The situation in Afghanistan remains highly volatile. Over half a million of Afghans have been displaced in their country due to conflict and violence this year alone, amid what is now a humanitarian emergency of internal displacement. While Iran has not yet witnessed a major influx of refugees, UNHCR has seen an increase in the number of approaches by newly arrived Afghans in need of international protection. Most Afghans fleeing to Iran are doing so in an irregular manner through unofficial border crossings and with the help of smugglers, as official border points remain closed for entry to persons without valid passports and visas intending to seek asylum. The actual numbers of new arrivals to Iran are likely to be much higher than presented in this document – however, UNHCR currently lacks access to border areas and is only able to report on newly arrived persons of concern who have reached us through our hotlines and receptions. Therefore, UNHCR is not able to confidently confirm trends and figures, UNHCR has issued a non-return advisory for Afghanistan on 16 August, calling on governments to halt returns of Afghans nationals, including asylum-seekers who have had their claims rejected. UNHCR calls on countries to keep their borders open for Afghans seeking international protection, as well as for resettlement spaces to be allocated to Afghan refugees currently in Iran, with flexible criteria.

PROTECTION SCREENING OF NEWLY ARRIVED FAMILIES (17 AUG 2021 - 8 JAN 2022)

2,189 newly arrived heads of household screened (on behalf of 8,289 individuals)

24% are female-headed households. In terms of ethnicity, 40% are Hazaras and 37% are Tajiks. 24% of all arrivals do not have any identity documents, and 27% crossed officially using passports with valid visas. This sample is not representative of all Afghans arriving in Iran, but provides insight into the profiles of new arrivals that are approaching UNHCR.

Top 5 needs reported in Iran:

- Access to documentation: 42%
- Access to shelter: 42%
- Access to livelihoods: 38%
- Access to food: 24%
- Access to education: 16%

Top 5 concerns reported by new arrivals in Iran:

- Detention: 19%
- Asking for money in exchange for assistance: 16%
- Refoulement: 15%
- Theft: 5%
- Family separation: 2%

While borders between Iran and Afghanistan were officially closed from 16 August, they are now open only for Afghan passport-holders with valid visas for Iran. The Government does not allow the entry of undocumented persons. UNHCR calls on countries to keep their borders open for Afghan refugees currently in Iran, and with the help of smugglers, as official border points remain closed for entry to persons without valid passports and visas intending to seek asylum. The actual numbers of new arrivals to Iran are likely to be much higher than presented in this document – however, UNHCR currently lacks access to border areas and is only able to report on newly arrived persons of concern who have reached us through our hotlines and receptions. Therefore, UNHCR is not able to confidently confirm trends and figures, UNHCR

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