UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency | CORE

PAKISTAN-AFGHANISTAN

Returns Emergency Response

as of 12 September 2026

2025 Overall figures

1M total returns[1]

478k UNHCR-assisted

155k deportations

2026 Key figures

705,400 total returns[1]

198,300 UNHCR-assisted

66,100 deportations

530,000

75%

157,300

79%

55,200

84%

Blue figures above correspond to the period of 1 January 2026 to 12 September 2026, while the **navy figures** refer only to those who arrived from 28 February to 12 September 2026.

Context

Large-scale returns of Afghans from Pakistan continue to add pressure on Afghanistan's already fragile humanitarian and protection environment.

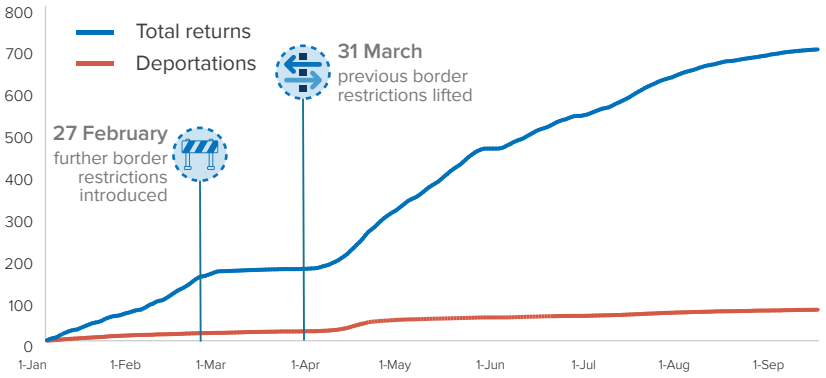
Nearly two years since the initial announcement of the Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan, the impact of these measures continues to be felt. **In 2025 alone, 1 million Afghans returned in adverse circumstances or were deported from Pakistan. This trend has continued in 2026 with 705,400 returns so far despite border closures earlier this year.**

These movements are unfolding amid escalating hostilities between Afghanistan and Pakistan, further compounding an already deteriorating humanitarian and human rights situation, particularly for women and girls. The Torkham border point – the largest crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan, accounting for some 80% of all returns prior to the crisis – was partially re-opened on 31 March.

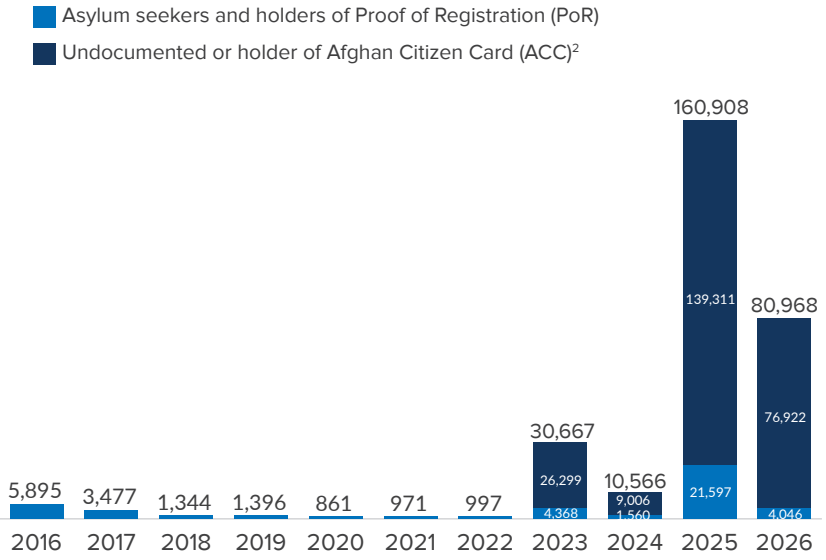
Ensuring that returns are safe, voluntary and dignified, while sustaining critical assistance for those arriving and host communities, remains essential.

Total returns (cumulative since 1 January 2026)

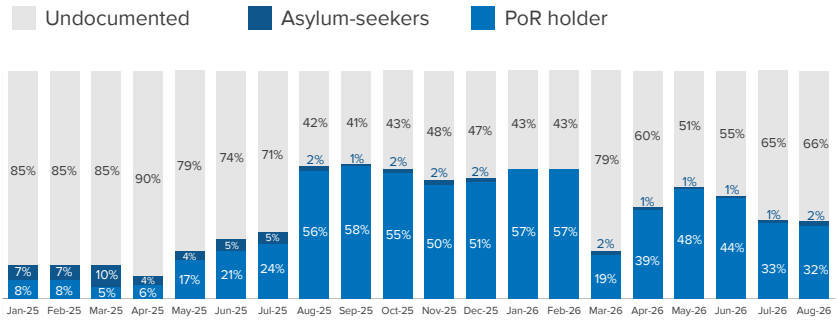
Number of people in thousands



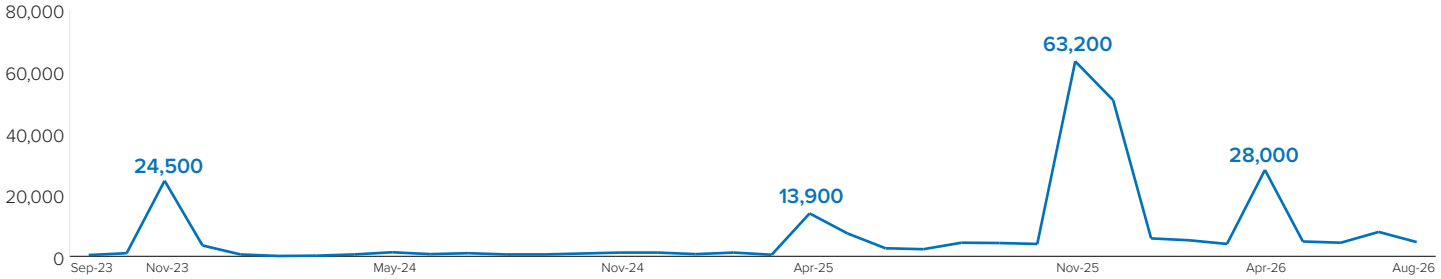
Afghan arrests and detentions in Pakistan (as of 5 Sep. 2026)



Overall returns by documentation (as of 31 August 2026)



Monthly deportations since 15 September 2023 (as of 31 August 2026)



The UN in Afghanistan, including UNHCR, has adopted a harmonized approach to reporting returnee figures, using consolidated data and country-of-arrival figures. The change in UNHCR figures reflects this joint methodology, effective October 2025. Data cleaning efforts undertaken by the participating agencies may result in minor retroactive adjustments to previously reported data.

[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, excluding passport holders.

[2] Prior to 2023, there was no data collected on the arrest and detention of ACC holders or undocumented Afghan nationals.

Sources: UNHCR, IOM

Returns profiles

Out of the total returns since 1 April 2025,
50% are women, of which **27%** are girls.
54% are children.

Ethnicity



- Hazara (1%)
- Pashtoon (90%)
- Tajik (2%)
- Uzbek (1%)
- Others (6%)

Education levels

refers to HoHs



- No education (78%)
- Primary school (Grades 1 - 6) (10%)
- Secondary school (Grades 7 - 14) (9%)
- University degree (1%)
- Madrasa (2%)

Occupational skills

refers to HoHs



- No skills (49%)
- Unskilled daily wage labour (21%)
- Shopkeeping (12%)
- Agriculture (12%)
- Livestock herders (6%)

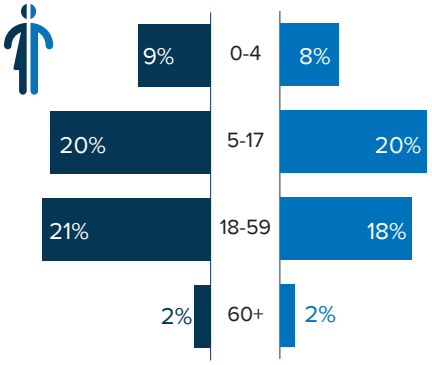
Returns assisted by UNHCR Afghanistan

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. This support aimed to alleviate the difficulties faced by Afghan nationals who returned home hastily, and often largely unprepared due to the circumstances in Pakistan.

Since 15 September 2023, over 794,100 individuals returning from Pakistan have been provided with cash assistance in Kabul, Kandahar and Jalalabad encashment centres. Some 478,000 have been assisted in 2025.

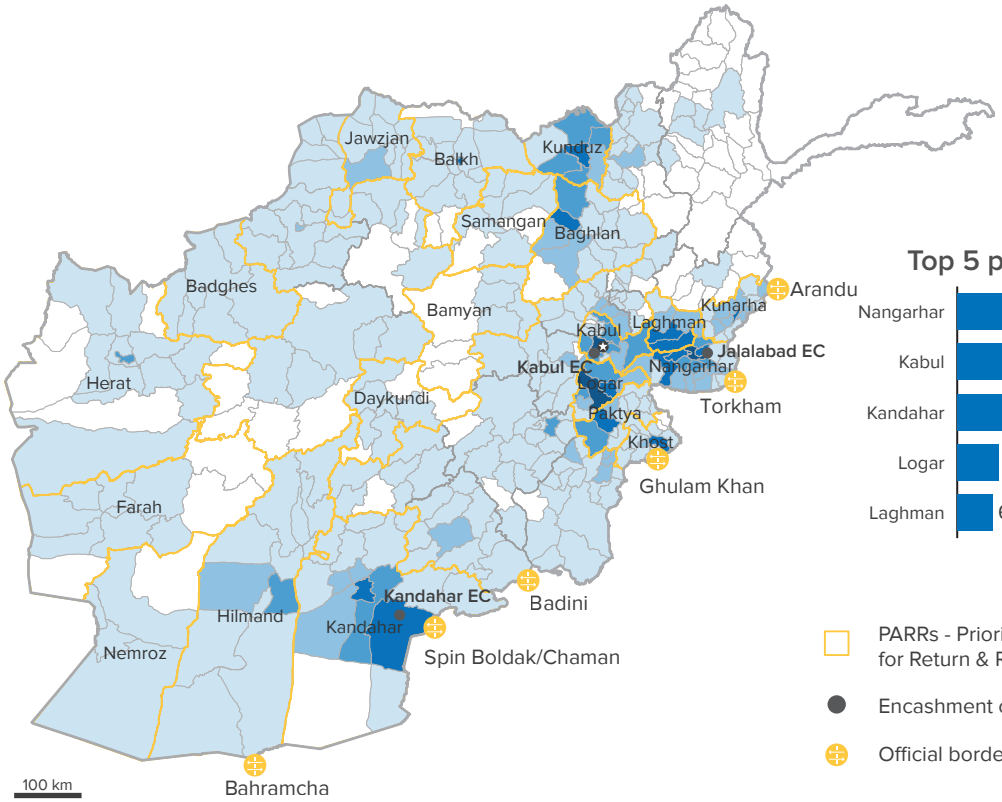
In 2026 alone, UNHCR assisted over 198,300 Afghan returnees from so far.

80% of the assisted are **women & children**
35% are **Female headed households**



15% of households with at least one person with disabilities

Afghanistan map - 2026 overall returns from Pakistan by intended district of destination



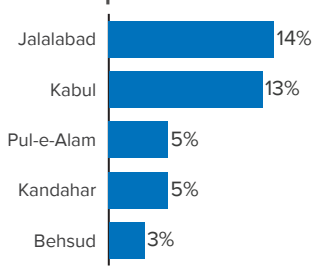
Crossing points:

from Pakistan
- Torkham (84%)
- Spin Boldak-Chaman (11%)
- Bahramcha (5%)

No returns captured in 2026 crossing from Badini, Ghulam Khan and Arandu.

Top 5 provinces

Top 5 districts



- PARRs - Priority Areas for Return & Reintegration
- Encashment centre (EC)
- Official border crossing

Intended returns per district:
- 0
- 1 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 3,000
- 3,001 - 10,000
- 10,001 - 30,000
- 30,001 - 100,000

Source: 2026 UNHCR Inflow Border Monitoring Interviews
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Escalating Afghanistan-Pakistan hostilities in 2026

In Afghanistan, the situation remains tense amid continued insecurity along the border. Internal displacement has been reported in eastern provinces, alongside ongoing insecurity along the Afghanistan–Pakistan border, which continues to drive displacement and constrain humanitarian access. Response efforts are ongoing under heightened security measures.

Crackdowns against undocumented Afghans in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan and elsewhere have increased due to the ongoing security situation. This includes more evictions, raids, arrests, and detentions of Afghans across multiple locations. On 1 March the Ministry of Interior of Pakistan reiterated that arrests of "illegal foreigners" will continue.

Border tensions remain elevated, with incidents recorded in Nangarhar, Paktia and Khost, including sporadic cross-border fire, surveillance and military aircraft activity. Torkham border crossing remained open to returnees.

Profiles



In **Afghanistan**, **74% of the IDPs are women and children**. Protection concerns have arisen in displacement sites. Authorities have ordered IDPs in 7 displacement sites to return to areas of origin, with two sites already fully vacated.

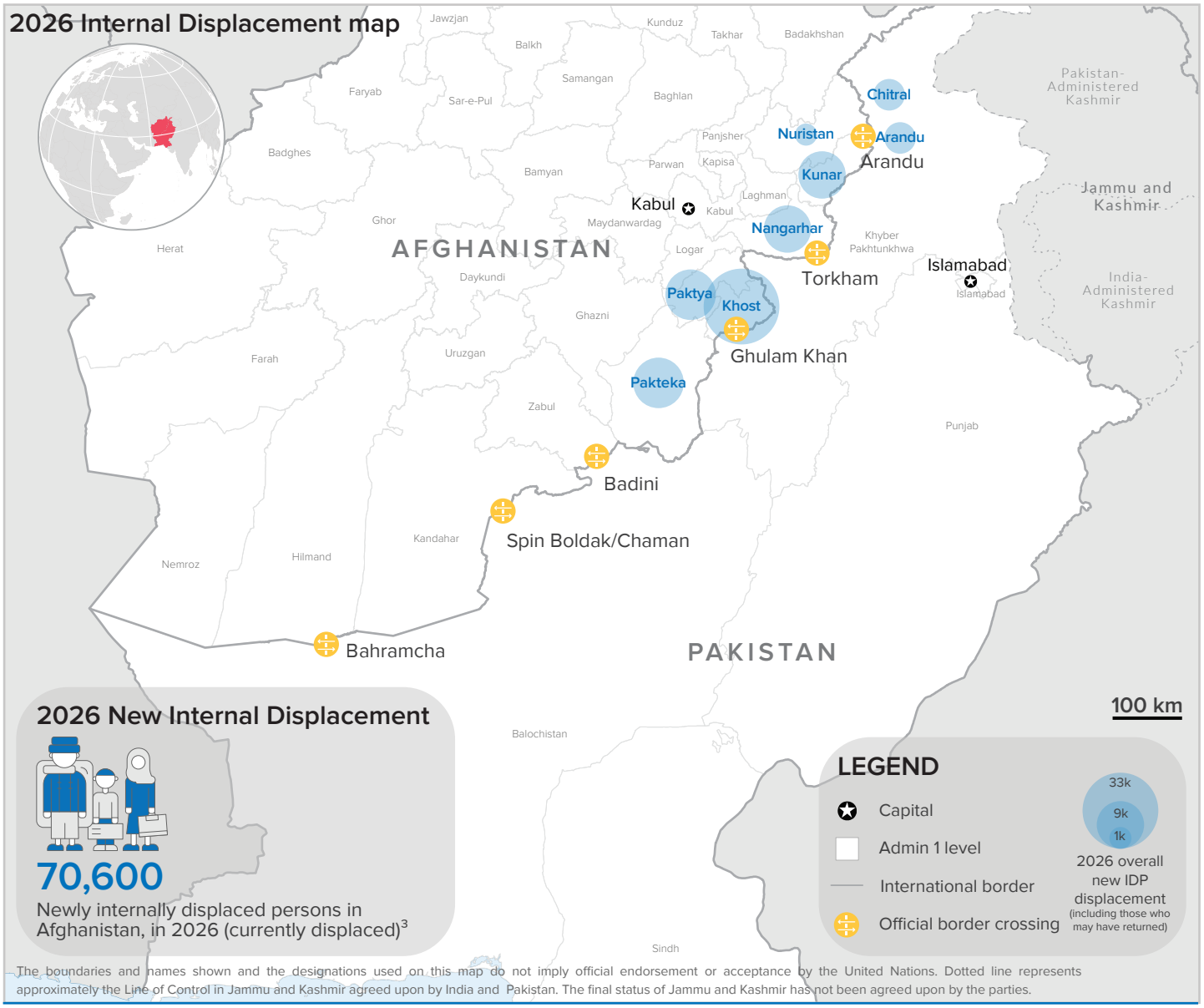
In **Pakistan**, **57% of IDPs were children, and 28% were women**.

Top 3 Needs



In Afghanistan, the top three highest priority needs identified by women affected by displacement are **shelter (71%)**, **food security (52%)** and **health (44%)**.[3]

Conflict constitutes the principal protection risk affecting women and girls, as reported by 48% of girls and 40% of women.[3]



[3] Source: OCHA Afghanistan

For more information, please visit the Returns to Afghanistan dashboard on the Afghanistan Situation Operational Data Portal