Since 2002, more than 5.2 million Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan through UNHCR’s facilitated voluntary repatriation programme. Returnees who avail of the voluntary repatriation programme are eligible for cash assistance at encashment centers in Afghanistan. In 2019 to date, of the 6,220 persons processed for voluntary repatriation in Pakistan 158 were identified as recycled cases - persons who previously received the cash grant and as such did not qualify for cash assistance a second time. In Iran, 13 of the 1,952 persons processed did not present themselves at the encashment centers to collect the grant.

During quarter 4 (October to December) there was a 32% decrease in returns compared to the previous reporting period. More than 2.14 million registered Afghan refugees continue to be hosted by the Islamic Republics of Iran and Pakistan (951,000 and 1.4 million respectively).

**RETURNEE DEMOGRAPHICS**

- **Male**: 46% (Children: 50%, Adults: 47%, Elderly: 3%)
- **Female**: 54% (Children: 50%, Adults: 47%, Elderly: 3%)

**TOP 10 PROVINCE OF DESTINATION**

**AFGHAN RETURNEES BY PROVINCE OF DESTINATION**

- **IRAN**: 1,939 returns in 2019
- **PAKISTAN**: 6,062 returns in 2019

**TOP 10 PROVINCES OF DESTINATION**

1. **Baghlan**
2. **Hilmand**
3. **Kandahar**
4. **Jawzjan**
5. **Balkh**
6. **Kunduz**
7. **Herat**
8. **Nangarhar**
9. **Sar-e-Pul**
10. **Kabul**
ASSISTANCE AT ENCAHMNT CENTERS (ECs) IN AFGHANISTAN

In addition to cash grants, a range of inter-agency services are provided for returning refugees, including basic health and malnutrition screening and vaccination, mine risk awareness, information on school enrolment, and overnight accommodation, if needed.

USD 0.42M was provided in cash assistance to returnees at ECs in Q4 out of a total of 1.68M in 2019

Returnee head of households were interviewed at ECs to assess protection concerns in Q4

REASONS AND INTENTIONS RELATED TO RETURN

Reasons for leaving Pakistan and Iran

- High costs of living/rent: 32% (Pakistan), 35% (Iran)
- No employment opportunities: 30% (Pakistan), 32% (Iran)
- Strict border entry requirements: 11% (Pakistan), 11% (Iran)
- Fear of arrest/deportation: 17% (Pakistan), 21% (Iran)
- Other: 16% (Pakistan), 16% (Iran)

Reasons for return to Afghanistan (pull factors)

- UNHCR assistance package: 27% (Pakistan), 32% (Iran)
- Reunion with family in Afghanistan: 24% (Pakistan), 23% (Iran)
- Land allocation scheme/shelter program: 16% (Pakistan), 30% (Iran)
- Employment opportunities: 7% (Pakistan), 7% (Iran)
- Improvement in health & education facilities: 2% (Pakistan), 5% (Iran)
- Other: 4% (Pakistan), 10% (Iran)

Reasons for not returning to Province of Origin

- Perceived insecurity: 21.6% (Pakistan), 21.4% (Iran)
- To re-unite with relatives: 18% (Pakistan), 18% (Iran)
- Lack of income opportunities: 16% (Pakistan), 16% (Iran)
- Lack of housing/shelter: 13.2% (Pakistan), 13.2% (Iran)
- Lack of land: 9.5% (Pakistan), 9.5% (Iran)
- Other: 3.5% (Pakistan), 3.5% (Iran)

After you spend your cash grant, how will you support your family?

- Rely on daily wage 61%
- Rely on extended family wage 28%
- Borrow from relatives to start up a small business 8%
- Will join army or police 2.2%
- Will sell my asset(s) 1.1%
- Other 0.3%

What will be your living arrangements after return?

- Own house 39%
- Relatives house 35%
- Rental house 22%
- Open area 2%
- Makeshift shelter 1%
- Tent 0.6%

Upon return, how do you plan to spend the cash grant?

- Paying transportation costs 36%
- Buying food and commodities 35%
- Rent accommodation 11%
- Building shelter 5%
- Investment in livelihoods 5%
- Other 8%

REGISTERED VOLUNTARY REPARTIARTION (2018 and 2019)

For more information: