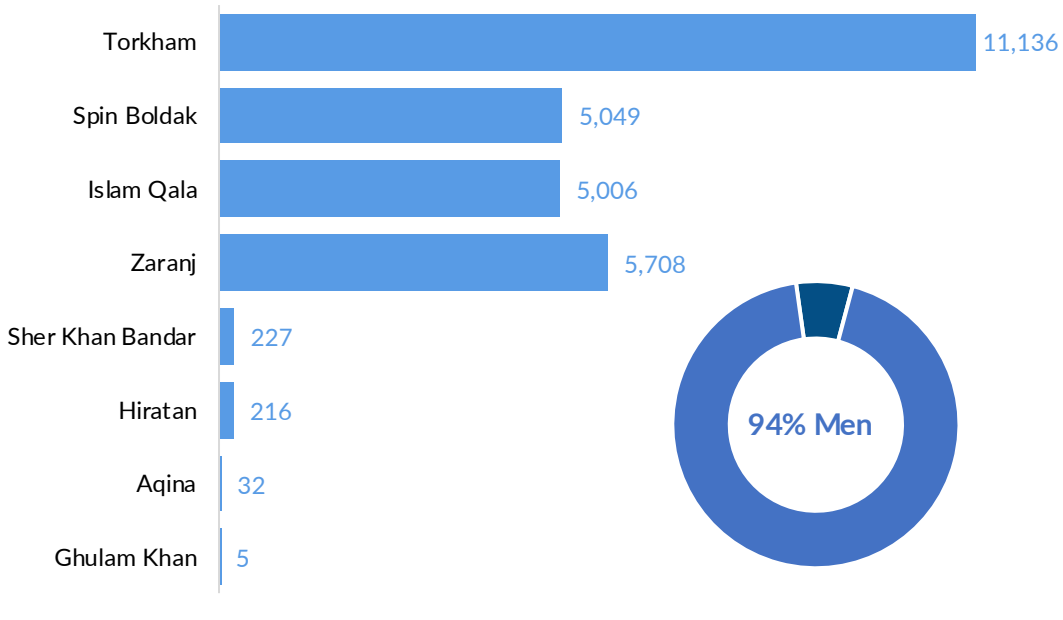
2024 CROSS BORDER MONITORING

Outflow Monitoring

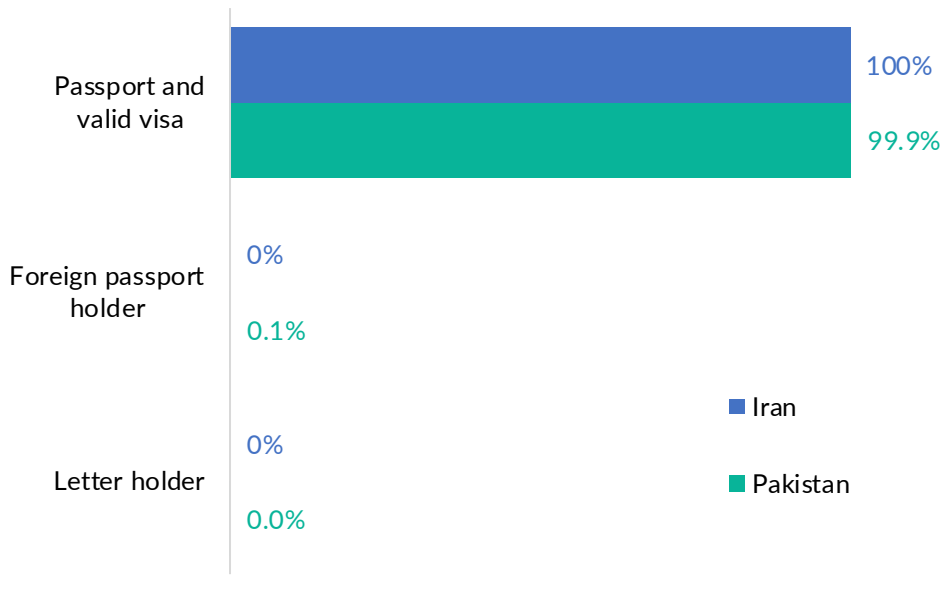
UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

Summary Findings: Official Crossing Points

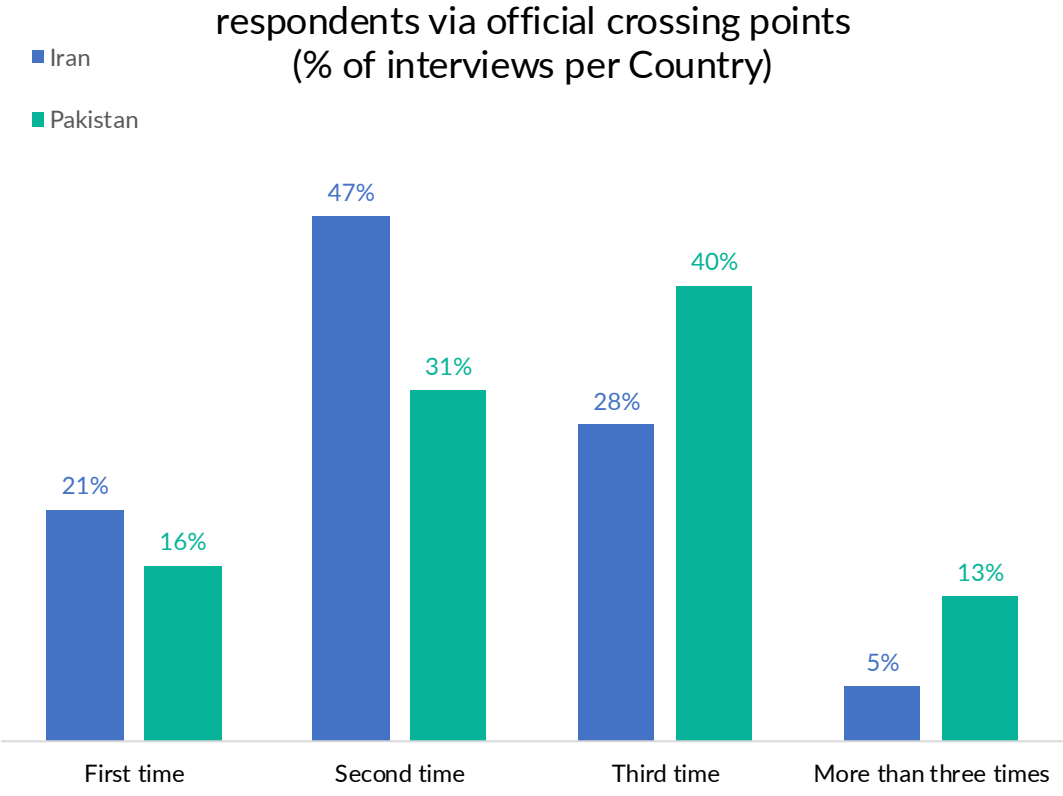
Interviews by Entry Point



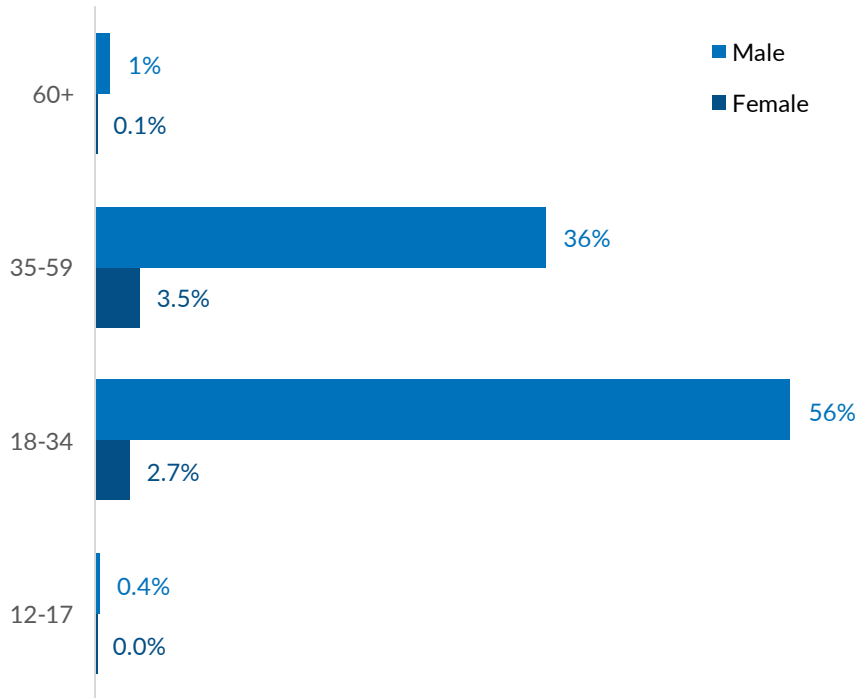
Documentation Status of Respondents



*Movement Frequency of passport holding respondents via official crossing points (% of interviews per Country)

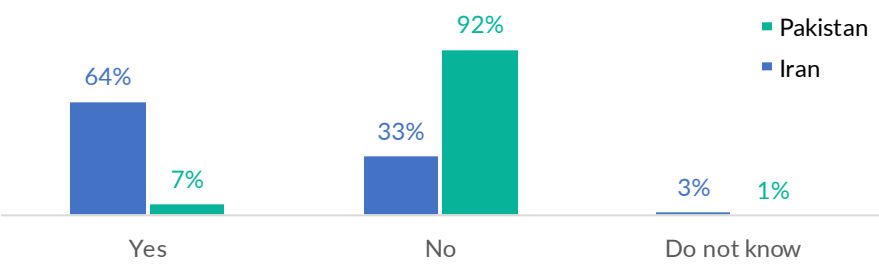


Respondents Age and Gender



*Movement frequency only refers to movers who were traveling to Iran and Pakistan via official crossing points and hold passports. Based on information collected at unofficial crossing points, more than half of Afghans fleeing to Iran are undocumented and flee Afghanistan through unofficial crossing points.

Have you or your family experienced feelings of stress that affected your day-to-day life?





Jalalabad Encashment Center, Nanangarhar, Afghanistan.
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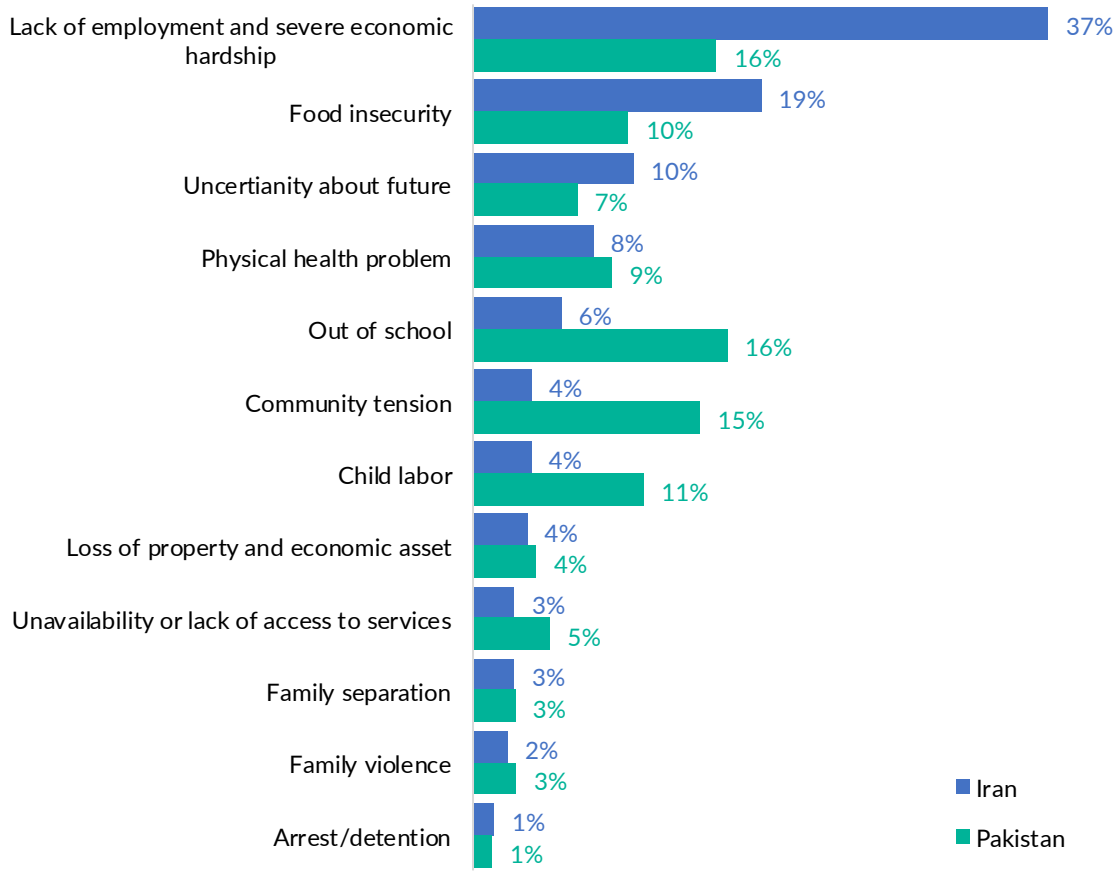
Sources of Stress



UNHCR AFGHANISTAN

2024 CROSS BORDER MONITORING

Inflow Monitoring

39,760
AFGHANS
14,428 families

34,150
86%

5,600
14%

SUMMARY FINDINGS

- **39,756 Afghans** – **34,152** male (**86 percent**) and **5,604** female (**14 percent**) – were interviewed upon arrival in Afghanistan. This includes **27,328** single individuals and **14,428** families. **27,043** interviews were conducted with spontaneous returnees and **12,713** with deportees. However, Afghans who returned/deported from Pakistan since November 2023 were mainly families with women, children making up **76 percent** of the returns (**47 percent** women and girls). UNHCR continues to receive inquiries from women, seeking support for education and expressing concerns about women protection. These cases involve allegation about forced marriages, denial of job opportunities, and other forms of gender discrimination. Women have also reported that their livelihoods have been detrimentally impacted by DfA policies.
- **63 percent** of the respondents were 18-34 years old, while **34 percent** were 35-59 years old, only **two percent** minors (12-17 years old), and **two percent** were elderly (60 and above).
- A majority **(82 percent)** of respondents from Iran were undocumented while most (**56 percent**) respondents from Pakistan were passport holders. However, since 15 September 2023, over **0.65 million** Afghans including refugees and those in refugee-like situations, have had to return from Pakistan.
- Interview findings in 2024 reveals that more people are traveling to Iran and Pakistan via unofficial crossing points compared to 2023. **90 percent** of the respondents including women and children traveled to Iran via unofficial crossing points during six months in 2024 while this percentage was lower in 2023 (**81 percent**). In contrast, **81 percent** of Afghan respondents who went to Pakistan in 2024 have departed via official crossing points, while in 2023, **92 percent** of the respondents stated that they went to Pakistan via official points. Of respondents moving to Iran via official border crossings, **21 percent** crossed for the first time. This was the case for **14 percent** moving to Pakistan.
- Returnees and deportees were asked to mention their reasons for leaving Afghanistan. In 2024, nearly **20 percent** of the respondents mentioned protection risks in Afghanistan as the primary reason of their departure to Iran and Pakistan i.e., overall violence (**8 percent**), fear of persecution (**4 percent**), ban on female education and work (**2 percent**) in Afghanistan. In contrast, some **67 percent** of the respondents mentioned that they went to Iran and Pakistan to escape poverty (**25 percent**) in Afghanistan, to access livelihood (**17 percent**), better living condition (**15 percent**), and medical treatment (**10 percent**) in Iran and Pakistan. In comparison search of better living conditions or employment opportunities and medical treatment were reported as the primary reasons of departure from Afghanistan to Pakistan by the respondents in 2023. While most respondents said that they departed to Iran and Pakistan in search of better living condition, or healthcare services, capturing reasons for movement is complex as interviews are conducted in Afghanistan making it difficult for respondents, particularly those in need of international protection, to express concerns. The list of reasons provided is not exhaustive and may not capture all motivations as Afghans may initially prioritize immediate needs for survival. UNHCR also considers Afghan women and girls to be likely in need of international refugee protection under the 1951 Refugee Convention, given the stringent measures imposed by the DfA.
- Following implementation of IFRP by the government of Pakistan in November 2023, UNHCR has scaled up protection response capacity at border crossing points in order to identify and assist persons/ families with sensitive protection backgrounds.
- **29 percent** of respondents returning from Iran and **89 percent** of those returning from Pakistan stated that they had no information about the risks of irregular migration.
- Lack of food, water, instances of robbery, physical violence perpetrated by smugglers, and the risk of trafficking were reported as the primary challenges encountered by travelers during the journey via irregular routes.
- Respondents who returned spontaneously from Iran highlighted the high cost of living, limited employment opportunities, and family reunification as the primary reasons for return. Conversely, irregular entry and lack of documentation were cited as the main reasons for deportation. However, respondents from Pakistan reported having decided to return to Afghanistan due to the fear of arrest, deportation, ongoing harassment, arbitrary arrests, extortion and night raids by the Pakistani police. Those who were deported from Pakistan stated that they were arrested during night raids or at police checkpoints and were detained prior deportation. The protection context has deteriorated since September/October 2023 when the government of Pakistan implemented the IFRP, and requested illegal foreigners, particularly Afghans, to leave Pakistan. However, June saw an overall reported rate of arrest and detention decrease by approximately **10-15 percent**, compared to the past months.
- In 2024, **60 percent** of respondents (**17,305**) who returned to Afghanistan or deported from Iran and **20 percent** of the respondents (**22,083**) who returned/deported from Pakistan cited that they are experiencing psychological/ having stressful feelings which affected their day-to-day life. The causes of stress includes economic hardship including lose of assets, uncertainty about future, food insecurity, no school for females, health problem, community tension, risk of arrest and detention and no education for females in Afghanistan.



A returnee family ready to depart to their intended destination after collection of protection assistance at Kandahar Encashment Center Kandahar, Afghanistan © UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production



Child Friendly Space, UNHCR Encashment Center in Kandahar, Afghanistan, © UNHCR//Oxygen Empire Media Production

UNHCR AFGHANISTAN

2024 CROSS BORDER MONITORING

Inflow Monitoring

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

Deportation Trends January – June 2024

Iran

2024: ~ 377,000 deportation

2023: ~ 310,000 deportation

Pakistan

2024: ~ 3,300 deportation

2023: ~ 29,300 deportation

FROM IRAN

- Based on estimations provided by UNHCR's border monitoring partners, during six months in 2024, an estimated **377,400 (undocumented Afghans** were deported from Iran through Islam Qala and Zaranj crossing points. This represents a daily average of **2,074 individuals**. The deportation figures for undocumented Afghans are approximately **22% higher** compared to an estimated **310,600** deportees during the same period in 2023 .
- Among those deported, UNHCR border monitoring identified **around 37 deportation** cases (93 individuals) of Amayesh card holders. Reasons for deportation varied; some were apprehended due to drug-related offenses, while others were deported for lacking Amayesh cards during their arrest and subsequent movement to "no-go areas," notably border regions between Iran and Turkey, without obtaining necessary movement permits from authorities. In 2023, UNHCR's border monitoring team recorded the deportation of **63 cases/231** individuals. Amayesh card holders from Iran via Islam Qala and Zaranj.
- Furthermore, border monitoring teams at Islam Qala and Zaranj crossing points identified an estimated **37,550** Afghans who declared themselves as headcount slip holders, indicating a refugee-like situation. This group consisted of approximately **20,150** regular returnees and **17,400** deportees. The deported individuals were reportedly arrested at various locations, including their workplaces. Some were apprehended because they did not possess the headcount slip at the time of arrest, while others were detained for moving to different areas without a movement permit. Some alleged that the police disregarded the importance of the headcount slip.
- UNHCR conducted protection monitoring interviews and delivered support to refoulment cases while IOM provided assistance to vulnerable undocumented deportees and returnees from Iran.
- The vast majority of deportees are undocumented Afghans. Among them, deportation without a court order or/and not having access to formal complain mechanism is reported. As a result, these deportees had no opportunity to raise concerns about potential protection risks in Afghanistan before being deported.
- Deportees consistently report numerous human rights violations, including physical violence, lack of access to adequate food, water, and sanitation, insufficient healthcare, verbal abuse and insults, overcrowded conditions, family separation, and loss of assets and money, among other issues.

FROM PAKISTAN

- The announcement and implementation of the IFRP by the Government of Pakistan led to an increase in the number of undocumented Afghans returning or being deported. Prior to the announcement, the average daily number of undocumented Afghans returning from Pakistan through Spin Boldak (Kandahar) and Torkham (Nangarhar) was approximately **260 individuals**. However, the figures saw a significant increase since September 15, with the peak occurring in early November 2023. Since January 2024, the number of individuals crossing these official border points has steadily decreased, although it remains significantly higher than the numbers observed before 15 September 2023.
- Since 15 September 2023 – 30 June 2024, some **0.65 million Afghans**, have returned/deported to Afghanistan including nearly **160,000** in 2024. Out of 0.65 million, **nearly 32,000 were deported** predominantly through Torkham and Spin Boldak. Among the returned or deported Afghans, UNHCR identified and assisted a total of **60,179 individuals**, including Afghan refugees holding PoR (Proof of Registration) cards, as well as individuals in refugee-like situations, such as holders of UNHCR's Slip/Asylum Certificate and Protection Cases. Out of **60,179**, a total of **21,021** individuals have been assisted during the six months of June and **39,158** during November and December 2023. The figure of assisted cases in 2024 is **46 percent** lower compared to the number of assisted cases during November and December 2023.
- In 2022, an estimated **2,372 undocumented Afghans were arrested** and deported on charges of infringing the 1946 Foreigners Act.
- No deportations of PoR (Proof of Registration) cardholders were recorded in 2022. However, in 2023, 24 POR card holders were recorded to have been deported prior to August (i.e. March, May and July) 2023.

FROM TAJIKISTAN

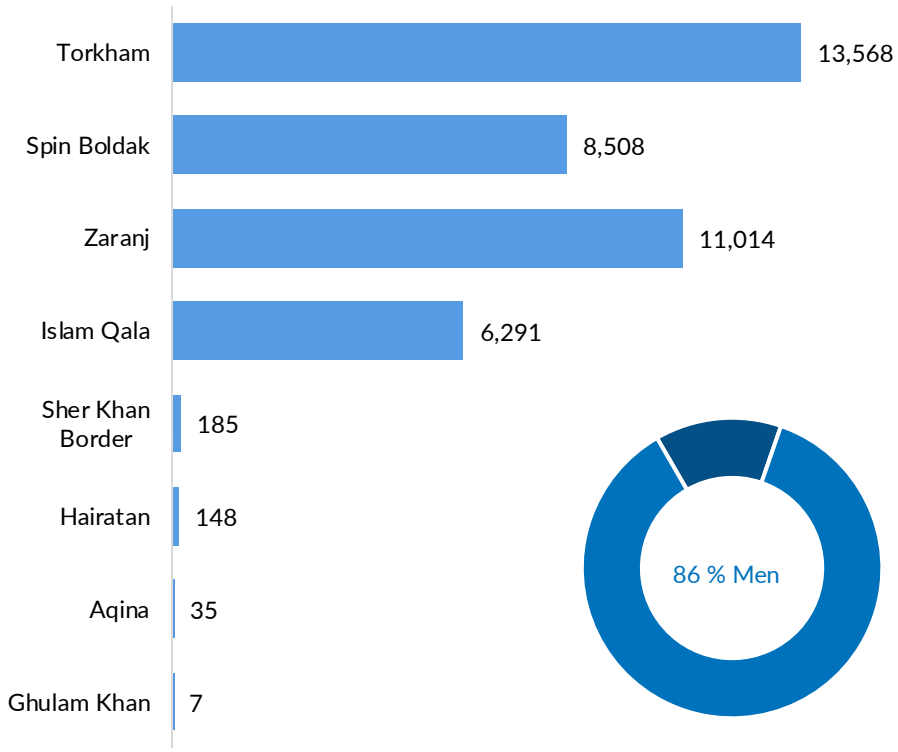
- No deportation recorded so far in 2024. Around **12 Afghan refugees were deported** from Tajikistan and were assisted by UNHCR in 2023 and an estimated **100** Afghans were deported from Tajikistan in 2022.

UNHCR AFGHANISTAN

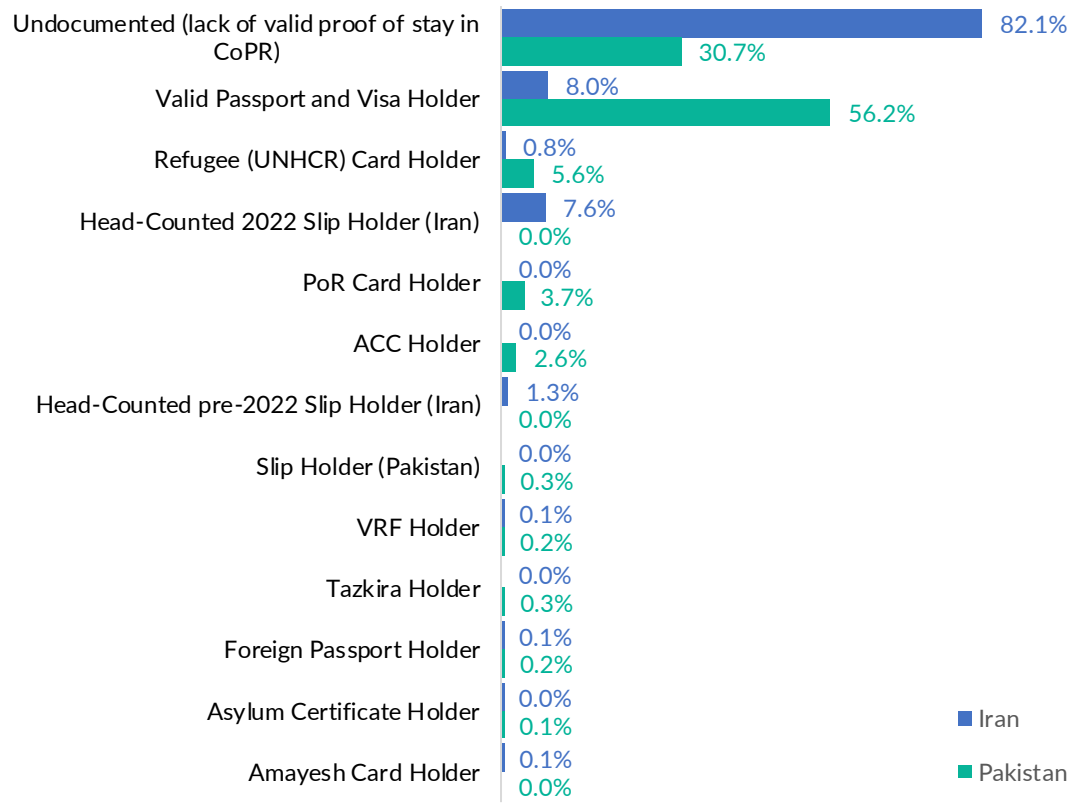
2023 CROSS BORDER MONITORING

Inflow Monitoring

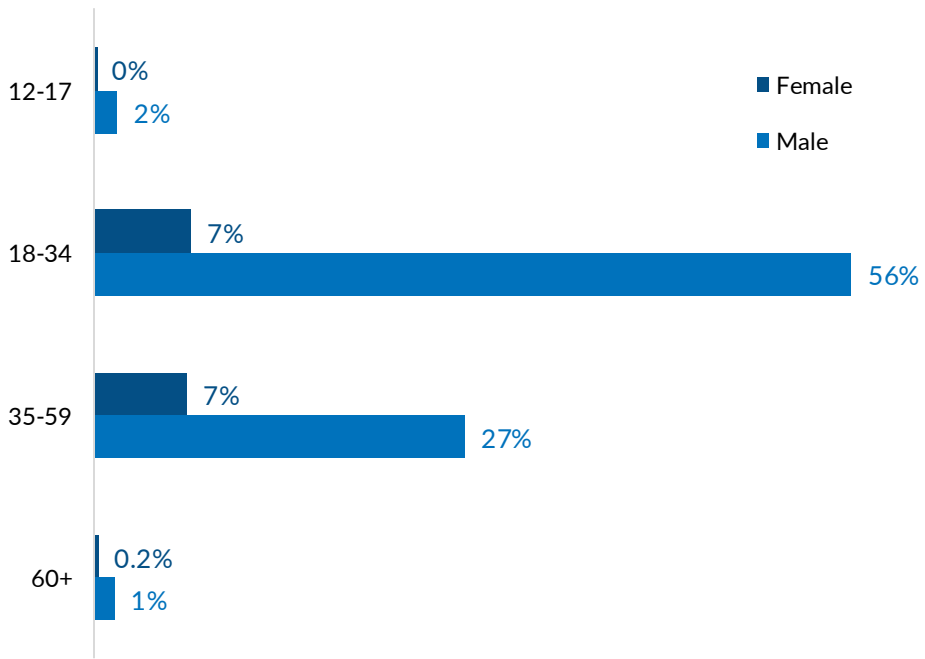
Number of Interviews by Official Entry Point



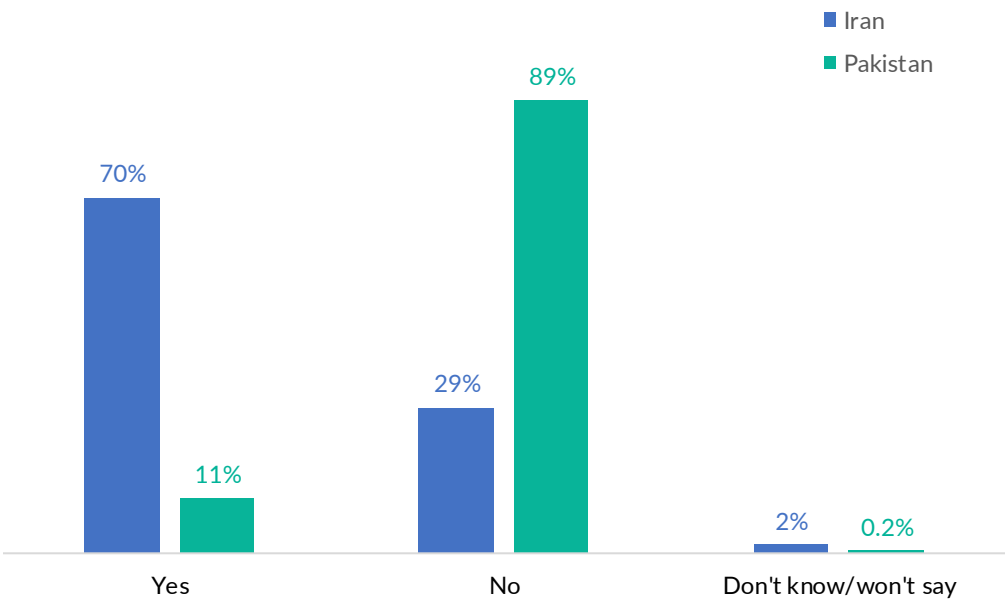
Documentation Status of Respondents



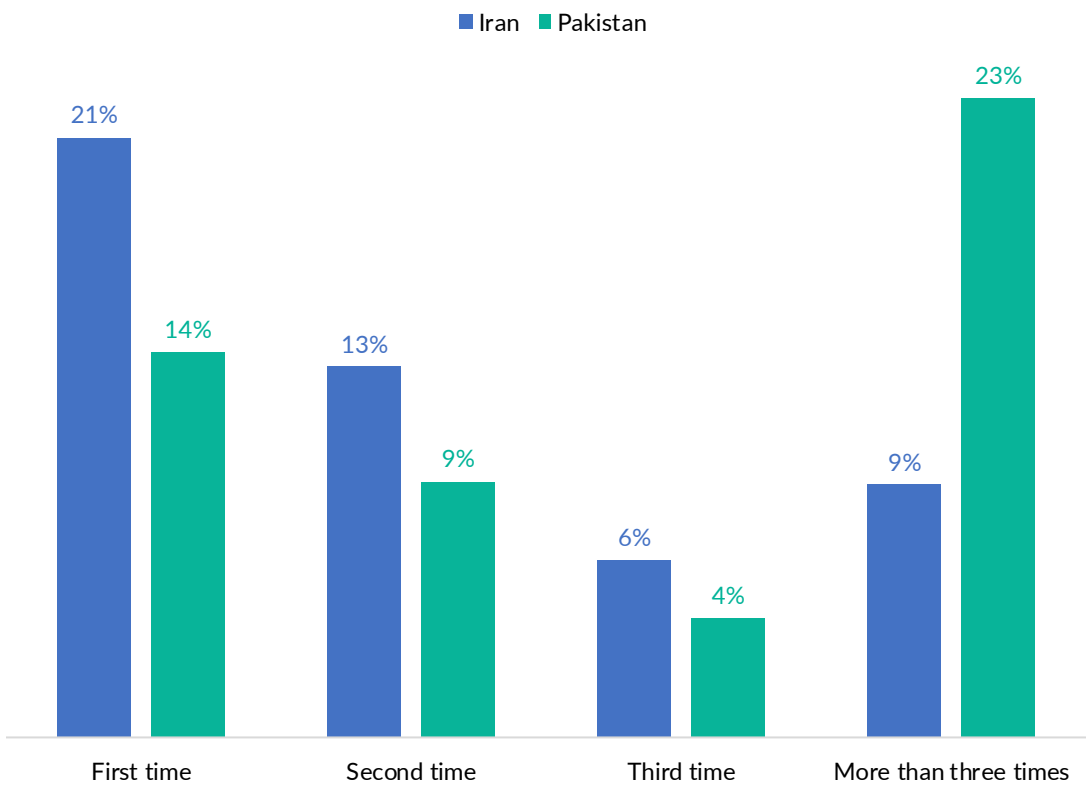
Respondents Age and Gender



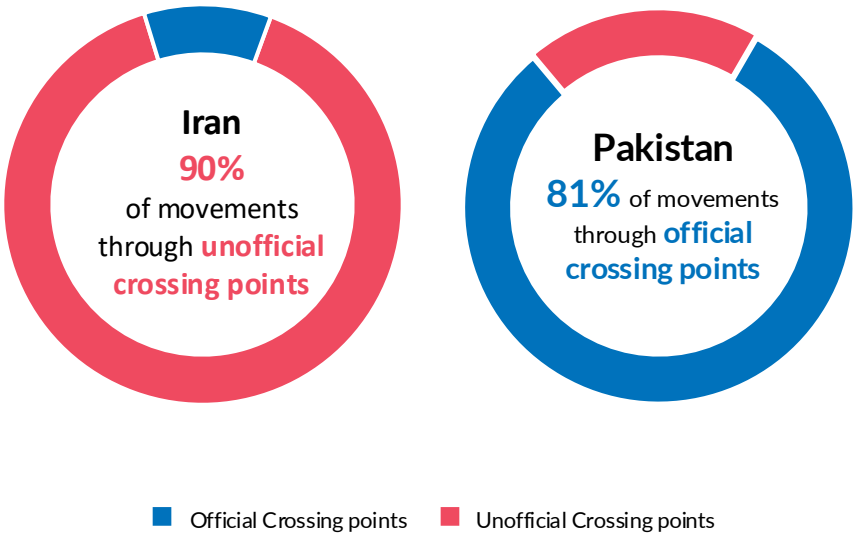
Awareness of Interviewed Returnees/Deportees about the Potential Protection Risks



Movement frequency of passport holding respondents via official crossing points (% of interviews per Country)



Type of Movement



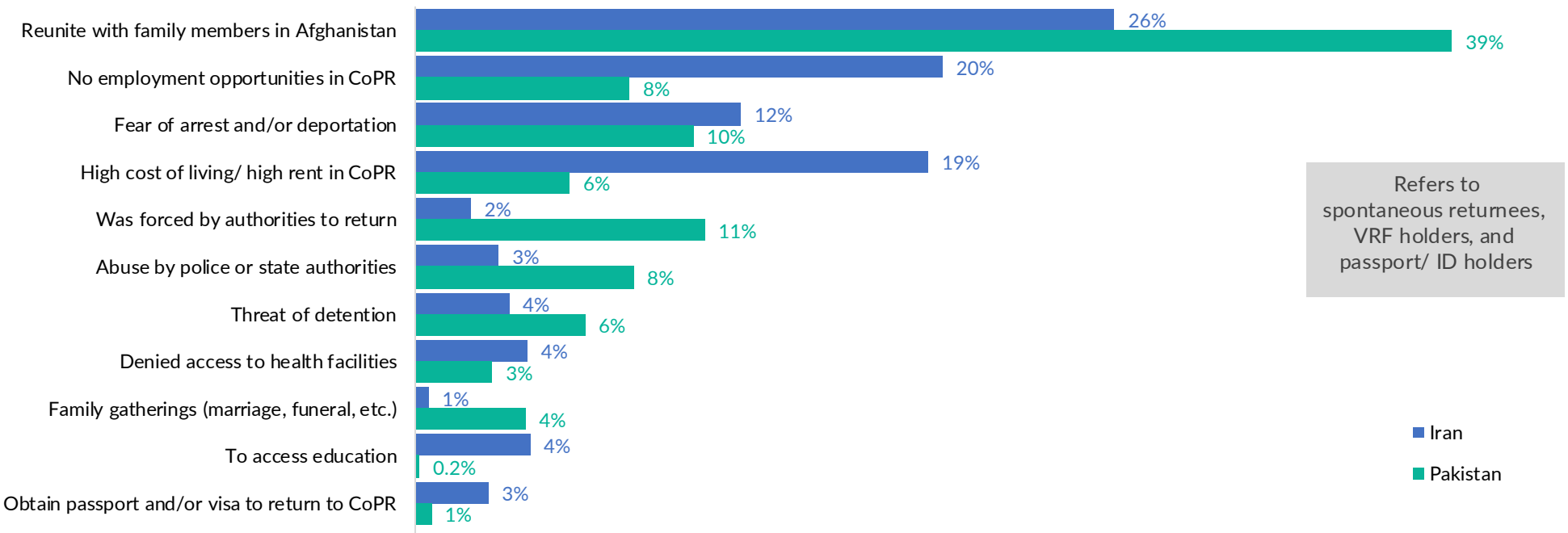
UNHCR AFGHANISTAN

2023 CROSS BORDER MONITORING

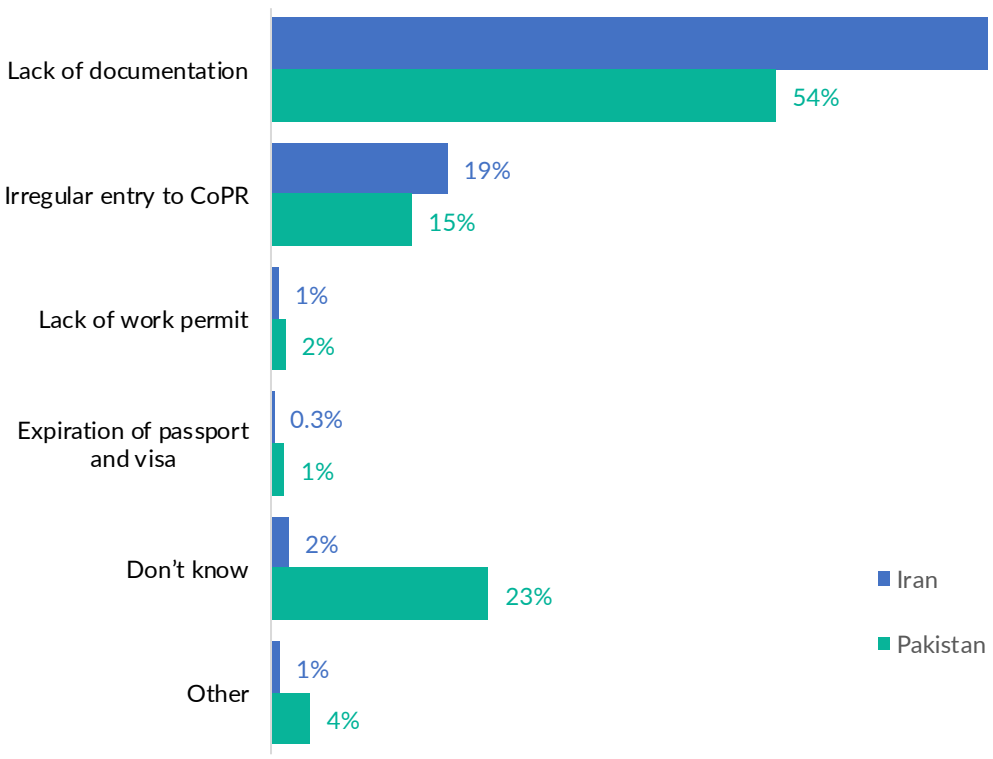
Inflow Monitoring

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

Reasons for Return to Afghanistan (Spontaneous returnees, VRF holders, and Passport/ID holders)

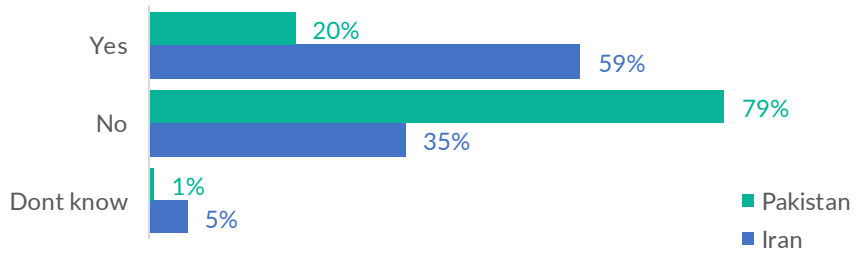


Reasons of Deportation

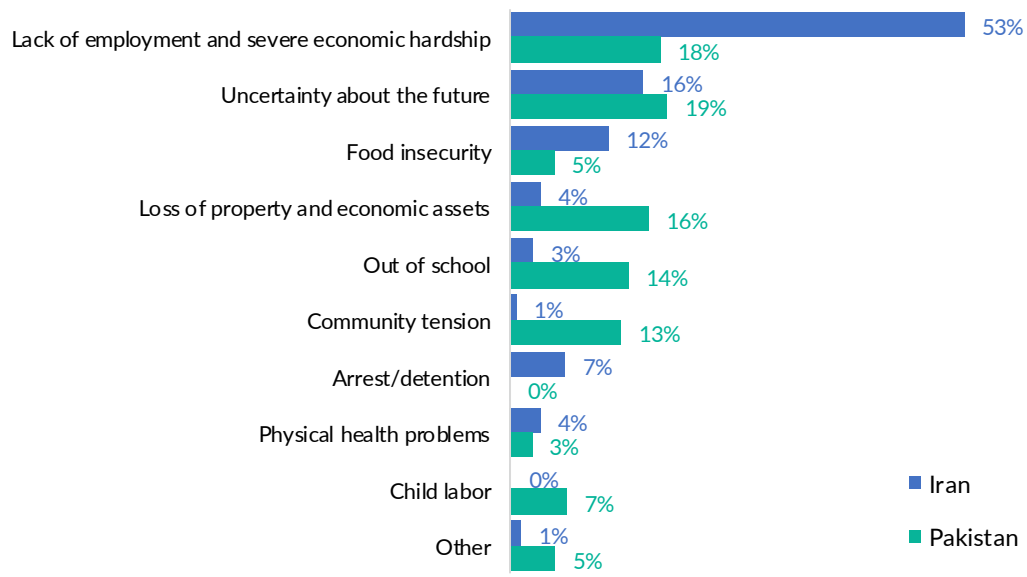


The vast majority of deportation are crossing through unofficial points to Iran.

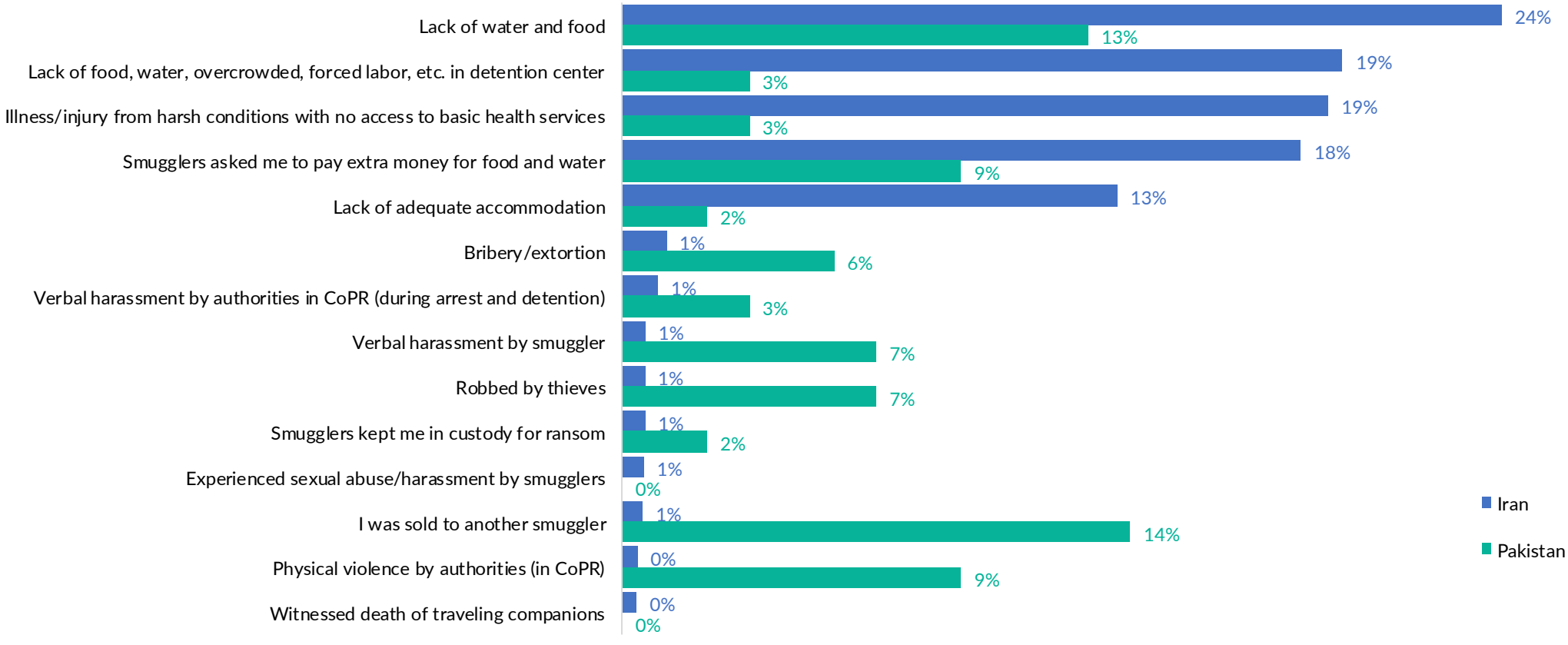
Have you or your family experienced feelings of stress that affected your day-to-day life?



Sources of Stress



Problems Faced during the Journey through Unofficial Crossing Points



UNHCR AFGHANISTAN

2024 CROSS BORDER MONITORING (January to June)

Overview of Population Movements to Iran and Pakistan

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency



- UNHCR partners collected estimated inflow and outflow figures at official crossing points. During six months of 2024, an estimated **2.1 million individuals**, predominantly Afghans, moved to or from Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The majority of these movements occurred via Islam Qala and Zaranj (to Iran), Torkham, and Spin Boldak (to Pakistan), and smaller numbers via Hiratan (to Uzbekistan), Aqina (to Turkmenistan), and Sher Khan Bander (to Tajikistan). The outflow movements to Pakistan through official border crossings experienced a **significant decline since October 2023** due to the government of Pakistan's decision to only permit individuals holding passports and visas to cross into Pakistan.

IRAN - OUTFLOW MOVEMENTS

- An estimated **390,000 Afghans** travelled to Iran with valid travel documents during the first six months of 2024. This represented an average of **2,143** individuals per day. In addition, an estimated **200,000-250,000 Afghans** went to Iran via unofficial points. This means that an estimated **650,000 Afghans** went to Iran in 2024, as witnessed by the KIs.
- Based on KIs, people's movement through unofficial points in Herat (to Iran) has declined due to the increased deployment of military personnel by the DfA. During the week of 14 June 2024, an estimated **1,100 – 1,950** individuals crossed to Iran during the night hours. During January – early June, an estimated **800 to 2,500** individuals have crossed into Iran on weekly basis via unofficial crossing points in Herat province. In addition, an estimated **300 – 2,500** went to Pakistan/Iran through Dak unofficial point during the week of 14 June 2024. According to KIs, prior mid-June 2024, an estimated **280 to 5,000** individuals have crossed via the "Dak" crossing point in Nimroz province. Afghans traveling via Dak initially enter Pakistan before continuing their journey to Iran. Reportedly more people including those with sensitive protection backgrounds travel through unofficial crossing points in Herat and Dak in Nimroz. Those who travel through Dak, first enter Pakistan where they split into groups – some continue their travel to Iran and some remain in Pakistan with the intention of traveling to Islamabad, KPK, etc., to attend an interview or to submit asylum application with UNHCR' legal partners in Pakistan.
- Challenges in obtaining passports and visas due to the overcrowded situation at national passport offices and at respective embassies or consulates and the deterioration of the financial situation, continues to limit individuals' ability to obtain documents, and may motivate more people to rely on irregular movement channels. All movements through unofficial crossing points were reportedly facilitated by smugglers.

PAKISTAN – OUTFLOW MOVEMENTS

- In 2024, there were an estimated **416,000** outflow movements (**an average of 2,286 individuals per day**). The majority, around **345,000 individuals**, occurred via Torkham (**an average of 1,895 individuals per day**), followed by approximately **71,000** via Spin Boldak (**an average of 391 individuals per day**). During pervious years and prior the implementation of IFRP the bulk of the population movements were occurred via Spin Boldak. They were primarily holders of Tazkira, border pass tokens, PoR, ACC, and passports, mainly from Kandahar province. They were small business owners who resided on one side of the border and conduct business on the other side. In addition, patients were able to travel without passport and visa. However, outflow movements via Torkham were Afghans from different provinces with valid passports and visas.
- In addition, an estimated **1,000 – 5,000** Afghans traveled to Pakistan via unofficial crossing points located in several provinces in the south and south-eastern regions on a weekly basis. This group primarily consisted of local individuals who were able to travel back and forth for business, medical treatment, and family visit purposes in the absence of passport and visa. Currently Afghan pedestrians, including local people can cross into Pakistan if they possess valid passport and visa. There were no movements via unofficial points located in the eastern region (Nangarhar, Kunar and Nuristan provinces).

IRAN - INFLOW MOVEMENTS

- In 2024, an estimated **795,000** Afghans either returned to Afghanistan or were deported from Iran. This marks an increase of **12 percent** from **710,000 Afghans** who returned/deported during the same period in 2023. Out of 795,000 people, approximately **417,600 (averaging 2,295 daily)** were regular cross-border movers, while **377,400** were deportation movements, **averaging around 2,074 daily**. The deportation figures represent an increase of **22 percent** from the estimated **310,600** recorded during the same period in 2023.

PAKISTAN – INFLOW MOVEMENTS

- In 2024, there were an estimated **450,000 Afghans** came to Afghanistan from Pakistan including passport holders, businessmen, patient and, mainly via Torkham. Prior to the announcement by the government of Pakistan in October 2023, inflow movements from Pakistan to Afghanistan via official crossing points were minimal, averaging only **260 individuals** daily. The inflow movements significantly increased after the implementation of IFRP by the government of Pakistan. Since 15 September 2023, nearly **0.65 million** Afghans including women, girls and boys, particularly undocumented Afghans as well as refugees and those in refugee-like situations, returned/deported from Pakistan including nearly **160,000** Afghans in 2024. The main driver for this increase was the implementation of IFRP by the government of Pakistan.
- Among the refugees and people in refugee like situation assisted by UNHCR, at least one in four families are headed by women. **58 percent** were girls and boys, and some **2.5 percent** are individuals with disabilities. Returnees and deportees reported that problems experienced prior to the cross-border movement have consistently been harassment, waiting long hours at checkpoints and detention. Returnees interviewed by UNHCR were concerned about the lack of shelter/housing, food, financial support/livelihoods, documentation, education, water and sanitation, health care including MHPSS, services in return areas, as well as difficulties in meeting their basic needs such as food and access to transportation. Returnees have also underscored significant concerns regarding security threats and have employed various coping mechanisms (such as maintaining a low profile, staying indoors, avoiding contact with others, relocating within their province or to another province) to mitigate further risks. However, the limited support available has resulted in individuals at risk and their families enduring harsh living conditions, severe restrictions on their freedom of movement and access to livelihoods, and a lack of access to basic services, thereby restricting the exercise of rights.

UNHCR AFGHANISTAN

2024 CROSS BORDER MONITORING

Overview of Population Movements 2024

UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency

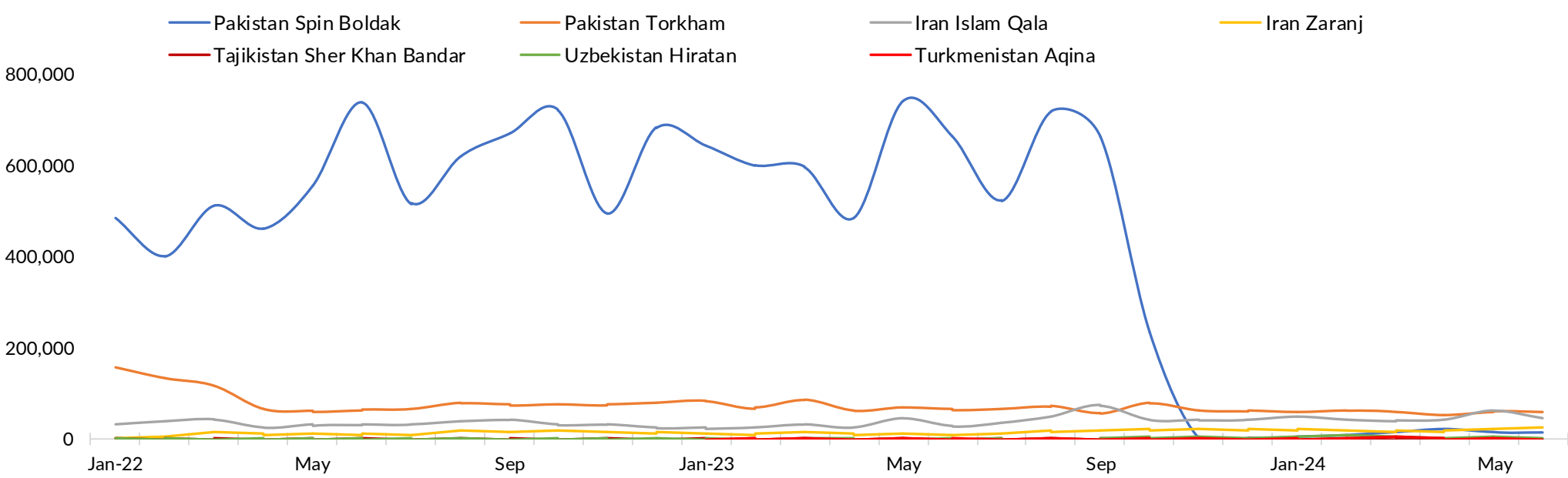
Population Movements to Central Asia Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan – January- June 2024

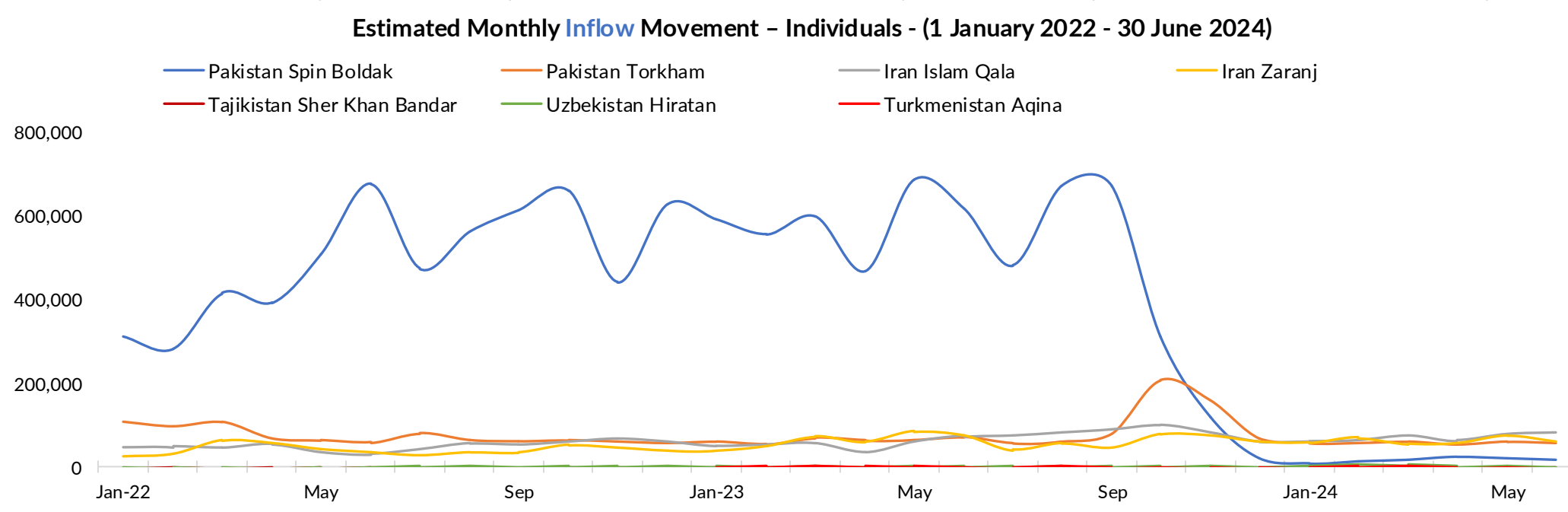
- **UZBEKISTAN:** The border in Hiratan is restricted to commercial movements and visa holders only. An estimated **19,300** individuals, mainly railway staff, drivers from Uzbekistan, and diplomats, as well as Afghan visa holders travelled to Uzbekistan while an estimated **20,100** individuals with a similar profile returned to Afghanistan. To be able to cross the border, Afghans were required to present resident permits, business/education documents or an official letter from the Government of Uzbekistan.
- **TURKMENISTAN:** In 2024, the Aqina border was exclusively open for commercial movements and visa holders. An estimated **4,000** individuals, primarily railway staff and drivers from Turkmenistan, along with a small number of Afghan visa holders, traveled to Turkmenistan. Similarly, approximately **3,800** individuals with a similar profile returned to Afghanistan through the same border.
- **TAJIKISTAN:** The border in Sherkhan-Bandar remains open. An estimated **1,700** Afghans and foreigners with valid visas, gate passes, or permission documents travelled to Tajikistan while an estimated **1,280** individuals returned to Afghanistan.

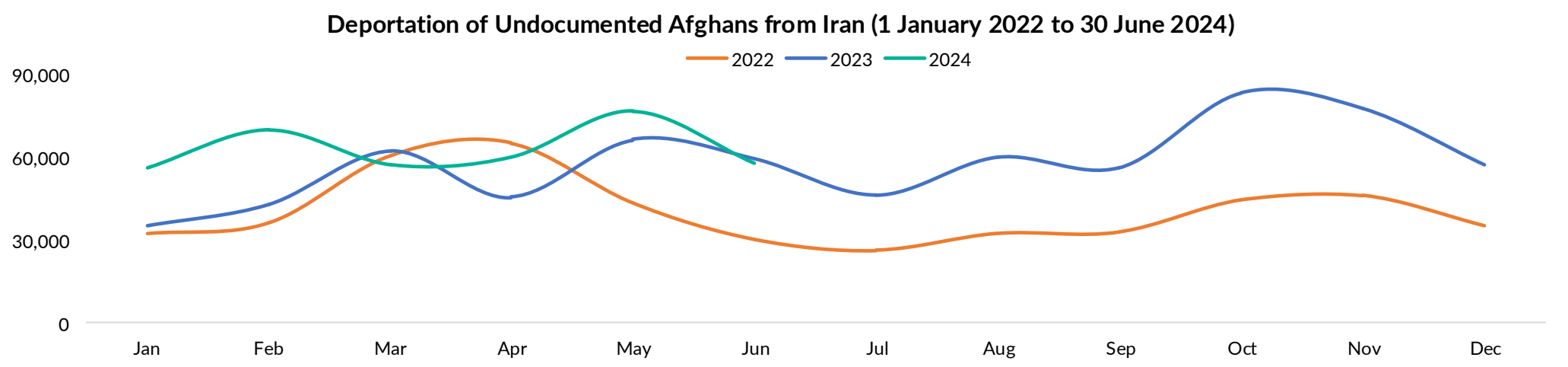
Population Movement By Crossing Point: 1 January - 30 June 2024

Movement type	Spin Boldak	Torkham	Islam Qala	Zaranj	Sher Khan Bandar	Hiratan	Aqina	Total
Outflow total (A)	71,150	344,950	274,850	115,150	1,700	19,300	4,000	831,100
Outflow Monthly Average	11,850	57,500	45,800	19,200	280	3,200	670	138,500
Inflow total (B)	99,600	350,300	420,000	375,100	1,300	20,100	3,800	1,270,200
Inflow Monthly Average	16,600	58,400	70,000	62,500	200	3,350	600	211,650
Total (A+B)	**170,750**	**695,250**	**694,850**	**490,250**	**3,000**	**39,400**	**7,800**	**2,101,300**

Note: the figures of in/outflow movements, in the below charts, are estimates and do not represent actual figures of Afghans moving either way to Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.









Mine awareness session for refugee returnees from Pakistan, Kandahar Encashment Center, Afghanistan © UNHCR/Oxygen Empire Media Production

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For further information or any questions please visit the Afghanistan ODP page or www.unhcr.org/Afghanistan.