Returns Emergency Response

as of 9 May 2024

Key figures

577,700
total returns[1]

87,300
UNHCR-assisted

30,800
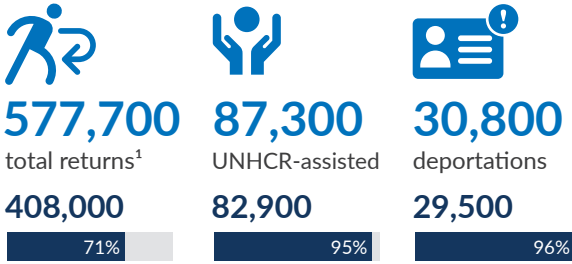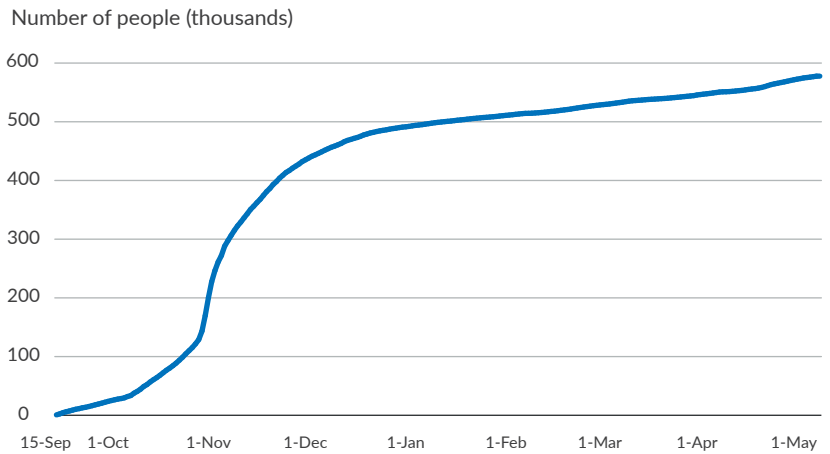deportations

408,000
71%

82,900
95%

29,500
96%

Out of the overall returns **49%** are female, of which **29%** are girls. **59%** are children.

Blue figures above correspond to the period of 15 September 2023 to 9 May 2024, while the **navy figures** refer only to those who arrived from 1 November 2023 to 9 May 2024.
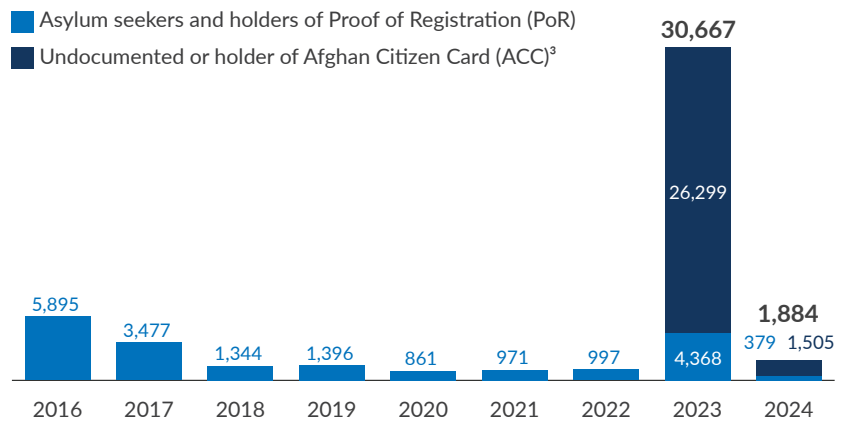
Context

On 3 October, Pakistan's national Apex Committee endorsed a plan to repatriate over a million foreigners without valid documents, largely Afghans, requiring them to leave the country by 1 November.

Since 15 September, **some 578,000 Afghans have returned to Afghanistan**. Most of this movement took place during the month of November.

Since 15 September, **UNHCR has assisted over 87,000 individuals**, including some 51,100 PoR cardholders, of which 30,400 were assisted via UNHCR voluntary repatriation programme.

The last month of April saw the overall reported rates of arrest and detention more than double, in comparison to the previous month of March 2024.

Total returns since 15 September 2023[2]

Number of people (thousands)

Arrests and detentions (from 2016 up to 4 May 2024)

- Asylum seekers and holders of Proof of Registration (PoR)
- Undocumented or holder of Afghan Citizen Card (ACC)[3]

Returns assisted by UNHCR Afghanistan
by Demographic profile

48% of assisted are **Female**

52% of assisted are **Male**

11%	0-5	11%
17%	6-17	18%
19%	18-59	21%
1%	60+	2%
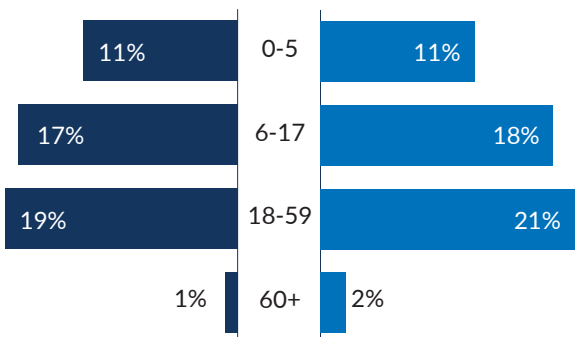
Out of those assisted **2.5%** have disabilities

Gender breakdown of head of households

27% are **Female**

73% are **Male**

Situation map

Legend
- Encashment centres
- Crossing points
- Total returns (cumulative since 15 September)

UZBEKISTAN   TAJIKISTAN
TURKMENISTAN
Jammu and Kashmir

Jalalabad EC
Kabul EC

AFGHANISTAN

Torkham
66% of the overall returns

Ghulam Khan
2% of the overall returns

Kandahar EC

Badini

Spin Boldak/Chaman
32% of the overall returns

PAKISTAN   INDIA

ISLAMIC REP. OF IRAN

Bahramcha

100 km

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

---

[1] An umbrella term that includes all returns including deportations, assisted Voluntary Repatriation (VolRep) and other returns of Afghans of all statuses such as PoR cardholders, ACC holders, and the undocumented.
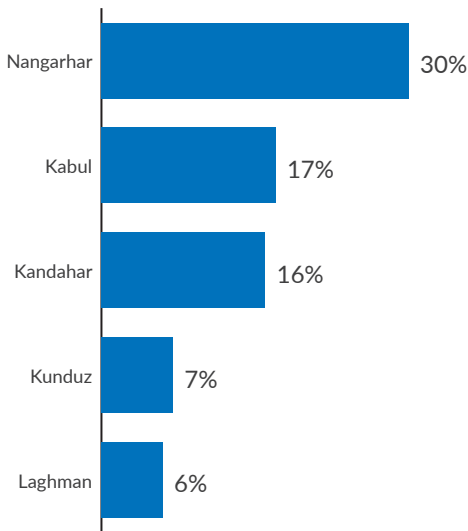[2] Return figures from 4 May 2024 onwards may fluctuate till validation process is concluded.
[3] Prior to 2023, there was no data collected on the arrest and detention of ACC holders or undocumented Afghan nationals.

Sources: UNHCR, IOM
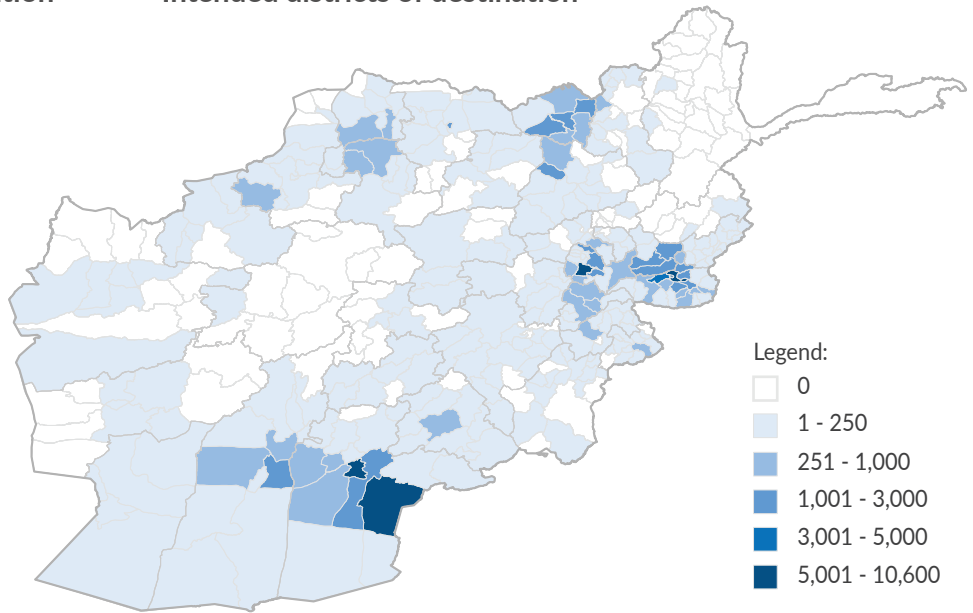
Returns assisted by UNHCR Afghanistan

In Afghanistan, UNHCR continued to biometrically process and provide cash assistance to PoR card holders and their nuclear family members, UNHCR slip holders, asylum seeker certificate holders and other Protection referrals. Since 15 September 2023, some 87,300 individuals returning from Pakistan have been provided with cash assistance in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad encashment centres, including over 51,100 PoR cardholders. Out of the assisted, some 2.5% are individuals with disabilities and some 3,000 PoR card holders, UNHCR slip holders and Asylum certificate holders were deported.

At least one in four households assisted are headed by women. 33% of them intend to return to five provincial capitals (Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Lashkargah and Mazar-e-Sharif).
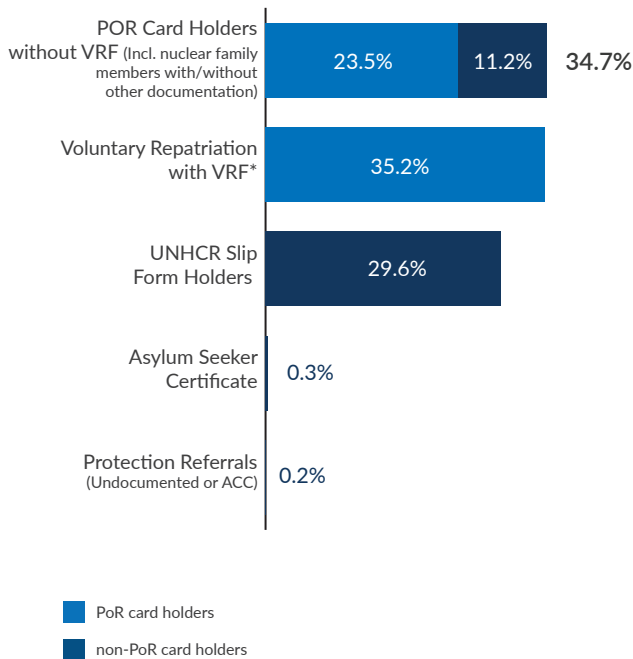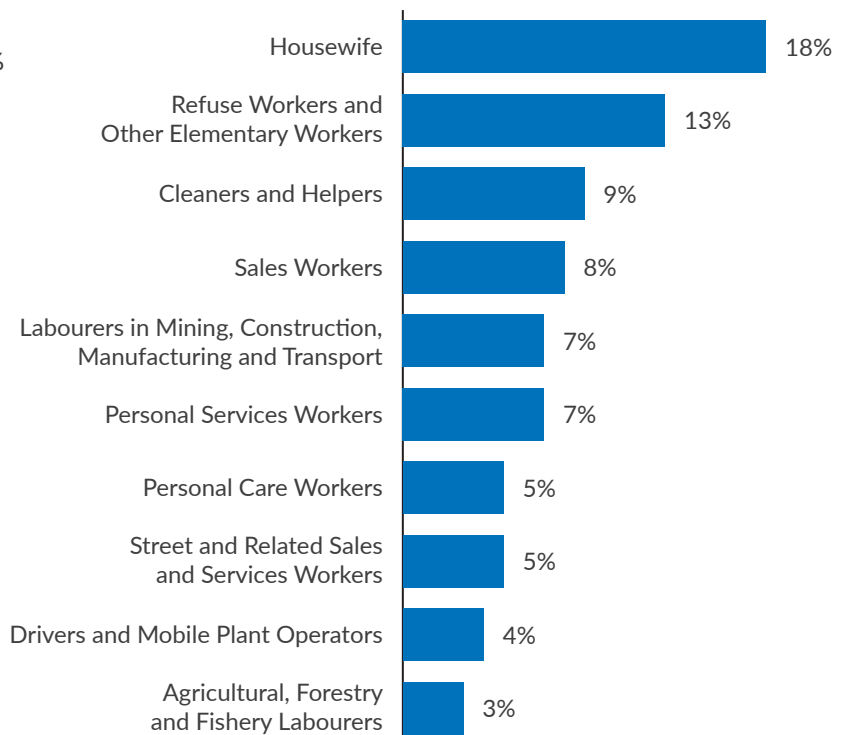
Top 5 provinces of intended destination

- Nangarhar — 30%
- Kabul — 17%
- Kandahar — 16%
- Kunduz — 7%
- Laghman — 6%

Intended districts of destination

Legend:
- 0
- 1 - 250
- 251 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 3,000
- 3,001 - 5,000
- 5,001 - 10,600

Documentation status

- POR Card Holders without VRF (Incl. nuclear family members with/without other documentation) — 23.5% | 11.2% | 34.7%
- Voluntary Repatriation with VRF* — 35.2%
- UNHCR Slip Form Holders — 29.6%
- Asylum Seeker Certificate — 0.3%
- Protection Referrals (Undocumented or ACC) — 0.2%

- PoR card holders
- non-PoR card holders

Top 10 occupation of the head of households

- Housewife — 18%
- Refuse Workers and Other Elementary Workers — 13%
- Cleaners and Helpers — 9%
- Sales Workers — 8%
- Labourers in Mining, Construction, Manufacturing and Transport — 7%
- Personal Services Workers — 7%
- Personal Care Workers — 5%
- Street and Related Sales and Services Workers — 5%
- Drivers and Mobile Plant Operators — 4%
- Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Labourers — 3%

Voluntary Repatriation Form.

Border Protection Monitoring

UNHCR and its partner Wadan in Afghanistan have scaled up protection activities at the border. Daily presence consists of Border Protection monitoring through interviews with returnees including deportees in order to identify protection concerns and risks, as well as their intended areas of return in Afghanistan. Five help desks have been set up to boost protection screening interviews, identification and referral of individuals to be assisted by UNHCR.

Since 12 November, the most reported problems experienced prior to the cross-border movement have consistently been harassment, waiting long hours at checkpoints and detention. Interrogations has continued to be the least reported issue.
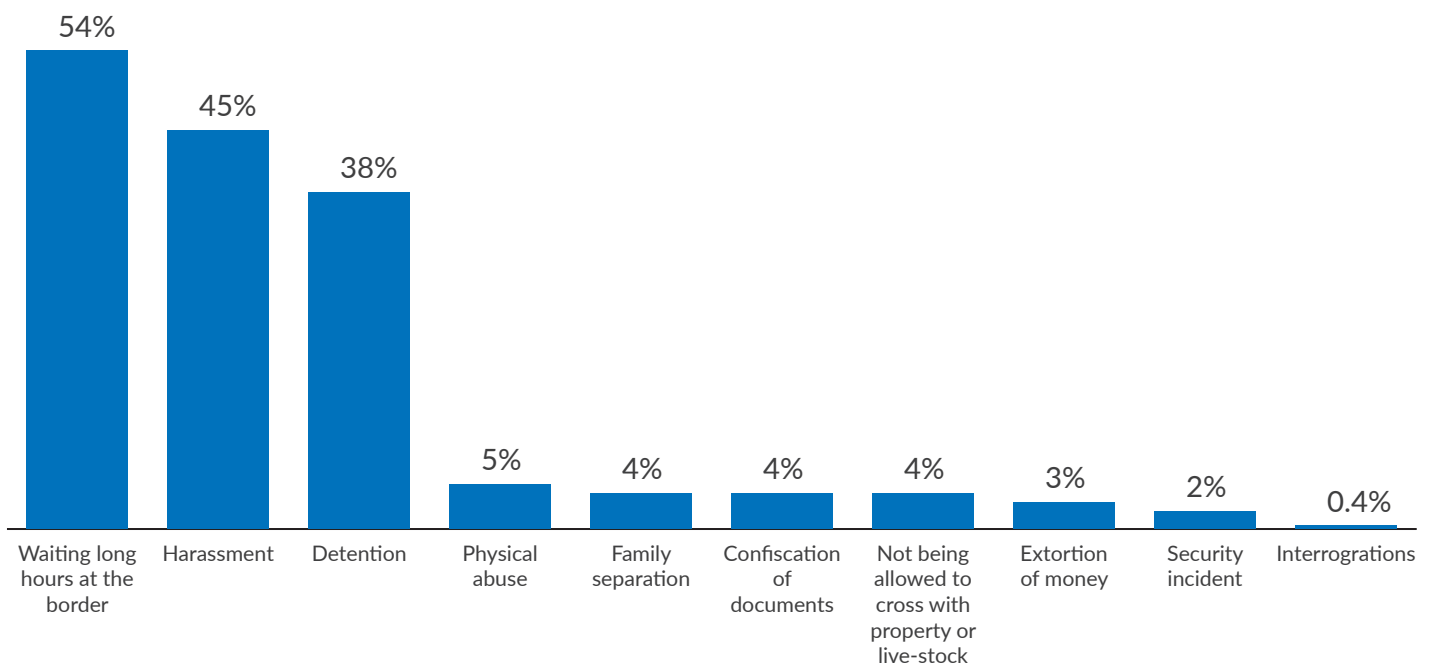
Top problems experienced in Pakistan prior to the cross-border movement[4]

Percentage interviews per month reporting problems
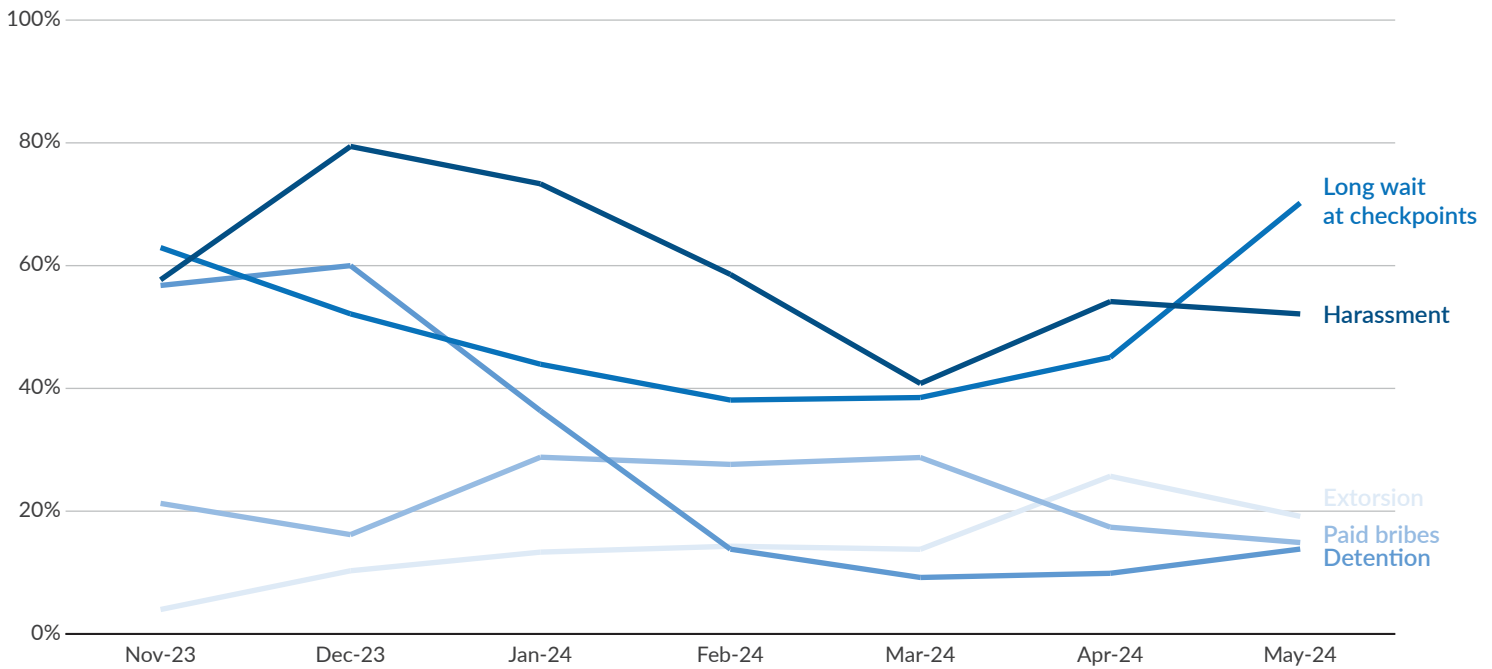
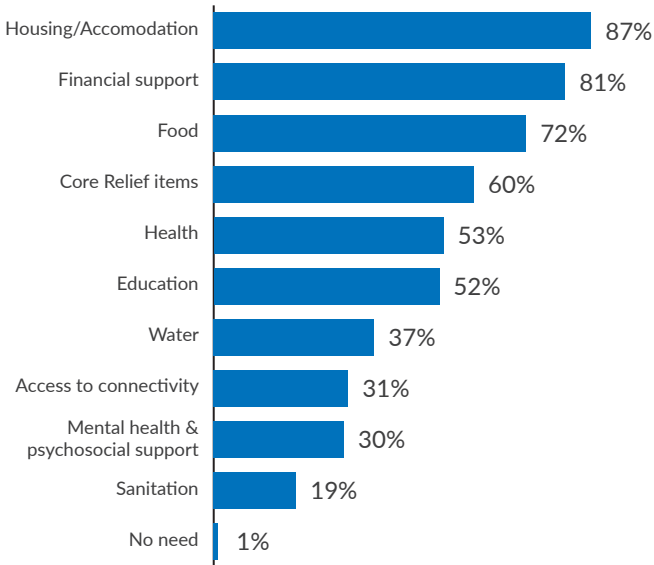## Problems experienced at the Pakistan border point[4]

Percentage interviews per month reporting problems

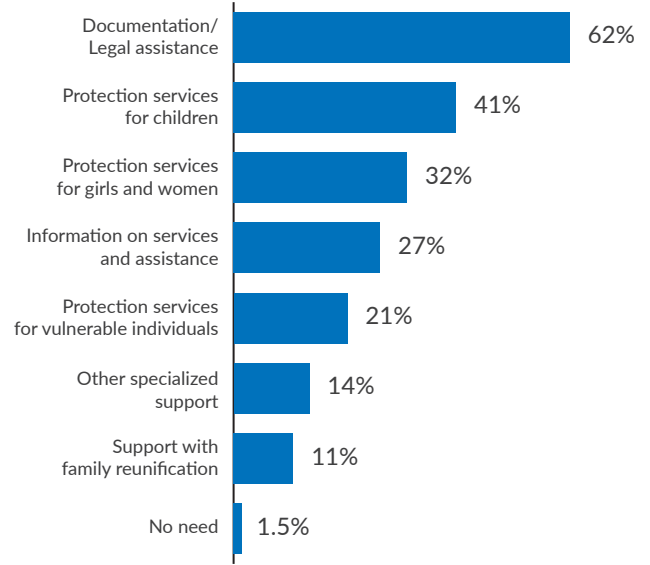[4] Multiple choice questions, may add up to over 100%.

Needs upon arrival in final destination[6]

Percentage interviews per month reporting problems

Category	Percentage
Housing/Accomodation	87%
Financial support	81%
Food	72%
Core Relief items	60%
Health	53%
Education	52%
Water	37%
Access to connectivity	31%
Mental health & psychosocial support	30%
Sanitation	19%
No need	1%

Protection services required in final destination[6]

Percentage interviews per month reporting problems

Category	Percentage
Documentation/ Legal assistance	62%
Protection services for children	41%
Protection services for girls and women	32%
Information on services and assistance	27%
Protection services for vulnerable individuals	21%
Other specialized support	14%
Support with family reunification	11%
No need	1.5%

[6] Multiple choice questions, may add up to over 100%.

Protection Analysis - using natural language processing

In addition to the border monitoring interviews, returnees who are enrolled and provided with cash assistance are asked to elaborate on topics that they would like to highlight to UNHCR. The descriptive experiences and perceptions shared were analysed with Artificial Intelligence using natural language processing for semantic similarities and patterns.

The analysis done with a word count of over 33,100, found in the 12 detailed clusters shown in the diagram below. These 12 clusters can be broadly categorized into experiences leaving Pakistan, specific vulnerabilities in the household and requests for support to meet needs in Afghanistan. Amongst the 12 clusters, shelter and food needs, experiences of being arrested, need for services other than protection and harassment by authorities were the top four most-highlighted, compared to, shelter and food needs, experiences of being arrested, harassment by authorities and health issues and disabilities in April.

The top highlighted clusters vary with documentation status. For UNHCR slip holders specifically, paying bribes was the most highlighted cluster followed by shelter and food needs and experiences of being arrested. For those without documentation, in need of support other than Protection services was the most highlighted.

■ Experience leaving Pakistan　■ Household vulnerabilities　■ Support needs

Shelter and Food Needs
21%

Arrested
13%

In need of service other than protection
11%

Harassed/threatened by authorities
11%

Bribes Paid
8%

Female head of household at risk
7%

Health Issues & Disability
9%

Financial Assistance Request
8%

Political protection risk
4%

Support for livelihoods or finding a job
4%

Minor or older person at risk
4%

Documentation issues
1%