

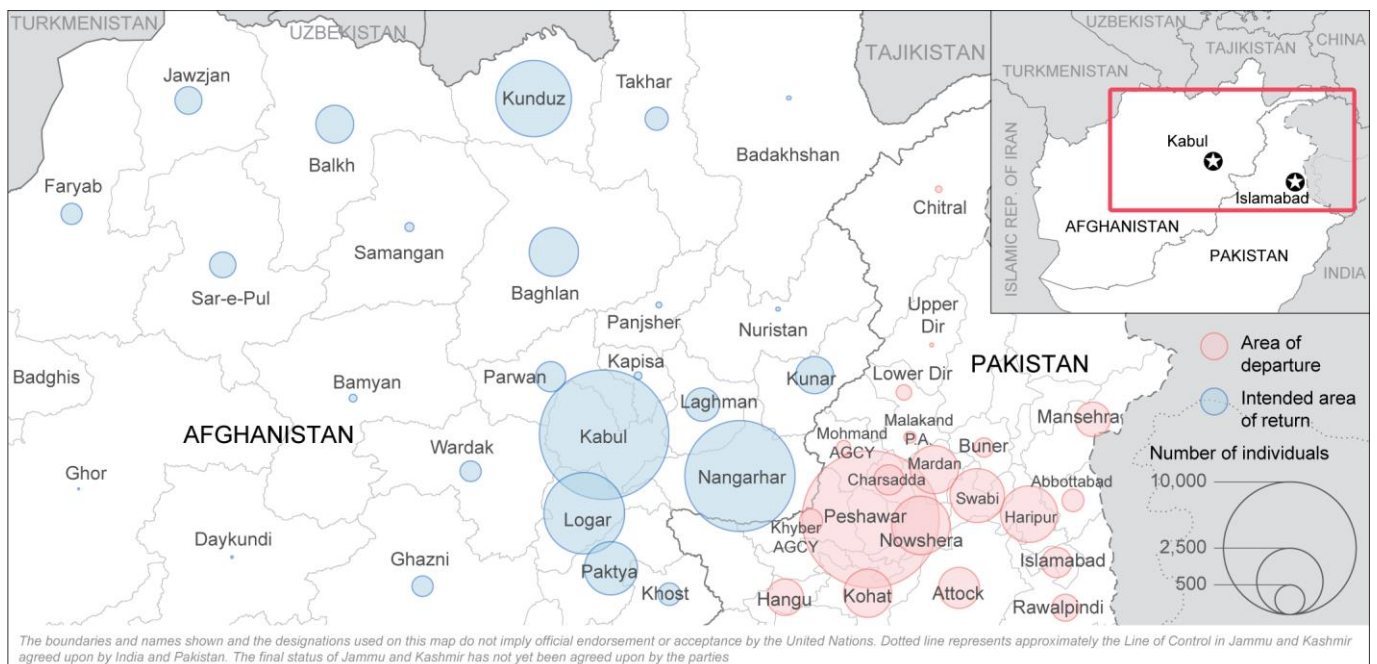
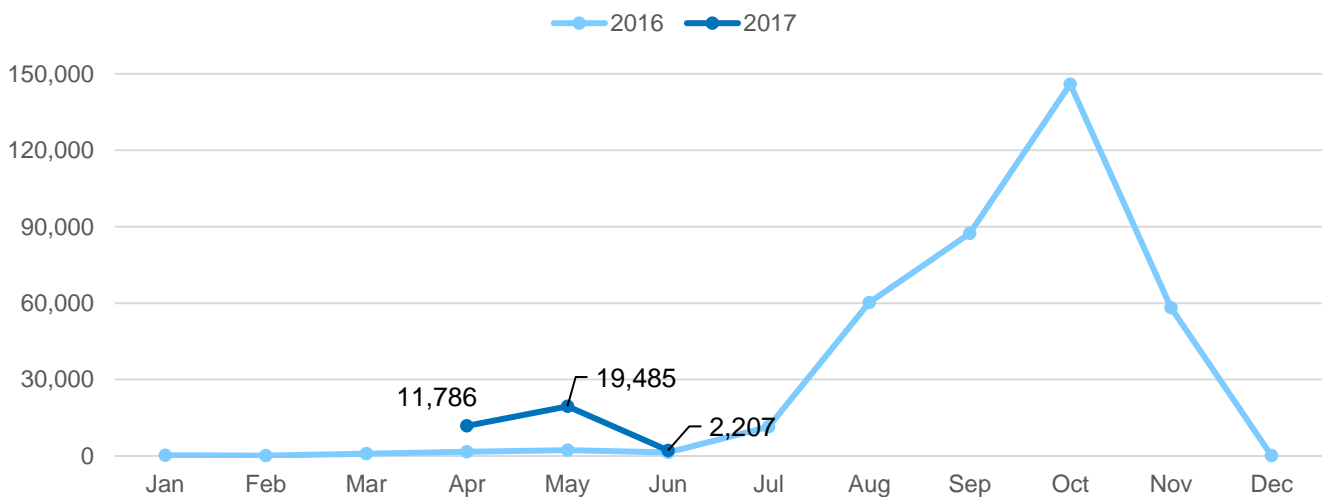
Update on assisted voluntary repatriation to Afghanistan

33,733 refugee returnees arrived at UNHCR's Encashment Centres in Jalalabad, Kandahar and Kabul from the beginning of return operation on **4 April until 30 June 2017**

Refugees have been assisted to return in 2017, with an overwhelming majority from **Pakistan (33,325)** and smaller numbers from **Iran (319)** and **other countries (89)**.

About 58% of refugee returnees are under 18 years old. Among them, more than **11,000** children are in schooling age.

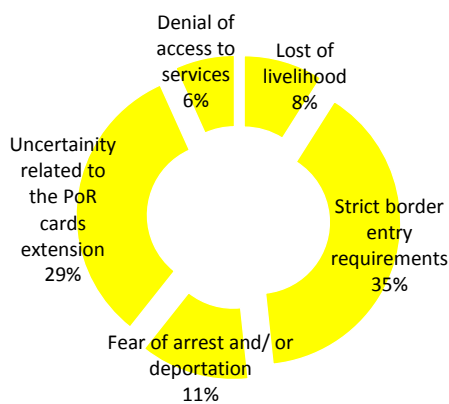
Monthly voluntary repatriation trends to Afghanistan (2016-2017)



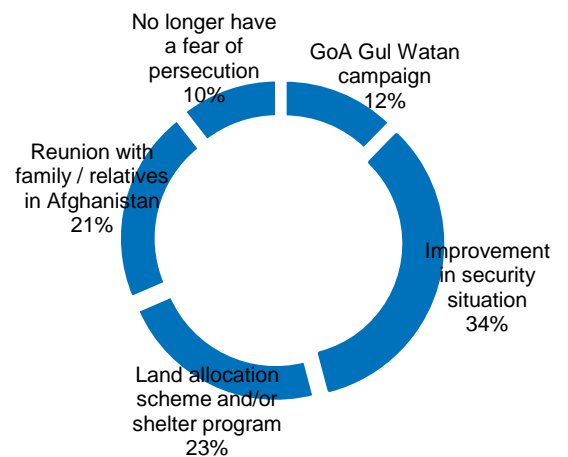
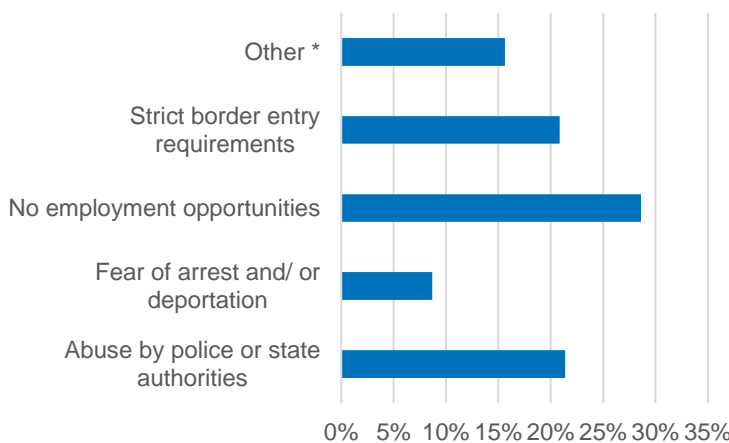
Reasons to return to Afghanistan

During the reporting period, the main reasons that have triggered the decision to return to Afghanistan were collected and analysed from 4,905 persons* at Voluntary Repatriation Centres (VRC) upon departure in Pakistan and from 954 persons in Encashment Centres (EC) upon return in Afghanistan.

Exit interview at VRC in Pakistan



Entry interview at EC in Afghanistan



*Discrimination and/ or harassment, Undocumented family members facing issues / troubles, Uncertainty related to the PoR cards extension, Overall deterioration in security conditions, Discrimination by local community, Camp / settlement closures or relocation campaigns, Denied access to school and health facilities, Risk of GBV or threats against women/girls

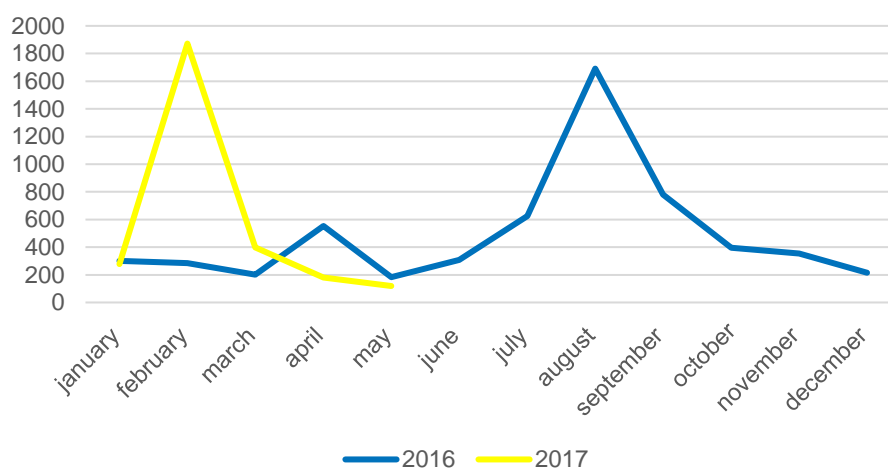
Highlight of the reporting period

- The return trend has slowed down during the period of Celebration of Ramadan, from 27 May to 25 June. Refugees prefer to travel after the celebration.
- As a result of work between UNHCR Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Afghanistan and Pakistan Humanitarian Country teams (HCT) and ACBAAR¹, **2017 Key Messages on Return of Afghans** were developed and endorsed on **21 June**.

Pakistan

- The Chaman border remained closed from 5 to 27 May following an exchange of fire between Afghanistan and Pakistan forces following a border dispute. This resulted in a halt in voluntary repatriation movements from the VRC Baleli, Quetta.
- **On 8th of May**, the Peshawar High Court disposed of the writ petition in favour of the refugees directing the police to restrain from harassing the refugees. The court also directed that the refugees should be dealt with in accordance with the governments' law and policy and afforded protection².
- While February 2017 witnessed the highest number of arrests and detentions countrywide due to intensified security operation, with a net decrease in March. In May 2017 in comparison with April saw a 34% decrease in the number of arrests and detentions countrywide. This is potentially the result of the widespread dissemination of the official notification issued by the Ministry of SAFRON on 24 February regarding the Federal Cabinet's decision to extend the validity of the PoR cards providing proof of legal stay for registered Afghan refugees until the end of 2017.

Arrests and detention in Pakistan 2016-2017 comparison



¹ Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development

² UNHCR Pakistan Monthly Protection Trends Reporting- April 2017

Afghanistan

- A Provincial Displacement and Return Executive Committee (*P-DiREC*) has been established in Nangarhar Province under the leadership of the Governor and with the technical assistance of UNHCR and partners, to harmonize, lead and oversee national policies and plans as well as ensure strategic guidance and decisions to develop and implement the provincial plan. On 15th May, the first meeting was held to follow-up on the finalization of the Provincial Operational Response Plan.

External / Donors Relations

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