

RETURNS TO AFGHANISTAN

Joint IOM-UNHCR Summary Report

2018



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Cover photo: Afghan refugee families waiting to return home at UNHCR's voluntary repatriation centre in Chamkani, Peshawar in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. (UNHCR/S. Rich)

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Preface

2018 brought new and daunting challenges to Afghans on the move, seriously affecting the nation's absorption capacity and the ability of returnees to find sustainable livelihoods. At the same time, one of the worst droughts in living memory struck Afghanistan and impacted the lives of more than two-thirds of Afghans, devastating the agricultural sector and leaving some 4 million people across the country in need of life-saving assistance, including 3.9 million in need of food and livelihoods support. When combined with the historic return numbers and the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in remittance payments from family members abroad,¹ the consequences for return and displacement have been stark.

Each year, many thousands of Afghans return from the neighbouring Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan and other countries, and these returns are impacted by a range of push and pull factors. The sizeable return caseload further burdens the already over-stretched absorption capacity of local host communities. The primary needs of returning Afghans include food, livelihoods, access to land, long-term shelter, and access to services including health, education and legal assistance. The Displacement and Return Executive Committee (DiREC), set up in 2016, continues to highlight the plight of returning Afghans and seeks their inclusion in national development planning and programming.

Together with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) continue to actively coordinate the provision of post-arrival humanitarian and reintegration assistance to returning Afghans.

IOM and UNHCR are very pleased to continue to highlight our inter-agency collaboration and issue a joint report for the second consecutive year, depicting the challenges faced by returning Afghans and the efforts made on their behalf by UNHCR and IOM.

We take this opportunity to thank our donors for their generous support and partnership.



Caroline Van Buren

UNHCR Representative



Laurence Hart

IOM Chief of Mission and Special Envoy

¹ <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2018/09/11/why-economic-turmoil-iran-causing-big-problems-afghanistan>

Contextual Background

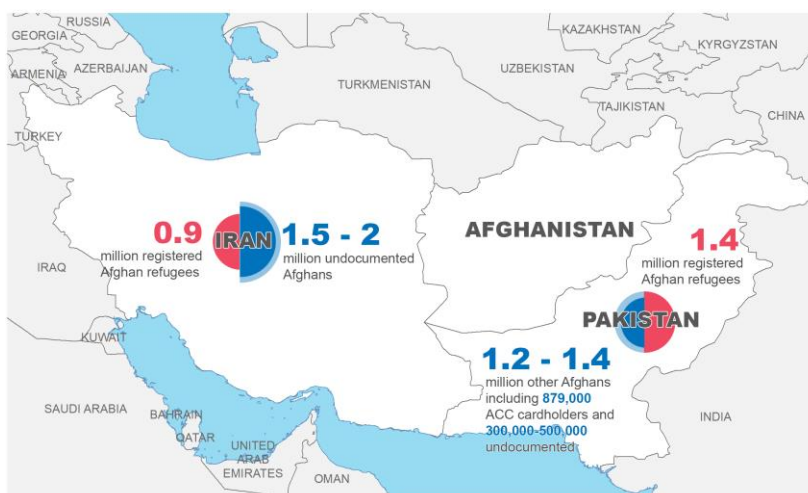
Populations of Concern in the Region

Registered Afghan refugees: Around 2.4 million registered Afghan refugees are living in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, where 1.4 million refugees hold Proof of Registration (PoR) cards, and in the Islamic Republic of Iran, which hosts some 951,000 Afghan refugees holding Amayesh cards.² UNHCR facilitates the voluntary repatriation of Afghan refugees from the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan and other countries, and assists in their return and reintegration in Afghanistan, but does not promote returns due to the prevailing security situation in Afghanistan.

Undocumented Afghans: An estimated 1.2 to 1.4 million Afghans are in Pakistan, including 879,000 who have either received or are entitled to an Afghan Citizenship Card.³ According to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, there are 1.5 to 2 million undocumented Afghans in the country at any given time, including 850,000 persons who participated in a headcount exercise in 2017.⁴

Overview of 2018 returns

Over 820,000 Afghans returned from the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan in 2018. This includes 13,600 refugees and 32,000 undocumented returnees from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and some 2,000 refugees and over 770,000 undocumented returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran. It is important to note that the figures for undocumented returns include an unknown number of Afghans who move back and forth between Afghanistan and neighbouring countries, particularly the Islamic Republic of Iran, for employment, trade, or other temporary reasons. As such, it is unclear to what extent these figures represent sustainable returns or ongoing cross border movements.



Following the arrival of more than 610,000 refugees and undocumented Afghans in 2017, combined with ongoing conflict and drought related displacement across the country, the country’s capacity to absorb new arrivals remains under significant strain and negative coping mechanisms such as remigration are increasingly prevalent.

Returns in 2018 took place against a backdrop of increased internal displacement and record numbers of civilian casualties, where Afghanistan now ranks second behind Syria and ahead of Yemen for the most civilian casualties in the world.⁵ Over the course of 2018 just under 370,000 Afghans were newly displaced by conflict, while over 235,000 were forced to leave their homes due to the ongoing drought.⁶ The continuing insecurity and limited capacity to absorb returning Afghans and those displaced within Afghanistan frequently lead to secondary displacement and onward movement.⁷

² The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran registers refugees in the country. With the exception of refugees in settlements, UNHCR has most recently received only the aggregate number of refugees from the Government in May 2015. Source: *Global Trends. Forced Displacement in 2017, UNHCR*.

³ Following a 6-month registration exercise carried out in Pakistan from August 2017 to February 2018.

⁴ ‘Undocumented’ in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan refers to Afghans who do not hold PoR cards. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, ‘undocumented’ refers to Afghans who reside irregularly in the country without Amayesh cards or valid visas. The designation as ‘undocumented’ does not refer to the possession of civil documentation in Afghanistan such as Tazkera and/or passports.

⁵ Action on Armed Violence, 2018: a year of explosive violence, <https://aoav.org.uk/2019/2018-a-year-of-explosive-violence/>

⁶ See: <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/afghanistan>.

⁷ Samuel Hall / NRC / IDMC (2018) *Challenges to IDPs’ Protection in Afghanistan*, commissioned by NRC / IDMC and funded by the European Union and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs <https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/escaping-war-where-to-next-the-challenges-of-idp-protection-in-Afghanistan/>

Return Support

Afghan refugee returnees



A woman from Afghanistan's Kunduz province speaks about her family's protection needs. (UNHCR/S. Rich)

UNHCR, in coordination with the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and partners, manages four Encashment Centres (ECs) where it provides a cash grant of an average USD 200 to each registered refugee returnee. The grant aims to cover transportation costs from the Afghan border and immediate needs upon return. Additional services provided at the ECs include basic health assessments and vaccinations (delivered by Ministry of Public Health supported by WHO and UNICEF), mine risk awareness (coordinated by the United Nations Mine Action Service and delivered by the Danish Demining Group), information on education, access to land, and procedures to obtain civil documentation, a transit facility for overnight accommodation, and hygiene kits provided by United Nations Population Fund. At the ECs,

UNHCR also conducts household level interviews to assess the voluntary nature of returns and to collect data on return trends, including reasons for return and protection risks in the country of asylum and during return movements. Persons with specific needs are jointly identified by UNHCR and the Directorate of Refugee and Repatriation (DoRR) and referred to service providers for assessment and assistance.⁸

In addition, UNHCR implements community-based protection initiatives to assist returnees, IDPs and host populations who are identified through UNHCR's protection monitoring to be in need of protection assistance. In 2018 UNHCR assisted over 6,600 persons with specific needs, including IDPs, refugee returnees, undocumented returnees, refugees, and members of host communities, with cash or in-kind protection assistance (which also benefitted some 50,000 persons indirectly). UNHCR provided winterization assistance (multi-purpose cash grants of USD 200 per family, along with non-food items) to nearly 50,000 vulnerable returnee, IDP and host community families (350,000 individuals) across 34 provinces while coordinating the winterisation response as lead agency for the Emergency Shelter/NFI Cluster.

Undocumented Afghan returnees

IOM continues to lead the humanitarian undocumented returnee response at the four major border crossings with the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan through a network of IOM built and managed transit facilities. In reception centers at the borders, DoRR identifies, screens and registers all returning Afghans regardless of status. DoRR refers vulnerable undocumented returnees to IOM, who then conduct assessments and provides immediate humanitarian post-arrival assistance in IOM Transit Centers. This includes meals, accommodation, seasonal clothes, psychosocial assistance, basic medical and tuberculosis screening, vaccinations, food and non-food items, referrals to specialised services, onward transportation for special cases (including deceased persons), and multi-purpose cash grants for transportation and NFIs. IOM provides persons with specific needs with tailored protection-sensitive post-arrival humanitarian assistance according to their particular needs. As part of its protection programme, IOM provides comprehensive case management and protection assistance, including reunification of vulnerable returnees in 15 destination areas, unconditional cash, in-kind assistance and referrals to protection actors for unaccompanied children, single females, female headed households, medical cases and victims of human rights violations.



A young boy gets off his family's truck at Spin Boldak, one of the two official border crossings between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

⁸ IOM and UNHCR jointly revised the 11 categories of specific needs criteria to include sub-categories to effectively identify vulnerabilities and to better facilitate assistance and referral.

From August 2017 to February 2018, the Government of Pakistan’s National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), supported by the Government of Pakistan, IOM and UNHCR, registered over 879,000 undocumented Afghans for Afghan Citizen Cards (ACC) at 21 registration centres. To date 385,000 persons have received ACC cards, which have recently been extended until 30 April 2019.

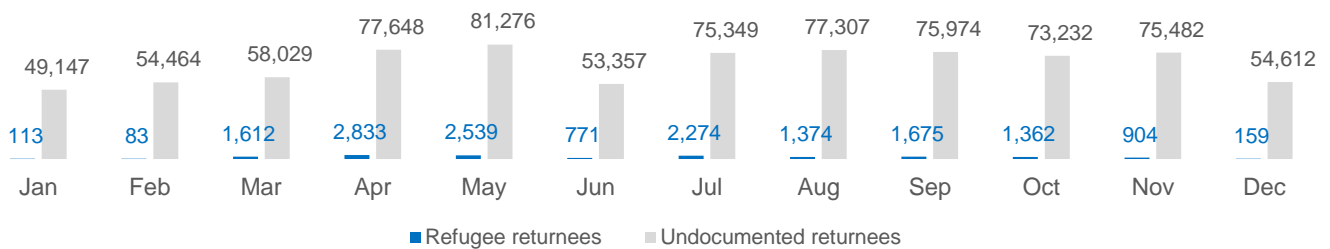
Key Return Trends

Top 5 Areas of Return

Afghan refugee returnees: Some 60% have returned to Kabul, Nangarhar, Sar-e-Pul, Kunduz, and Herat provinces since 2002, with Kabul, Nangarhar and Kunduz remaining the top provinces of return.

Undocumented Afghan returnees: Based on 19,271 surveys, the top 3 destination provinces for returnees from Pakistan were Kandahar (24%), Nangarhar (15%) and Kunduz (9%), followed by Kunar (6%) and Kabul (5%). The top 3 destination provinces for returnees from Iran were Herat (15%), Takhar (9%), and Ghor (8%), followed by Kunduz (7%) and Faryab (7%).

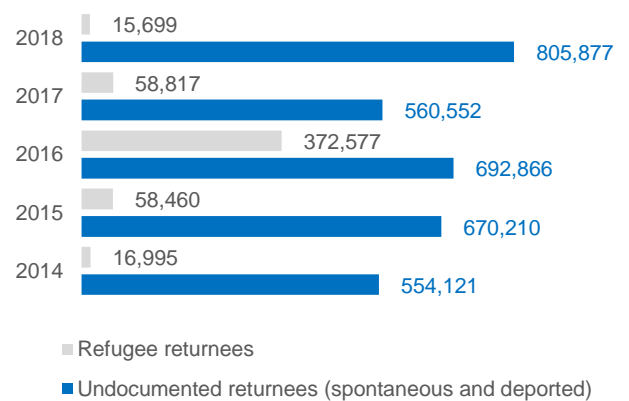
Returns to Afghanistan in 2018 by Month



In general

- One in four Afghans have been displaced.
- The top five challenges for returnees are food insecurity, shelter, land, livelihoods and access to services including civil documentation.
- The majority of returnees from Pakistan are from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan followed by Sindh, Punjab, Islamabad and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Return Trends to Afghanistan 2014-2018



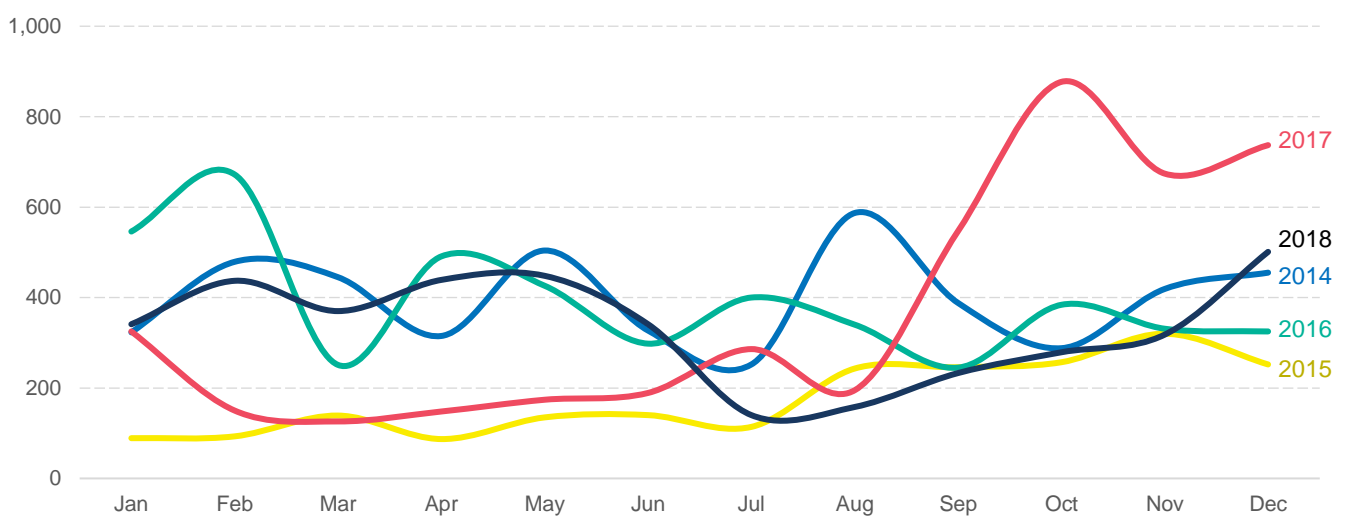
Afghan refugee returnees⁹

- 55% of 2018 returnees and 46% of 2017 returnees surveyed in 2018 are currently living in their province of origin. This is lower than the findings from last year, in which 61% of 2017 interviewed returnees confirmed that they were living in their province of origin.
- Insecurity, lack of shelter, job and economic opportunities are the most-cited reason for not living in the province of origin.
- Over 90% of interviewed returnees stated that they had sufficient information to make an informed decision prior to the return.
- 60% of refugee returnees spent over three decades in Pakistan.
- 22% of refugee returnees from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and 16% from the Islamic Republic of Iran were born in exile.¹⁰

Undocumented Afghan returnees

- Profiling surveys of undocumented Afghan returnees crossing the border from Pakistan show that 78% intended to return to their province of origin whereas 22% intended to return to different provinces.¹¹
- 29% of the undocumented Afghans returning from Iran returned from Tehran, 25% from Fars, 16% from Khorasan Razavi and the remaining from other provinces.
- According to IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) flow monitoring activities conducted from February through December 2018, an estimated 604,583 undocumented Afghan returnees were deported or spontaneously returned (373,814 deportees and 230,769 spontaneous returnees), predominately from the Islamic Republic of Iran through Herat and Nimroz border crossings.¹²
- According to IOM screenings at border points, in 2018 the number of unaccompanied children returning to Afghanistan from the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan reduced slightly from 4,419 in 2017 to 4,005 in 2018.¹³
- IOM’s DTM flow monitoring data suggests that UAC accounted for 3.84% of the total undocumented population returning from Iran – 7.24% at Milak and 1.77% at Islam Qala border crossings.
- IOM assisted 20,735 cases with protection needs from the two countries, of which 14,806 were deportees and 5,929 were spontaneous returnees. This included 4,005 UAC; 2,143 female-headed households; 511 unaccompanied elderly; 348 physically disabled; 194 drug addicts; 119 single females; 31 chronically ill; and 26 mentally ill or severely traumatized.

Deported and Assisted Unaccompanied Undocumented Children by Month (2014-2018)



⁹ Source: UNHCR Returnee and IDP monitoring report, December 2018.

¹⁰ Source: UNHCR Encashment Centre monitoring.

¹¹ Source: IOM Intention Survey, January 2018.

¹² Source: IOM DTM Flow Monitoring Registry.

¹³ IOM Beneficiary Screening Assessment Database, January 2019.

Specific Protection Concerns

Lack of access to basic services, land and land tenure, shelter, and livelihoods remain major obstacles to sustainable return and reintegration for both refugees and undocumented returnees in Afghanistan.

Afghan refugee returnees¹⁴

- Approximately 50% of 2018 returnees and 54% of 2017 returnees surveyed in 2018 report skipping a meal or reducing their food intake in the previous week. This is a dramatic rise from last year's study, which found that only 27% of 2017 returnees (and 39% of 2016 returnees) reported skipping a meal or reducing their food intake.
- 28% of refugee returnees reported that they are unable to access healthcare.
- 5% of 2018 returnees and 4% of 2017 returnees surveyed in 2018 report having a child under 14 years old working in times of need to support the family. These estimates are a marked decline from last year's survey, in which 16% of 2017 returnees (and 18% of 2016 returnees) reported relying on child labor in times of need.¹⁵

Undocumented Afghan returnees

- 72% of female-headed undocumented households and 51% of male-headed undocumented returnee households reported that they had eaten fewer meals in the past week.
- 66% of undocumented returnee children were not going to school in Afghanistan, and 9% of female-headed households and 6% of male-headed households reported that a child under 14 was working.
- 52% of female-headed households and 44% of male-headed households reported that they were unable to access healthcare, primarily because they could not afford the cost.¹⁶
- Land ownership was rare for undocumented returnees. The highest rate of land ownership was in Ghor, where 18% of interviewees owned land, and the lowest was Kandahar and Nimroz with 2%. On average, 10% of undocumented returnees from other provinces owned land.¹⁷ Roughly 8% of male head-of-households versus 1% of female head-of-households reported to own land.¹⁸

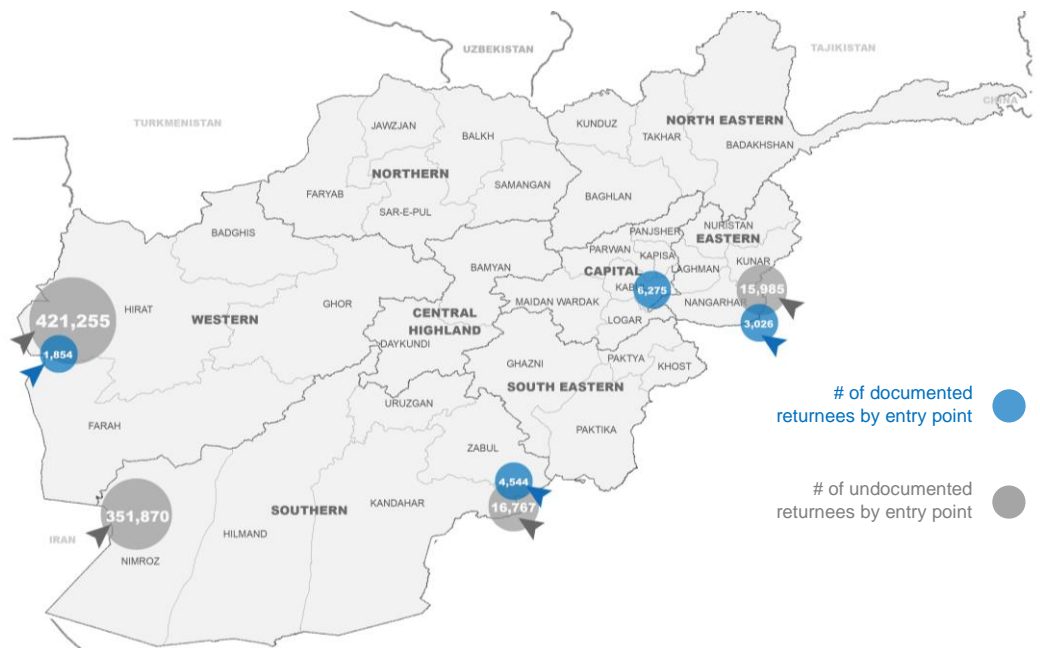
of returnees in 2018

821,576

Documented 15,699 **Undocumented** 805,877

of returnees by country of asylum

Iran	773,125
Pakistan	32,752
Other	0
	1,964
	13,584
	151



¹⁴ Source: UNHCR returnee monitoring conducted 1-6 months after arrival of the refugee returnees.

¹⁵ Interviews for 2018 returnees were conducted by phone 1-6 months following the return.

¹⁶ Based on analysis of 3,811 monitoring and evaluation surveys, which included 522 female respondents and 3,289 male respondents. 80% of both men and women said their lack of access to healthcare was due to the cost.

¹⁷ Based on analysis of 17,948 BSAF surveys.

¹⁸ Based on analysis of 19,234 BSAF surveys, with 16,681 male respondents and 2,553 female.

Data Collection and Analysis in Afghanistan

UNHCR

Through **protection monitoring** UNHCR systematically and regularly collects, verifies and analyses information over an extended period of time to identify violations of rights and protection risks for IDPs, returnees and members of host communities for the purpose of developing effective responses. Protection risk analysis helps to inform the overall humanitarian response and upholds the centrality of protection. UNHCR's protection monitoring is used as a tool for community-based interventions and for interventions aimed at persons with specific needs; it furthermore assists UNHCR and partners in the overall programme planning and response, as well as in providing evidence for advocacy efforts with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and development stakeholders. UNHCR is using mobile data collection to enhance the analysis of data collected through protection monitoring, to facilitate the categorisation and systematisation of evidence, and to develop advocacy and intervention strategies. Analysis of collected data is key for its effective usage.

In September 2018 UNHCR contracted Orange Door Research to conduct phone interviews with returnees, IDPs, and host communities, as well as persons with specific needs, to identify violations of rights and protection risks for populations of concern, and to assess the impact, efficiency, and effectiveness of cash grants and other forms of assistance in addressing protection risks and facilitating sustainable reintegration.

Encashment Center (EC) monitoring is a component of UNHCR's overall protection monitoring. EC monitoring is conducted upon the arrival of refugee returnees in Afghanistan and aims at identifying return trends, assessing the voluntariness of return, and identifying reasons for the decision to return, while also assessing the level of information returnees received pre-departure in countries of asylum in order to make a well-informed choice to return home, as well as the conditions and respect for basic rights in the country of asylum. It also assists in detecting harassment and human rights violations that will be brought to the attention of responsible authorities.

UNHCR carries out **protection assessments** of individual cases involving persons with specific needs using a participatory approach. Home visits are carried out to assess the needs, capacities and vulnerabilities of each individual in order to respond in the most appropriate manner, in consultation with the beneficiary and his or her family.

To **enhance collaboration with other UN Agencies**, UNHCR has signed a data sharing agreement with UN-HABITAT to complement ongoing efforts with regard to the selection of beneficiaries for the allocation of land for returnees through the Shura Programme. UNHCR has a data sharing agreement with the World Bank, which aims to strengthen existing return and protection monitoring initiatives and data analysis; a joint report was published by the World Bank and UNHCR in early 2019 providing a detailed analysis of the situation of recent refugee returnees.¹⁹ UNHCR has signed a data sharing agreement with WFP to ensure food assistance to vulnerable returnees through WFP's SCOPE program. UNHCR is in the process of developing a similar agreement with IOM to facilitate data analysis of return trends.

A young newlywed Afghan couple who were both born in Iran pass through the Dogharoun Repatriation Centre on their way to start a new life back home in Afghanistan. (UNHCR/S. Rich)



¹⁹ "Living Conditions and Settlement Decisions of Recent Afghan Returnees – Findings from a 2018 Phone Survey of Afghan Returnees and UNHCR Data", World Bank and UNHCR, February 2019 (pending release)

UNHCR/IOM

Post-return monitoring: UNHCR and IOM use mobile phone surveys (at the household level) and focus group discussions (at the community level) to collect real-time data from all returnee populations one to six months after the returnees have settled in communities. Comprehensive socio-economic profiling and vulnerability assessments are conducted in selected locations of high return and displacement to design evidence-based programming for protection and solutions. This is supplemented by interviews with IDPs and the general Afghan population for comparison purposes. This provides UNHCR and IOM with an unparalleled perspective on current returnee population mobility trends and real-time data regarding assistance needs, protection risks and vulnerabilities, as well as comparative information from a broader cross-section of the population.

IOM

Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM): IOM's DTM is a unique data collection mechanism currently deployed in over 40 countries with complex humanitarian emergencies to track and monitor population movements, mobility patterns and presence of specific population categories and their needs. DTM supports effective and targeted delivery of humanitarian and development assistance, as an inter-agency tool that enables partners to understand the mobility patterns of IDPs, returnees, and population movement in general. DTM also tracks the presence of vulnerable groups within communities that enhances the ability of IOM and its humanitarian and development partners to target specific, priority areas and provide more efficient and timely delivery of assistance.



At the IOM office on the Islam Qala border between Afghanistan and Iran a man receives help in returning to his village in Daikundi province. (IOM/E. Schwoerer)

DTM Baseline Mobility Assessment Form is used to collect settlement-level data on inflows, outflows, locations, and multi-sectoral needs of returnee, displaced, migrant and mobile populations, through focus group discussions in each assessed settlement.

DTM Flow Monitoring Registry Form is used to collect quantitative data on the inflows, outflows, drivers of migration, vulnerabilities and needs of migrants, returnees and deportees at the key border crossing points.

Beneficiary Selection Assessment Form is filled out for all persons screened by DoRR who receive IOM assistance at border crossing points to identify protection concerns. This includes profiling of beneficiaries' intended destinations.

Vulnerable Migrant Protection Assessment is conducted for all persons with specific needs that require protection sensitive humanitarian assistance. As part of the comprehensive case management process, this assessment is conducted after successful family tracing and safe reunification in destination areas with family members (or alternative caregivers). This identifies the immediate, medium and longer-term needs of vulnerable returnees such as single females, unaccompanied migrant children, female-headed households, medical cases or victims of human rights violations. IOM's protection-sensitive post arrival humanitarian assistance also provides referrals to specialist protection actors and in-kind assistance according to the beneficiary's self-identified priority needs (typically food, NFIs and civil documentation and livelihood opportunities).

Protection Monitoring: IOM systematically collects, verifies and analyses data to identify violations of rights and protection risks of returnees at the border areas, as well as areas of final destination to enhance the response. This includes protection monitoring of populations of concern, protection monitoring missions, (internal and inter-agency) at each of the four major border crossings and areas of final destination for PSNs. Needs assessments identify the manifold protection concerns that arise during the return and reintegration process amidst evolving nature of complex humanitarian crises. Regular monitoring of individual caseloads is conducted through comprehensive case management for the most vulnerable PSNs in coordination with partners in the field.

IOM-UNHCR Collaboration

In 2019, UNHCR and IOM will finalize a data sharing agreement, while harmonizing all post return monitoring forms with joint reporting and analysis through an integrated dashboard. In addition, baseline data for reintegration programming and community selection will be informed by UNHCR protection monitoring and IOM's DTM. UNHCR and IOM will jointly work on the development of key indicators for displacement and mobility monitoring tools. Further areas for joint programming will include continuing coordination efforts, advocacy and public outreach, cash, and protection referrals.

Linking Return to Reintegration

UNHCR's Community Protection Measures (CPMs) are part of UNHCR's multi-year strategy and focus on mitigating protection risks, both at the individual and community level. CPMs adopt an integrated community-based approach to address the protection needs and identify solutions for Pakistani refugees (in Khost and Paktika provinces), refugee returnees, IDPs, and host communities while fostering social cohesion, peaceful coexistence and community resilience. CPMs are area-based and site-specific projects informed by protection monitoring, baseline socio-economic profiling, and protection risk and market analyses. This enables the design of evidence-based programming to systematically address the protection risks and immediate to short- and medium-term needs of populations of concern. In 2018, UNHCR's community-based protection measures supported 61 communities and over 500,000 individuals, both directly and indirectly, including more than 60,000 members of communities hosting displaced populations.

Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: In July 2018, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan officially announced its decision to formally support the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF). The application of the CRRF in Afghanistan will contribute to bringing national strategies and frameworks in line with practical plans through a whole of community approach, while ensuring implementation and monitoring in the provinces under close government leadership. Broadly, the CRRF seeks to ease pressure on host countries, enhance refugee self-reliance, expand access to third country solutions, and support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

Villagers walk along a 1,240 meter irrigation canal in Afghanistan's Bamyan province. With UNHCR's support, the canal was built by returnees and members of the local community as part of an infrastructure development project. (UNHCR/S. Rich)



A young boy sits in the middle of his female family members in their home in Kabul. They are among the hundreds of thousands of Afghans who returned from Pakistan in 2018. (IOM/E. Schwoerer)



Promoting Migration and Development through the Engagement of Qualified Afghan Diaspora: IOM approaches the link between migration and development from the perspective that international migration, if properly managed, can contribute to the growth and prosperity of countries of origin and of destination, as well as benefiting migrants themselves. It therefore harnesses the development potential of migration for the benefit of both individual migrants and societies. IOM's Return of Qualified Afghans (RQA) programme aims at supporting Afghanistan's development and reintegration process through skills and knowledge transfer by facilitating the return of skilled and qualified members of the Afghan diaspora. IOM started its RQA programme in 2001 and, as of 2018, has facilitated the permanent or temporary return of 1,665 Afghans from 29 countries.

IOM's 4-year Reintegration Assistance and Development for Afghanistan (RADA) programme is being implemented in eight provinces of high return and internal displacement at the community and individual level and targets over 30,000 vulnerable Afghans. Activities are implemented on the individual, community and institutional level across 8 provinces – Kabul, Herat, Nangarhar, Balkh, Kandahar, Baghlan, Laghman and one final province to be decided based on needs – with five different sets of activities. RADA incorporates technical assistance and capacity building for MoRR and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA); community development projects; in-kind grant assistance to small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs); post-arrival reception assistance to returning migrants from Europe; and technical and vocational training courses.

Importantly, UNHCR's CPMs and IOM's RADA programme focus on **strengthening the humanitarian-development-peace nexus** by fostering linkages with development partners, including the private sector, for continuum to long-term development and sustainability. The CPM and RADA programmes are aligned to the Displacement and Return Executive Committee (DiREC) national action plan, the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANDPF, 2017-2021), relevant National Priority Programs, and the One UN framework. Through innovation programming such as Code4Fun and MADE51 UNHCR supports women and youth empowerment including explicit focus on addressing sexual and gender-based violence. UNHCR's cross border programming – Support for Self-Reliance (S4S initiative) – is built on the human capital of returnees and capitalizes on their knowledge and skills to foster self-reliance.



Community members plant vegetables in a greenhouse in Afghanistan's Herat province. The successful community-based programme utilises the skills of the community and links them with markets in the western region of the country. (UNHCR/S. Rich)

Planning Scenarios for 2019

Afghan refugee returnees

Based on 2018 return trends, UNHCR has budgeted for the return of 60,000 registered Afghan refugees in 2019, mainly from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, but with smaller numbers expected from the Islamic Republic of Iran and other countries. However, this figure depends on a number of factors, including the situation in the two main countries of asylum and the security environment in Afghanistan. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has extended PoR cards for Afghan refugees until 30 June 2019.

Undocumented Afghan returnees

IOM is projecting a return from Pakistan in 2019 of 50,000 ACC card holders in line with recent discussions between the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan and Pakistan under the Afghanistan-Pakistan Action Plan for Peace and Solidarity (APAPPS) forum, with further undocumented return figures to be negotiated through upcoming talks. All returning undocumented Afghans from Pakistan are in need of humanitarian assistance, as well as transitional and recovery to support sustainable reintegration. In addition, IOM is projecting a return of roughly 570,000 undocumented Afghans from the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2019. IOM estimates that 20% of these returnees from the Islamic Republic of Iran (or 114,000 persons) will be in need of assistance, as detailed in the Afghanistan Humanitarian Response Plan 2019-2021.

Additional Resources

IOM Afghanistan

1. [IOM Afghanistan Website](#)
 - a. [Weekly Situation Update on Return of Undocumented Afghans from Iran and Pakistan](#)
2. [IOM Humanitarian Compendium](#)
3. [IOM Afghanistan Displacement Tracking Matrix Website](#)
4. [IOM Afghanistan Facebook](#)
5. [IOM Afghanistan Twitter](#)
6. [IOM Afghanistan Instagram](#)

UNHCR Afghanistan

1. [UNHCR Afghanistan data portal](#)
2. [Humanitarian Data Exchange: UNHCR Afghanistan data](#)
3. [UNHCR Global Focus – Afghanistan](#)
4. [UNHCR Population Statistics Database](#)
5. [UNHCR Afghanistan Twitter](#)

Other Useful Resources

1. [Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2017](#)
2. [World Migration Report 2018](#)
3. [IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre](#)
4. [IOM Framework on Resolution of protracted displacement scenarios](#)
5. [New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants](#)
6. [Global Compact on Migration](#)
7. [2019-2021 Humanitarian Response Plan for Afghanistan](#)