UNHCR-IOM FLASH UPDATE #17

ARREST AND DETENTION FLOW MONITORING (15 September 2023 – 31 March 2024)

INTRODUCTION

In response to the Ministry of Interior's (MoI) decision of 26 September 2023 to enact an "*Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan*", UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and IOM, the UN Migration Agency, have collated their data on the arrest, detention, and deportation of Proof of Registration (PoR) holders, Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders, and undocumented Afghan nationals as well as on the outflows of Afghan nationals at the Torkham and Chaman border crossing points, to better understand the protection environment and movements of Afghan nationals returning to Afghanistan from Pakistan.
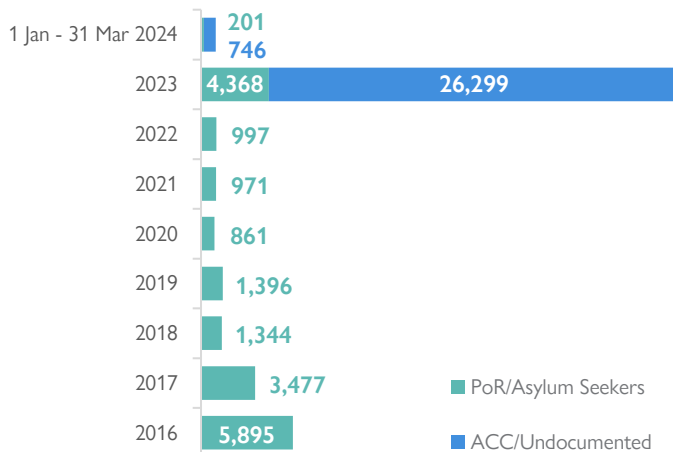
While the Government of Pakistan has yet to halt the "IFRP", the rate of arrest, detention, deportation, and returns has decreased significantly since its peak in October and November 2023. Furthermore, on 7 January 2024, the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) issued a notification that the validity of the POR cards has been extended until 31 March 2024.

KEY FINDINGS AND LIMITATIONS

It is important to note that prior to 2023, there was no data collected on the arrest and detention of ACC holders or undocumented Afghan nationals. Since January 2023, IOM has started to collect this data, which should be considered indicative at this point. The figures, particularly of undocumented Afghan nationals, should be considered underreported.

- The month of March 2024 saw the overall reported rates of arrest and detention increase by 121 per cent, in comparison to February 2024.

- In March 2024, the rate of arrest and detention was almost four times higher for ACC holders and undocumented Afghans, then it was for PoR holders and asylum-seekers.

- Since the start of 1 October 2023, the overall reported rate of arrest remains highest for the province of Balochistan. However, between January 1st and March 31st, the highest reported rate of arrest for Afghan nationals has been in the province of Sindh.

- Across Pakistan, the top three districts for arrest and detention between January 1st and March 31st are Karachi (Sindh), Peshawar (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), and Pishin (Balochistan).
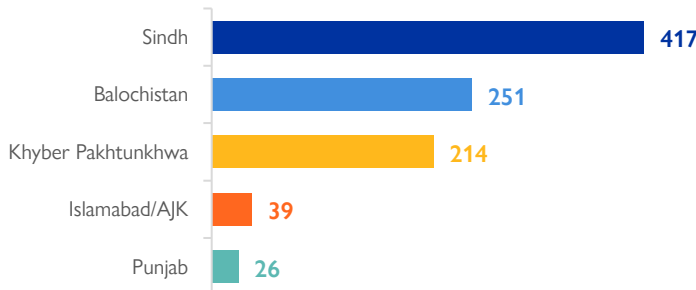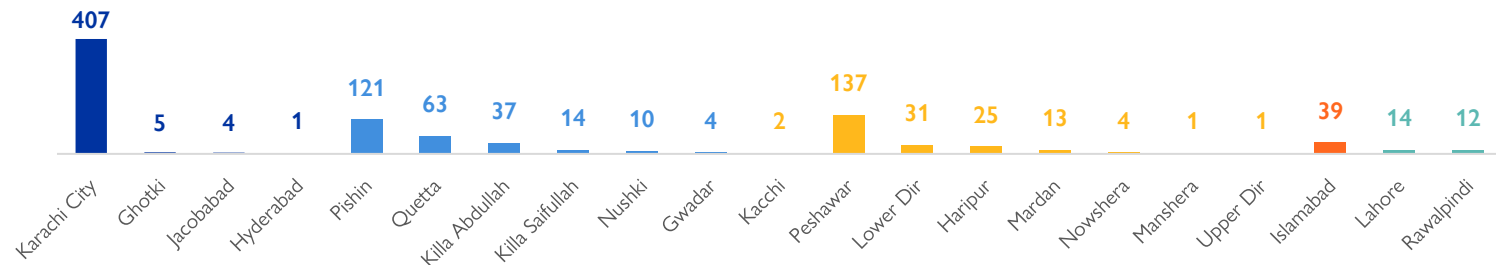
ARREST AND DETENTION BY YEARS

Year	PoR/Asylum Seekers	ACC/Undocumented
1 Jan - 31 Mar 2024	201	746
2023	4,368	26,299
2022	997	
2021	971	
2020	861	
2019	1,396	
2018	1,344	
2017	3,477	
2016	5,895	

% OF ARRESTS BY LOCATION (1 January – 31 March 2024)

Location	%
Sindh	44%
Balochistan	26%
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	23%
Islamabad/AJK	4%
Punjab	3%

NO. OF ARRESTS BY PROVINCE (1 January – 31 March 2024)

Province	No.
Sindh	417
Balochistan	251
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	214
Islamabad/AJK	39
Punjab	26

NO. OF ARRESTS BY DISTRICTS (1 January – 31 March 2024)

District	No.
Karachi City	407
Ghotki	5
Jacobabad	4
Hyderabad	1
Pishin	121
Quetta	63
Killa Abdullah	37
Killa Saifullah	14
Nushki	10
Gwadar	4
Kacchi	2
Peshawar	137
Lower Dir	31
Haripur	25
Mardan	13
Nowshera	4
Manshera	1
Upper Dir	1
Islamabad	39
Lahore	14
Rawalpindi	12

MONTHLY ARRESTS AND DETENTION TRENDS 2022 – 2024 (PoR HOLDERS)

Month	PoR/Asylum Seekers 2022	PoR/Asylum Seekers 2023	PoR/Asylum Seekers 2024
Jan	74	87	46
Feb	80	278	81
Mar	74	120	82
Apr	37	54	
May	72	123	
Jun	101	214	
Jul	65	210	
Aug	89	212	
Sep	100	299	
Oct	74	819	
Nov	133	1,872	
Dec	90	80	
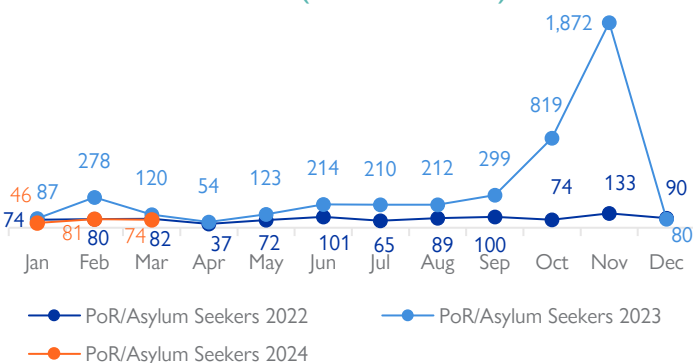
MONTHLY ARRESTS AND DETENTION ANALYSIS 2023 – 2024

Month	ACC/Undocumented	PoR/Asylum Seekers	PoR/Asylum Seekers/ACC/Undocumented
Aug, 23	118	212	330
Sep, 23	226	299	525
Oct, 23	430	819	1,249
Nov, 23	21,932	1,872	23,804
Dec, 23	3,290	80	3,370
Jan, 24	448	46	494
Feb, 24	57	81	138
Mar, 24	241	74	315

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ARREST AND DETENTION | **FLOW MONITORING (15 September 2023 – 31 March 2024)**

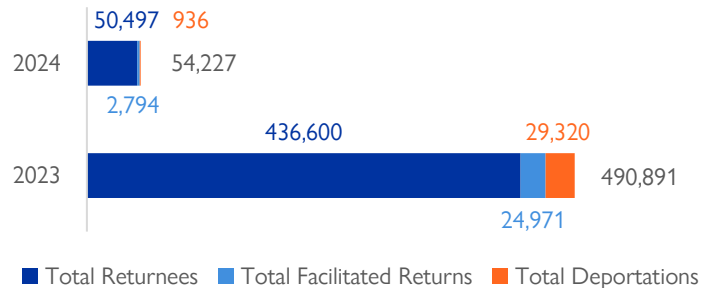UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency   IOM UN MIGRATION

KEY FINDINGS

- During the past month, UNHCR and IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) estimate 17,137 Afghans returned through the Torkham, Ghulam Khan (located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Chaman, Badini and Bahramcha (located in Balochistan) border crossing points to Afghanistan.
- Cumulatively, from 15 September 2023 to 31 March 2024, 545,118 individuals have returned.
- The number of returns in March (17,137) declined by three per cent compared to returns in February (17,632). The overall return figures remain low in comparison to the first weeks of November 2023.
- Most of the returnees were undocumented Afghans (89%), followed by PoR holders (9%) and ACC holders (2%). Majority of the POR returns are facilitated by UNHCR.
- Vulnerable persons including chronically ill people, elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, and others account for four percent of the population.
- Fear of arrest (89%) remains the most common reason to return to Afghanistan among undocumented/ACC holders while PoR holders cite social economic challenges.
- Returnees were most likely to return from Quetta (21%) and Peshawar (19%) in Pakistan and intend to go to Nangarhar (26%), Kandahar (23%) and Kabul (15%) in Afghanistan.

IOM enumerator collecting flow monitoring data at Chaman border. [IOM Pakistan 2024]

CUMULATIVE – 2023 AND 2024

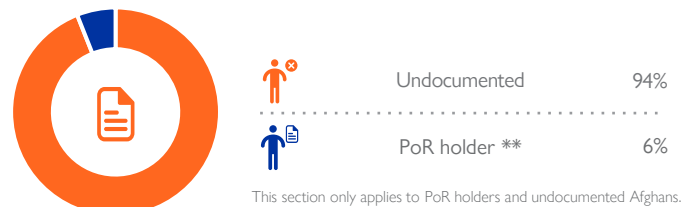|			
545,118 (100%) TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNS	**487,097 (89%)** TOTAL RETURNEES	**27,765 (5%)*** TOTAL FACILITATED PoR RETURNEES	**30,256 (6%)** TOTAL DEPORTATIONS

Period	Total Number of Returns	Total Returnees	Total Facilitated Returnees	Total Deportees
15 Sep – 31 Dec 2023	490,891	436,600	24,971	29,320
1 Jan – 31 Mar 2024	54,227	50,497	2,794	936
Total	**545,118**	**487,097**	**27,765**	**30,256**

2024: 50,497 | 936 | 54,227 | 2,794
2023: 436,600 | 29,320 | 490,891 | 24,971

■ Total Returnees   ■ Total Facilitated Returns   ■ Total Deportations

DOCUMENTATION – TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEES

Undocumented	89%
PoR holder **	9%
ACC	2%
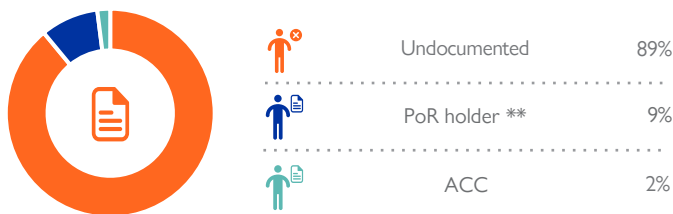
DOCUMENTATION – TOTAL DEPORTEES

Undocumented	94%
PoR holder **	6%

This section only applies to PoR holders and undocumented Afghans.

TOTAL RETURNS AND % DEPORTATIONS | 15 SEPTEMBER 2023 – 31 MARCH 2024

2023   2024

Values shown on chart: 10,270 (2%), 9,355 (1%), 27,665 (3%), (0%), (1%), 117,667 (0%), (9%), 47,484 (20%), 20% , 14%, 28,183 (7%), 7%, 16,747 (6%), 6%, 7,411 (3%), 5,148 (6%), 4,057 (5%), 3,433 (1%), 5,016 (1%), 4,650 (1%), 2,702 (0%), 1,727 (0%)

X-axis (Grouped per 7 days): 15 Sep – 21 Sep, 22 Sep – 28 Sep, 29 Sep – 5 Oct, 4 Oct – 12 Oct, 13 Oct – 19 Oct, 20 Oct – 28 Oct, 29 Oct – 2 Nov, 3 Nov – 9 Nov, 10 Nov – 16 Nov, 17 Nov – 23 Nov, 24 Nov – 30 Nov, 1 Dec – 7 Dec, 8 Dec – 14 Dec, 15 Dec – 21 Dec, 22 Dec – 28 Dec, 29 Dec – 4 Jan, 5 Jan – 11 Jan, 12 Jan – 18 Jan, 19 Jan – 25 Jan, 26 Jan – 1 Feb, 2 Feb – 8 Feb, 9 Feb – 15 Feb, 16 Feb – 22 Feb, 23 Feb – 29 Feb, 3/1/2024 – 3/7/2024, 3/8/2024 – 3/14/2024, 3/15/2024 – 3/21/2024, 3/22/2024 – 3/28/2024, 3/29/2024 – 4/1/2024

— Total Returns (Chaman + Torkham + Ghulam Khan + Badini + Bahramcha)
— Returns Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Torkham + Ghulam Khan)
— Returns Balochistan (Chaman + Badini + Bahramcha)
····· % Deportations (Chaman + Torkham + Ghulam Khan + Badini + Bahramcha)

*The number refers to facilitated PoR returns through VRCs who crossed the border during the reporting period.
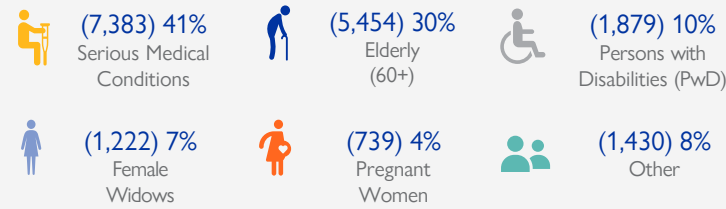** This figure refers to PoR holders based on interviews conducted with returnees in Afghanistan.

This section only applies to ACC holders and undocumented Afghans

TYPE OF VULNERABILITY
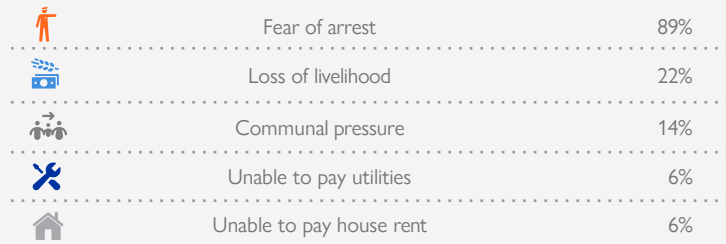(Expressed as a percentage of the total numbers of vulnerable persons)

- (7,383) 41% Serious Medical Conditions
- (5,454) 30% Elderly (60+)
- (1,879) 10% Persons with Disabilities (PwD)
- (1,222) 7% Female Widows
- (739) 4% Pregnant Women
- (1,430) 8% Other

AGE AND GENDER

	Female		Male
	49.7%		50.3%
	195,564		198,135
	(10.5%) 41,355	0 – 4	39,591 (10.0%)
	(18.7%) 73,683	5 – 17	79,369 (20.2%)
	(19.0%) 74,827	18 – 59	73,110 (18.6%)
	(1.5%) 5,699	60+	6,065 (1.5%)

REASONS FOR LEAVING PAKISTAN (TOP 5)
(Multiple answers can exceed 100%, N = 21,890)

Fear of arrest	89%
Loss of livelihood	22%
Communal pressure	14%
Unable to pay utilities	6%
Unable to pay house rent	6%

This section only applies to PoR holders

TYPE OF VULNERABILITY
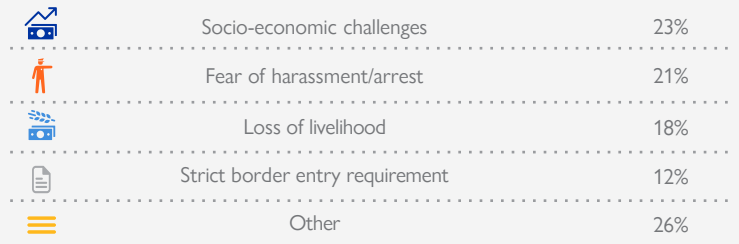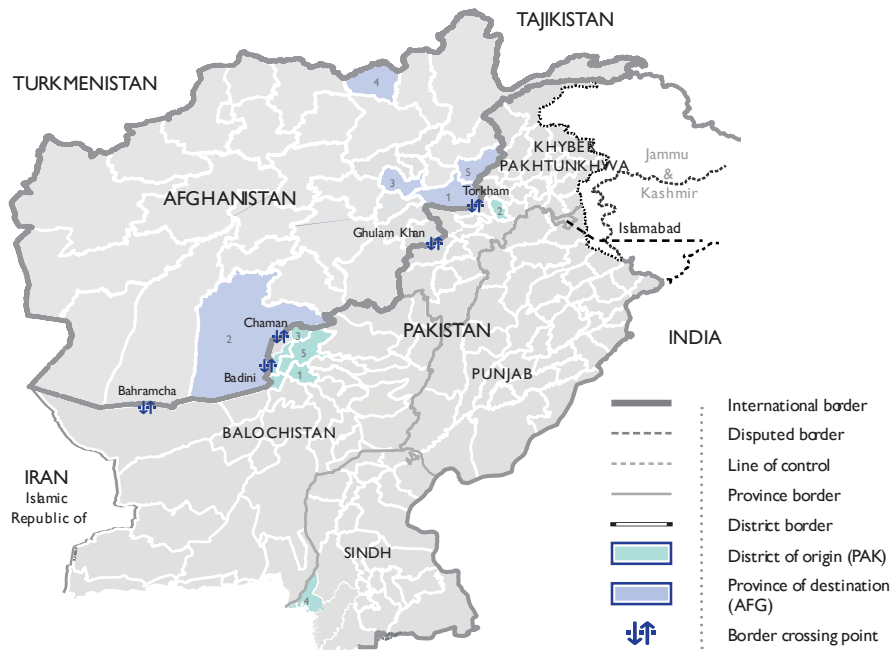(Expressed as a percentage of the total numbers of vulnerable persons)

- (655) 41% Serious Medical Conditions
- (275) 18% Elderly (60+)
- (166) 10% Women at Risk
- (165) 10% Persons with Disabilities (PwD)
- (320) 21% Other
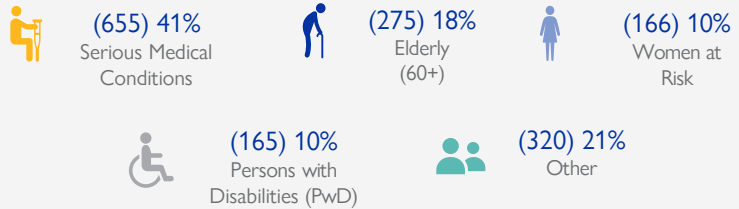
AGE AND GENDER

	Female		Male
	49.0%		51.0%
	13,593		14,170
	(9.4%) 2,588	0 – 4	2,448 (8.8%)
	(19.5%) 5,414	5 – 17	5,632 (20.3%)
	(19.1%) 5,305	18 – 59	5,618 (20.2%)
	(1.0%) 286	60+	472 (1.7%)

REASONS FOR LEAVING PAKISTAN (TOP 5)
(Multiple answers can exceed 100%, N = 2,106)

Socio-economic challenges	23%
Fear of harassment/arrest	21%
Loss of livelihood	18%
Strict border entry requirement	12%
Other	26%

DISTRICT OF ORIGIN IN PAKISTAN AND PROVINCE OF DESTINATION IN AFGHANISTAN

Legend:
- International border
- Disputed border
- Line of control
- Province border
- District border
- District of origin (PAK)
- Province of destination (AFG)
- Border crossing point

DISTRICT OF ORIGIN (TOP 5)

1. Quetta	21%
2. Peshawar	19%
3. Karachi Central	16%
4. Pishin	10%
5. Killa Abdullah	7%

PROVINCE OF DESTINATION (TOP 5)

1. Nangarhar	26%
2. Kandahar	23%
3. Kabul	15%
4. Kunduz	12%
5. Kunar	2%

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