

Official Crossing Points Status Weekly Update - as of **16 September 2021**

Spon Boldak/Chaman, Kandahar province – crossing point with Pakistan

Inflow

Pedestrian:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The border is open from 7:30 - 03:30 pm.
Commercial:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions.

Outflow

Pedestrian:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The crossing point remains open for Afghans possessing national identity cards (Tazkira or Shinakhti pass holder), PoR and ACC holders. Based on local customs, the crossing point was also open for persons who do not possess documents (such as the elderly and persons with serious medical conditions).
Commercial:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions.

Observations/Comments

- The Border was open from 7:30 - 15:30 (KBL Time) for outflow and inflow movement of pedestrians as well as for cargo trucks from both sides of the border. UNHCR's monitoring partner staff is physically present at the border, however, female staff continue work from home.
- On 13 September, the Taliban authorities banned the movement of small smugglers, known as "Lagharies" who smuggle goods to/from Pakistan. Reportedly the Taliban authorities informed the Lagharies that they should stop their movement at least for four days because of the presence of a large number of people who were waiting for hours to cross to Pakistan. The Taliban reportedly informed the Lagharies that they will discuss with the Pakistani authorities to find an alternative solution i.e., to establish a separate line only for the cross-border movement of Lagharies. Since this announcement, movement of Lagharies was suspended.
- As per an official notification by the Taliban authorities on 7th September addressed to the Taxi drivers, the Taxi drivers are authorized to transport those who are only from Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces to Spin Boldak. They asked the Taxi drivers to not transport people from other provinces to Spin Boldak. Despite the official notification and restriction on the travel of people from other provinces to Spin Boldak, Taliban are flexible and allow people of other provinces to travel to Spin Boldak.
- The Pakistan General Consulate office in Kandahar is functional since 04 September but hasn't been issued any visa.
- The immigration office on the Spin Boldak side remains closed since 06 September and people cross into Pakistan without an exit stamp in their passports. The latter group are those people who obtained visas in the past.
- The overall situation in Spin Boldak remains calm and the majority of the markets, trades, and businesses were open. The main road between Kandahar - Spin Boldak road is open for all sorts of movements.

Torkham, Nangarhar province - crossing point with Pakistan

Inflow

Pedestrian:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open for all persons without any restrictions.
Commercial:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions.

Outflow

Pedestrian:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open for persons holding passports and visas as well as support letters provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan on request of embassies based in Islamabad.
Commercial:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions

Khost – Ghulam Khan crossing point with Pakistan

Inflow

Pedestrian:	Closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian movement is not permitted.
Commercial:	Closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The border is closed.

Outflow

Pedestrian:	Closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian movement is not permitted.
Commercial:	Closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The border is closed.

Islam Qala/Dogharoon, Herat province - crossing point with Iran

Inflow

Pedestrian:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open for all persons without any restrictions.
Commercial:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions.

Outflow

Pedestrian:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Afghans with a valid passport and visa are allowed to cross into Iran.
Commercial:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions.

Zaranj/Milak, Nimroz province - crossing point with Iran

Inflow

Pedestrian:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open for all persons without any restrictions.
Commercial:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions.

Outflow

Pedestrian:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iran closed the border on 26 August 2021 ostensibly to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 7 September, the Iranian authorities allow the outflow movement of businessmen who have business passports and visas. In addition, Iran allows patients from Nimroz province who do not have visas but who have an official referral letter, approved by the Red Crescent Society, border police and provincial governor to go only to Sistan and Baluchistan province in Iran for medical treatment. In addition to the official letter, the Iranian authorities also require a cash and/or personal property guarantee from those seeking medical treatment in Iran.
Commercial:	Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No restrictions.

Sher Khan Bandar, Kunduz province - crossing point with Tajikistan		
Inflow		
Pedestrian:	Open	• Open for all persons without any restrictions.
Commercial:	Open	• No restrictions.
Outflow		
Pedestrian:	Open	• Open only for passport and visa holders but o movements are reported.
Commercial:	Open	• No restrictions.
Hiratan, Balkh province - crossing point with Uzbekistan		
Inflow		
Pedestrian:	Open	• Open for all persons without any restrictions.
Commercial:	Open	• No restrictions.
Outflow		
Pedestrian:	Open	• The border is open since 20 August 2021. • The border remains open only for persons holding educational, business, and diplomatic visas. The majority cross into Uzbekistan on business visas. Due to COVID-19 and the political situation in Afghanistan persons holding tourist or work visas cannot enter Uzbekistan.
Commercial:	Open	• No restrictions.
Akina, Faryab province - crossing point with Turkminstan		
Inflow		
Pedestrian:	Closed	• Pedestrian movement is not permitted.
Commercial:	Open	• No restrictions.
Outflow		
Pedestrian:	Closed	• Pedestrian movement is not permitted.
Commercial:	Open	• No restrictions.

Border Outflow Monitoring Report 01 April - 14 September 2021

In view of a change in the security and political context in Afghanistan, as of 01 April 2021 UNHCR Afghanistan enhanced its border monitoring activities and introduced outflow monitoring interviews (using a harmonized online Kobo form) at all four official entry points with Iran and Pakistan. The aim is to understand the triggers/intentions/reasons of Afghan movements to Pakistan and Iran and assess access to the territory and “the right to seek asylum” and challenges and barriers that hinder movement of people fleeing persecution and who may be in need of international protection.

Between 01 April – 14 September 2021, outflow interviews were conducted by UNHCR through partners with a total of 8,180 Afghans including 6,204 males and 1,976 females prior to their departure to Pakistan through the crossing points at Torkham (1,347) and Spin Boldak (5,113), and Iran, at Islam Qala (1,240) and Zaranj (480). These were consisting of 4,973 single individuals and 3,207 families. The variation in the sample size at the four official crossing points is due the temporary closure of the official crossing points with Iran and Pakistan due to COVID-19 (from 29 April until late June) as well as the escalation of the conflict in early July as a result of which UNHCR border monitoring partners were not able to operate until 21 August 2021.

Outflow monitoring findings (01 April – 14 September)

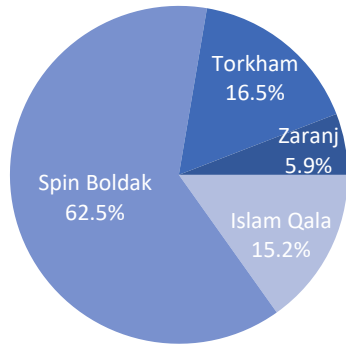
Respondents moving to Iran (1,720)	Respondents moving to Pakistan (6,460)
Type of Documentation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All were Passport Holders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 73% Tazkira/token holders 18% passport holders 4% border pass holders 5% Other (PoR and ACC holders)
Family Situation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 92% were single male Individuals vs 8% family cases 88% married and 12% single 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 52% were single male Individuals vs 48% family cases 87% married, 10% single, 3% widowed and divorced
Reasons of Departure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 57% move for business 12% in search of employment 9% for medical treatment 8% family visit 8% move to join other family members 5% to continue education 1% other reasons including conflict in Afghanistan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 62% for medical treatment 13% family visit 9% in search of employment 4% to move to a third country 4% due to conflict and fear of persecution in Afghanistan 2% move to join other family members 6% other reasons including for business, education and to attend a gathering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The difference in the number of single male individuals (the majority of the respondents) versus the marital status of these individuals is explained by the fact that many of single male individuals may be holding passport and visas because they require to move back forth to Iran/Pakistan for job opportunities or business purposes through the official crossing points. Reports have been received that some advise their families to cross into Iran and Pakistan to join them the unofficial crossing points, presumably due to lack of passport and visa. The percentage of those who stated that they moved to Pakistan due to conflict and fear of persecution in Afghanistan substantially increased during the month of August (during which conflict intensified across the country), though the number of interviews were low compared to the previous months. Prior to August, most of respondents stated that they were moving to Iran and Pakistan to access jobs, medical services and business. Out of a total of 340 interviews conducted with Afghans at Spin Boldak crossing, prior to their departure to Pakistan, during August, the majority of respondents (164 respondents – 48%) stated that they left Afghanistan due to conflict (137 respondents) and fear of persecution (27 respondents) in Afghanistan. These respondents stated that they were from Kandahar (20%), Ghazni (10%), Helmand (8%), Uruzgan (7%), Zabul (7%), Kabul (5%), Nangarhar (5%), Paktya (4%), Farha (4%), and Baghlan (3%) provinces. 	

- However, this trend among the Afghans who were interviewed at Zaranj and Islam Qala crossing points, prior to their departure to Iran, during the August remained similar to the trends reported prior August.
- Compared to August, however, the number of those who stated that they left Afghanistan due to conflict reduced during the month of September. During the two weeks of September, out of a total of 1,881 interviews conducted in all four crossing points, 192 respondents who were interviewed at Torkham (190) and Spin Boldak (2) stated that they were moving to Pakistan in order to move to a third country. This new trend is linked to the new initiative by a number of embassies based in Islamabad who are requesting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan to issue letters to facilitate the movement of people (who were stuck in Afghanistan) to Pakistan. This trend among the Afghans who were interviewed at Zaranj and Islam Qala crossing points remained similar to previous months. (see below chart and table).
- Note: The low-level interviews during the month of August is due the escalation of conflict which impacted UNHCR's border monitoring partner's presence and ability to conduct border monitoring interviews. However, the situation improved during the last quarter of August and during September and UNHCR's monitoring partners have resumed their activities at the official crossing points

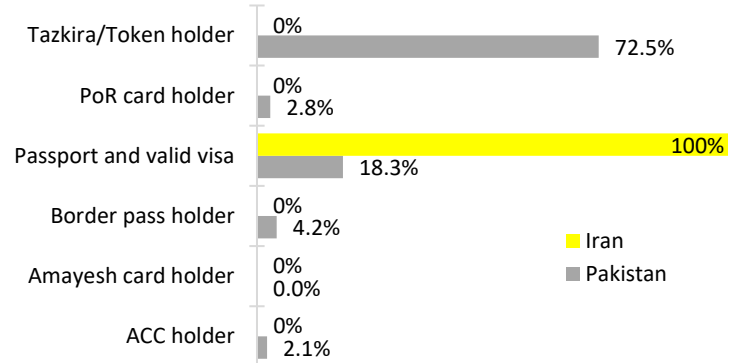
Movement Periodicity

- 25% stated that this is their first time moving to Iran
- 5% stated that they are moving for the second time
- 2% for third time
- 68% were regular movers (business owners)
- 35% stated that they are moving for the first time
- 18% for the second time
- 46% for third time
- 1% were regular movers (business owners)

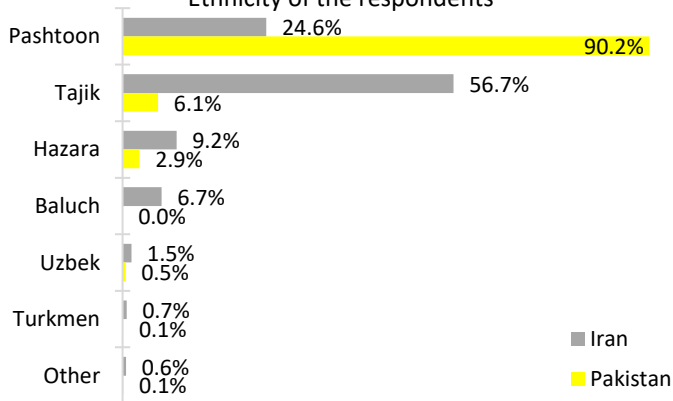
Number of Interviews by Entry Point



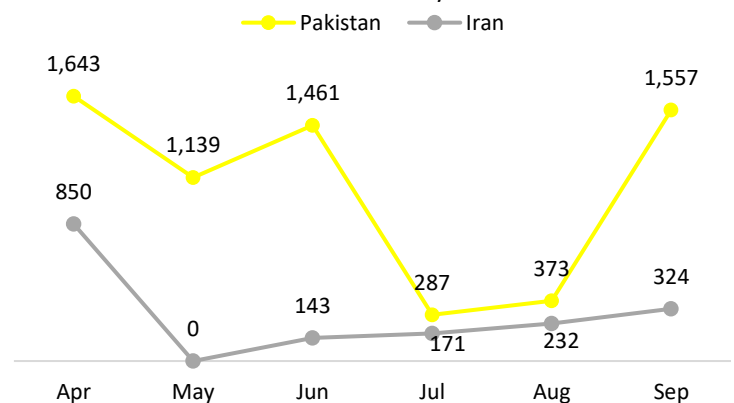
Documentation status of respondents



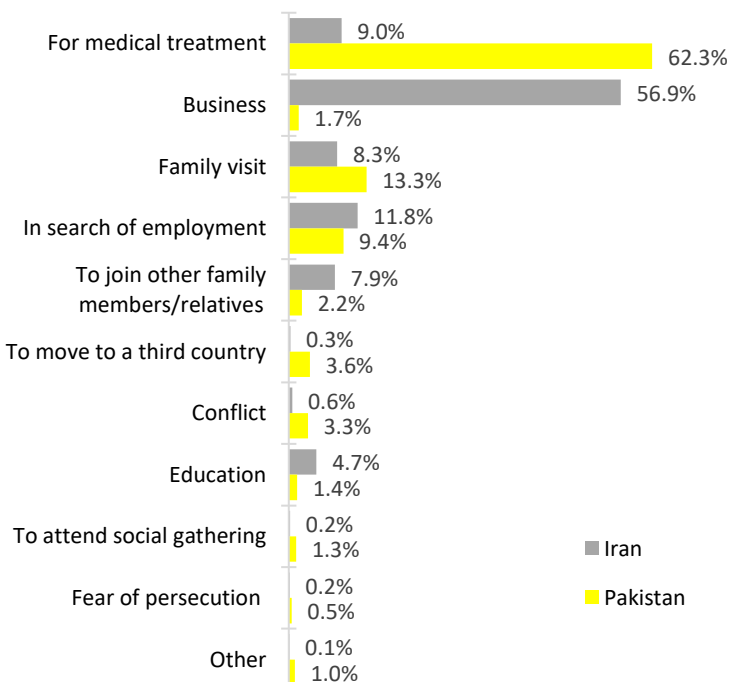
Ethnicity of the respondents



Number of interviews by month



Reasons of departure to Pakistan and Iran



Monthly trends - respondents who left Afghanistan due to conflict, fear of persecution, and intention to move to a third country



Reasons of departure from Afghanistan to Pakistan and Iran – monthly breakdown

Reasons of departure (multiple response)	Pakistan							Iran							Total
	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Total	
For medical treatment	1,109	893	1,143	178	94	810	4,227	100	0	23	24	8	13	168	4,395
Business	64	10	5	0	1	35	115	435	0	74	107	180	261	1,057	1,172
Family visit	256	158	161	22	38	269	904	81	0	3	9	41	20	154	1,058
In search of employment	183	91	118	20	74	149	635	159	0	11	8	40	1	219	854
To join other family members/relatives	14	36	55	7	14	25	151	90	0	13	17	6	21	147	298
To move to a third country	2	0	20	7	25	192	246	3	0	1	0	1	0	5	251
Conflict	9	31	25	8	137	12	222	8	0	0	1	2	0	11	233
Education	19	5	7	50	0	17	98	35	0	18	7	11	17	88	186
To attend social gathering	32	2	0	0	0	52	86	3	0	0	1	0	0	4	90
Fear of persecution	1	0	0	0	27	5	33	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	36
Other	41	9	2	0	8	11	71	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	73
Total	1,730	1,235	1,536	292	418	1,577	6,788	918	0	144	174	289	333	1,858	8,646