

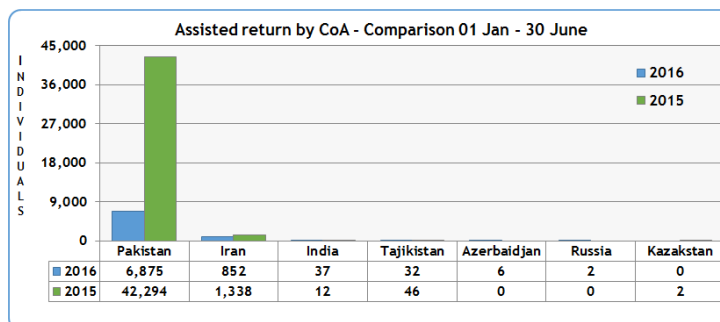
AFGHANISTAN

VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION AND BORDER MONITORING MONTHLY UPDATE

01 January–30 June 2016

VOLUNTARY RETURN TO AFGHANISTAN

In June 2016, a total of **1,506** Afghan refugees voluntarily repatriated to Afghanistan. 1,433 came from Pakistan, 63 from Iran, 6 from India and 4 from Tajikistan. **This figure is nearly six times lower** compared with the June 2015 figure of **10,137**. UNHCR expects an increase in voluntary return between July and October 2016, particularly in light of the increase in the reintegration grant to assist families re-establish themselves in the initial phase of reintegration.



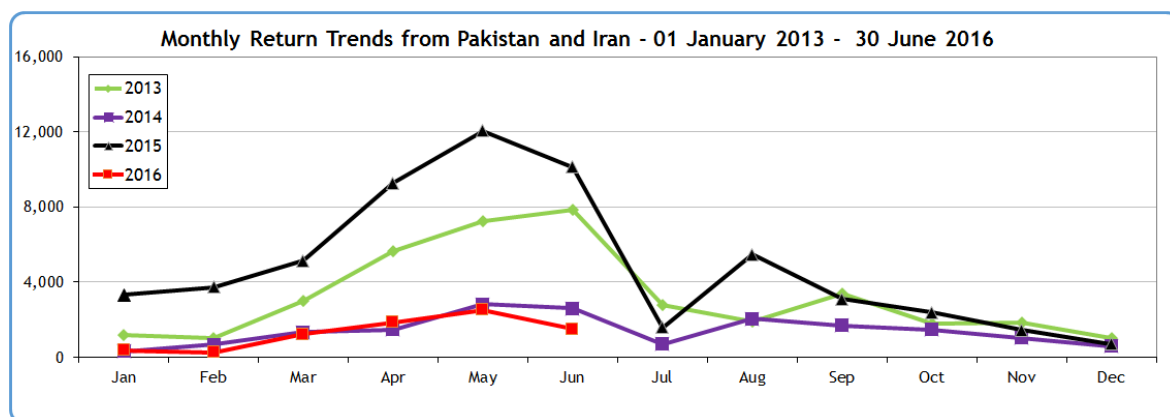
In the first six months of 2016, a total of **7,804** Afghan refugees returned to Afghanistan under UNHCR’s assisted voluntary repatriation program, including 6,875 individuals from Pakistan, 852 from Iran and 37 from other neighboring and non-neighboring countries. This figure is comparatively low compared to 43,692 returnees during the same period in 2015. It is also lower (17%) than the number of refugees (9,367) returned during the same period in 2014, the year that recorded the lowest return figure since the start of the voluntary repatriation operation in March 2002. The increase in the return figure in 2015 was mainly due to the adverse environment and retaliations against Afghan citizens in Pakistan following the terrorist attack on the Peshawar school in December 2014.

Region	No. of individuals returned - Comparison by year			
	Jan - Jun 2016		Jan - Jun 2015	
	No.	%	No.	%
Central	2,441	31.3%	14,390	32.9%
Northeast	1,543	19.8%	9,557	21.9%
East	1,429	18.3%	8,623	19.7%
North	1,037	13.3%	4,077	9.3%
Southeast	507	6.5%	4,136	9.5%
South	421	5.4%	1,417	3.2%
West	369	4.7%	1,384	3.2%
Central Highlands	57	0.7%	108	0.2%
Total	7,804	100.0%	43,692	100.0%

The low return trend so far this year is largely due to the lack of pull factors in Afghanistan namely high levels of unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities, limited access to land, shelter and basic services, particularly in areas of high return, coupled with continuous insecurity. Another factor is the prevalence of second and third generations of refugees in neighboring countries, who have limited or weak ties to their ancestral communities. In the same time, however, the insecurity of their situation in neighboring countries, coupled by growing asylum fatigue of host governments have an impact on their decisions to return.

Based on returnee monitoring findings with newly arrived returnees in 2016, economic problems (particularly poor access to job market and increasing cost of living) and harassment by the Police and authorities in country of asylum are the leading push factors influencing refugees’ decision to return. In contrast, improvement in the security situation in some parts of Afghanistan, UNHCR’s assistance package, perceived employment opportunities and the desire to reunion with families/relatives are the main pull factors.

Amongst the returnees repatriated from Pakistan this year, **79%** returned from KPK and Baluchistan, while the remaining returned from Punjab, Sindh and Islamabad. **86%** of returnees from Iran returned from Esfahan, Tehran, Khorasan, Kerman and Qom provinces. **4,703 (60%** of total returnees) returned to Kabul, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Baghlan and Logar provinces. Among those returned to these provinces, **41%** returned to the five provincial capitals (Kabul, Jalalabad, Kunduz, Pul-e-Khumri and Pul-e-Alam). Kabul, Nangarhar and Kunduz continue to be among the top five provinces of destination since 2002.



UNHCR's Voluntary Repatriation Centres (VRCs) are processing refugees in the country of asylum willing to return to Afghanistan and issue a Voluntary Repatriation Form (VRF) for each family.

Two VRCs are located in Pakistan: Chamkani in Peshawar (KPK) and Baleli in Quetta (Baluchistan).

Repatriation from Iran is facilitated through all UNHCR Offices including the VRC in Soleimankhani and the UNHCR Office at Dogharoun.

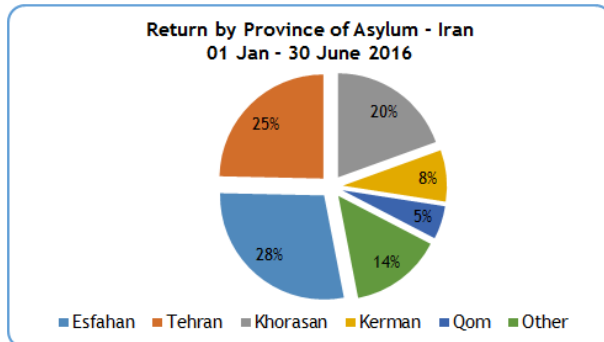
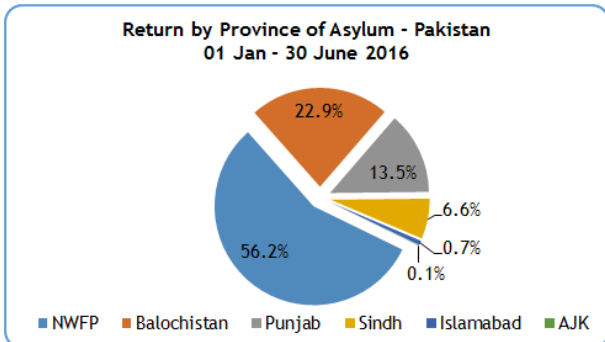
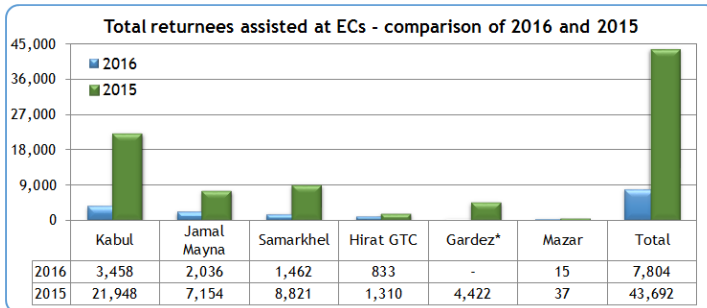
Upon return to Afghanistan, returnees are assisted at four Encashment Centers (ECs): Kabul, Samarkhel (Nangarhar), Jamal Mayna (Kandahar) and Herat.

Depending on the province of origin, at the EC all Afghan returnees with a valid VRFs receive a grant of approximately **US\$ 400 per person** consisting of two components: between **US\$30 - US\$70** for transport and **US\$350** as an initial reintegration grant. The transportation grant varies according to the distance from the areas of residence in the country of asylum to the areas of origin in Afghanistan. At the EC, returning refugees are also briefed on mine awareness and access to education in Afghanistan. They can benefit from transit facilities for overnight stay and basic health services. All children under the age of five are vaccinated against polio and measles.

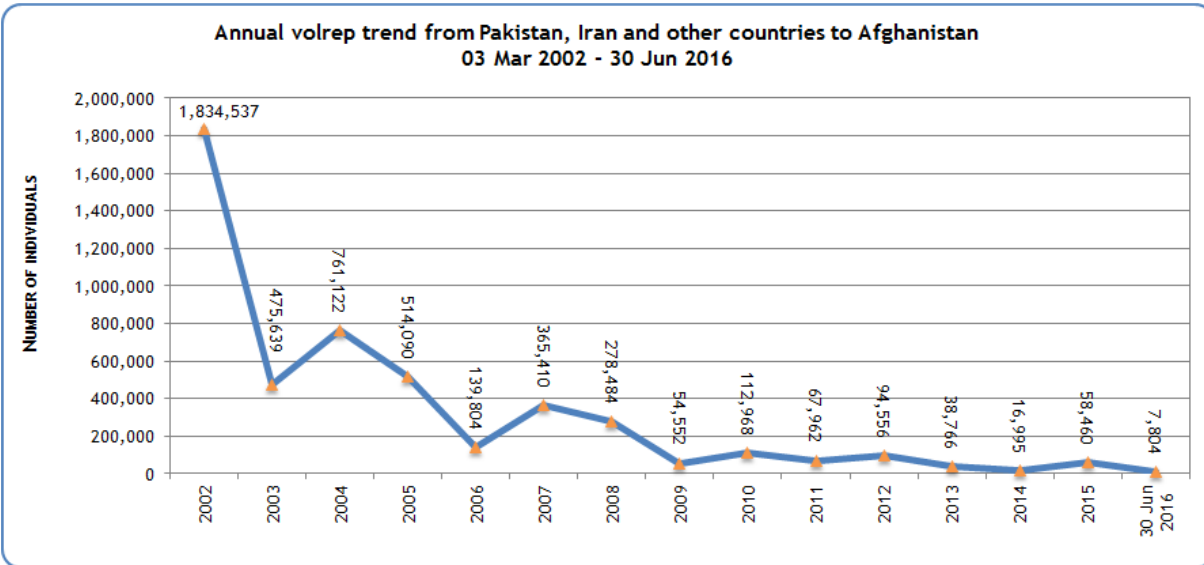
Effective 23 June 2016, UNHCR has increased the reintegration cash grant to **350 USD per person** for all registered refugees who wish to return under UNHCR's facilitated voluntarily repatriation program to Afghanistan. There have been no changes to the existing transportation grant (between **USD 30 - 70 based on areas of origin**) portion of the assistance package as prices have remained relatively constant. The additional funds are provided to assist returning families in the initial phases of reintegration, based on challenges identified in UNHCR's enhanced return monitoring.

* Gardez EC ceased its activities at the end of 2015 because of budgetary constraints and refugees returning to the South-eastern Region will be referred to Kabul and Samarkhel ECs.

** There is no EC in Mazar, returnees from Tajikistan and other central Asian countries receive their repatriation assistance at UNHCR Office in Mazar or in Kunduz.

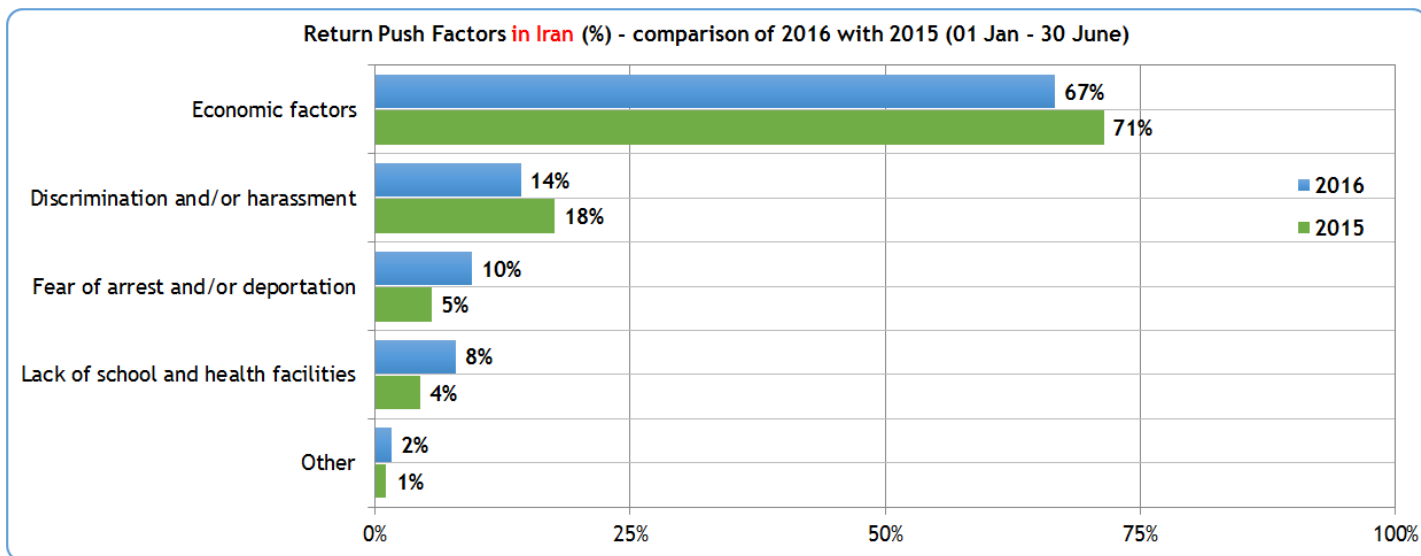
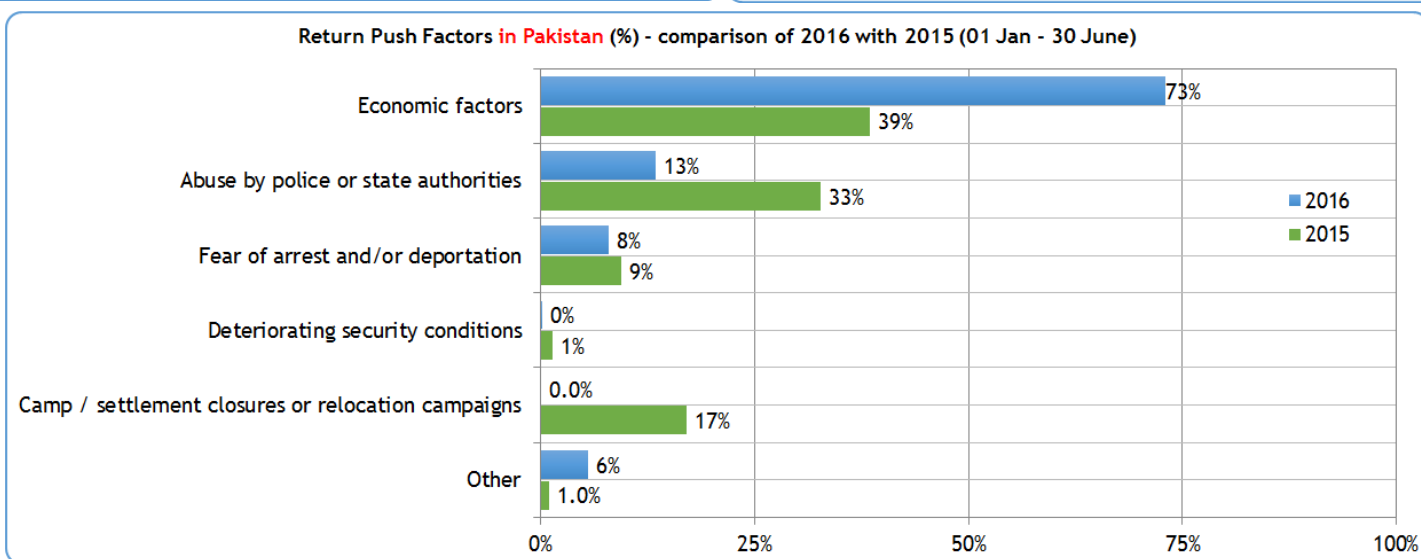
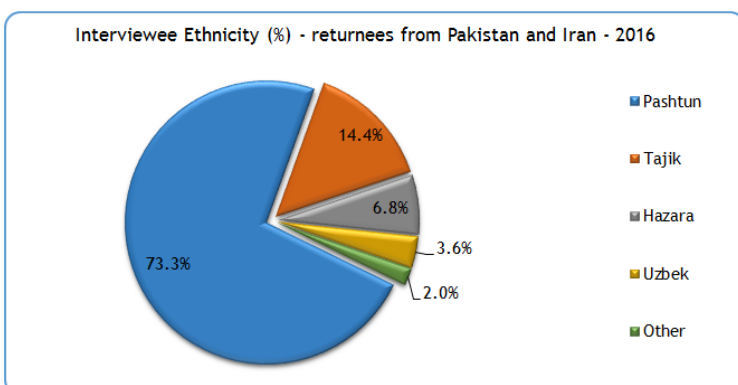
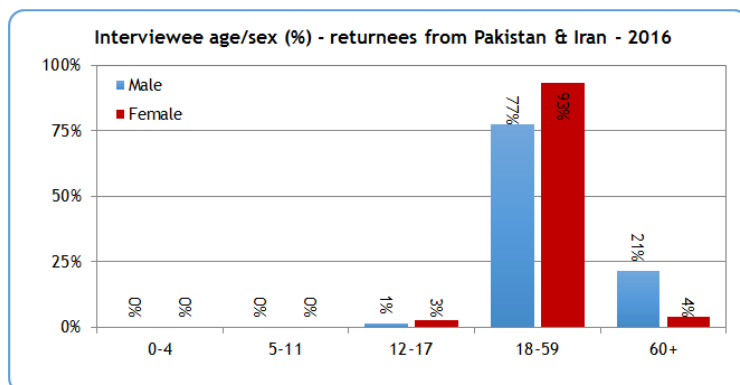


From the start of UNHCR's assisted voluntary repatriation operation in March 2002 to the end of June 2016, over 5.8 million Afghan refugees have returned home, of whom over 4.8 million repatriated with assistance from the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and UNHCR. It is estimated that returnees comprise 20% of the Afghanistan population.



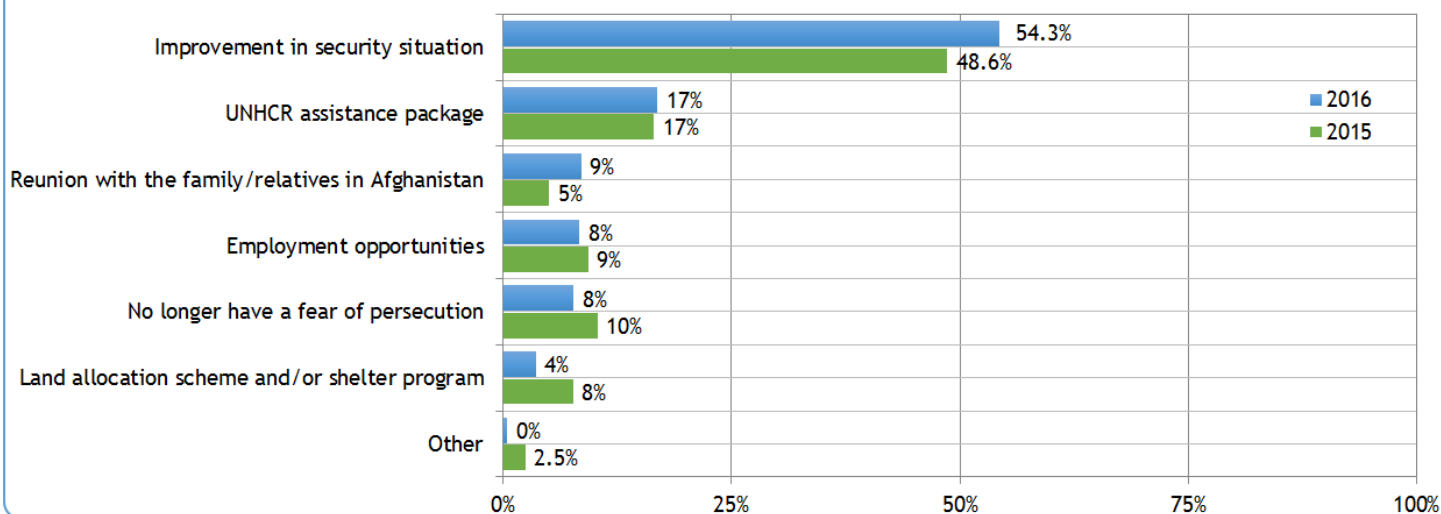
ENCASHMENT CENTRE RETURNEE MONITORING

Between 1 January and 30 June 2016, a total of **696 interviews** were conducted with returning refugees from Pakistan (633) and Iran (63) at the various Encashment Centres managed by UNHCR/DoRR. Interviewees were selected in two ways: randomly from the returning families (677) and purposively from returnees reporting some protection concerns (19) at the first point of contact in Afghanistan, i.e. the Encashment Centres. This regular monitoring exercise helps UNHCR to identify return trends, push/pull factors and assess the level of information that returnees received to make an informed choice to return home. It also helps to detect episodes of harassment and violations that UNHCR then brings to the attention of the allegedly responsible authorities.

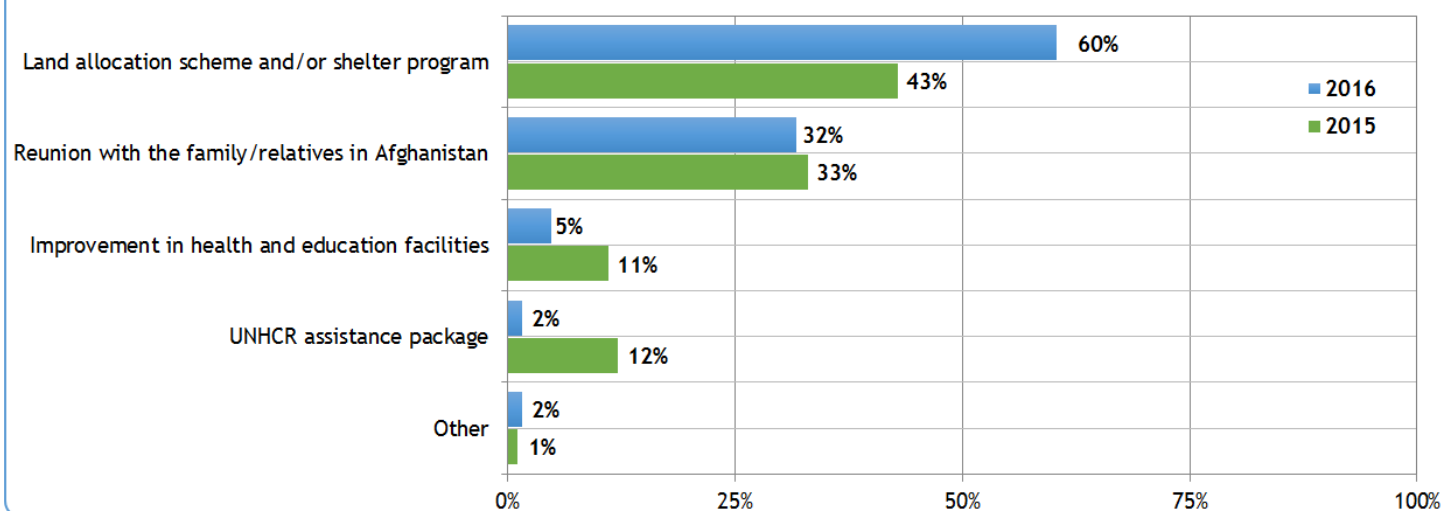


ENCASHMENT CENTRE RETURNEE MONITORING

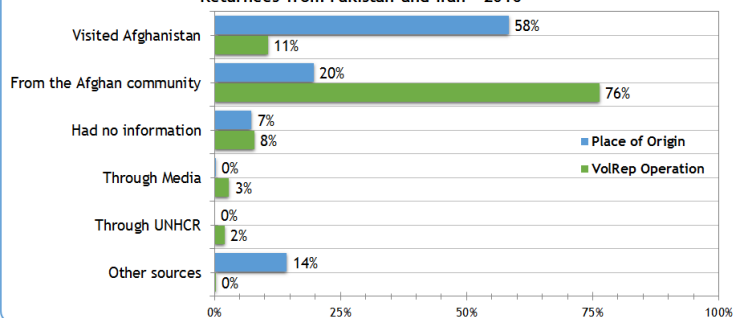
Return Pull Factors in Afghanistan (%) - **Returnees from Pakistan** - comparison of 2016 with 2015 (01 Jan - 30 June)



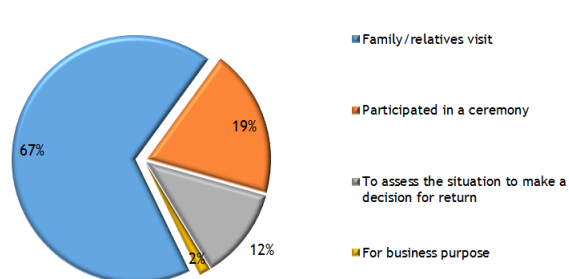
Return Pull Factors in Afghanistan (%) - **Returnees from Iran** - comparison of 2016 with 2015 (01 Jan - 30 June)



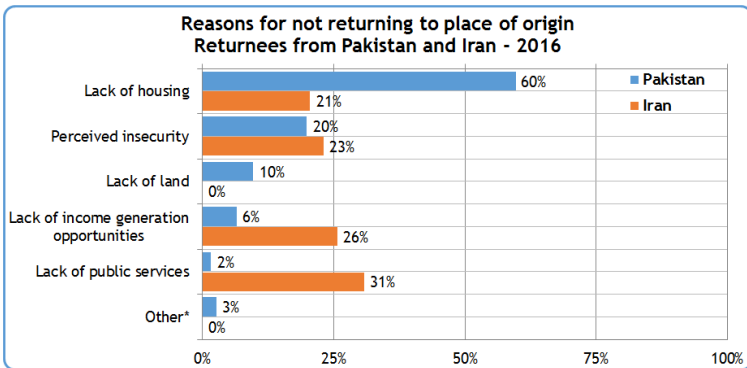
Sources of Information on Place of Origin and VolRep Program Returnees from Pakistan and Iran - 2016



Purpose of visit to Afghanistan before return Returnees from Pakistan and Iran - 2016

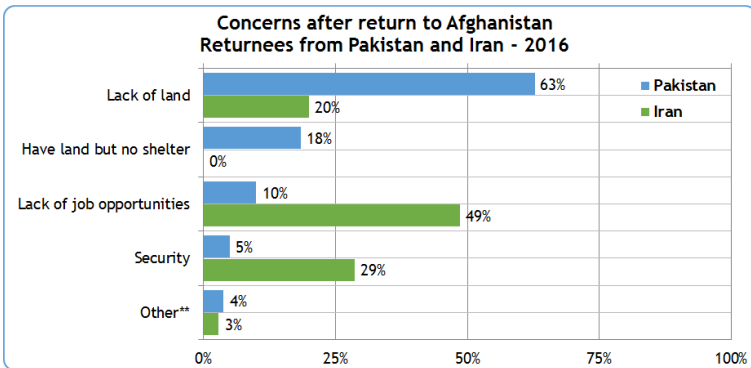


* Most of the interviewed returnees from Pakistan mentioned that they had visited Afghanistan within the past few months, while a majority of the returnees from Iran mentioned that they had visited Afghanistan five or more years ago. The reasons for this discrepancy could include strict border control by Iran and lengthier journey to the areas of origin.



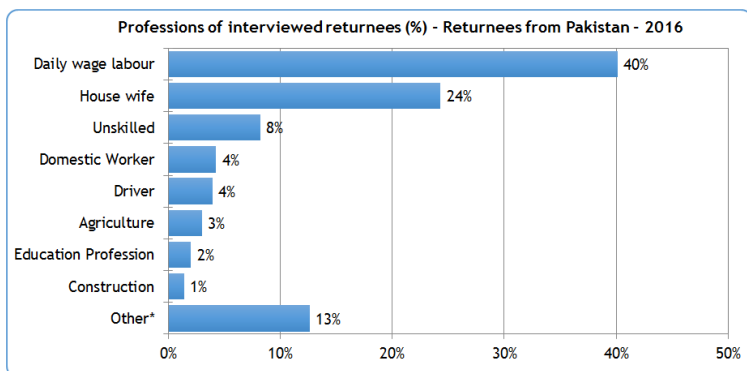
Out of 696 respondents, 225 returnees stated that they do not intend to return to their place of origin.

*Other; responses provided included lack of quality education and health facilities.

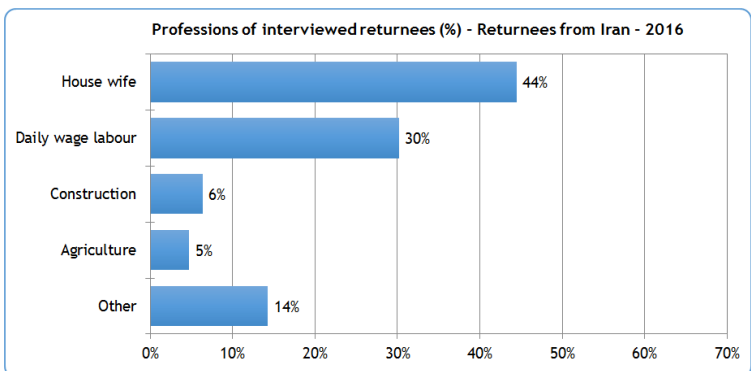


The primary obstacles discouraging Afghan refugees from returning have been lack of land, employment and shelter.

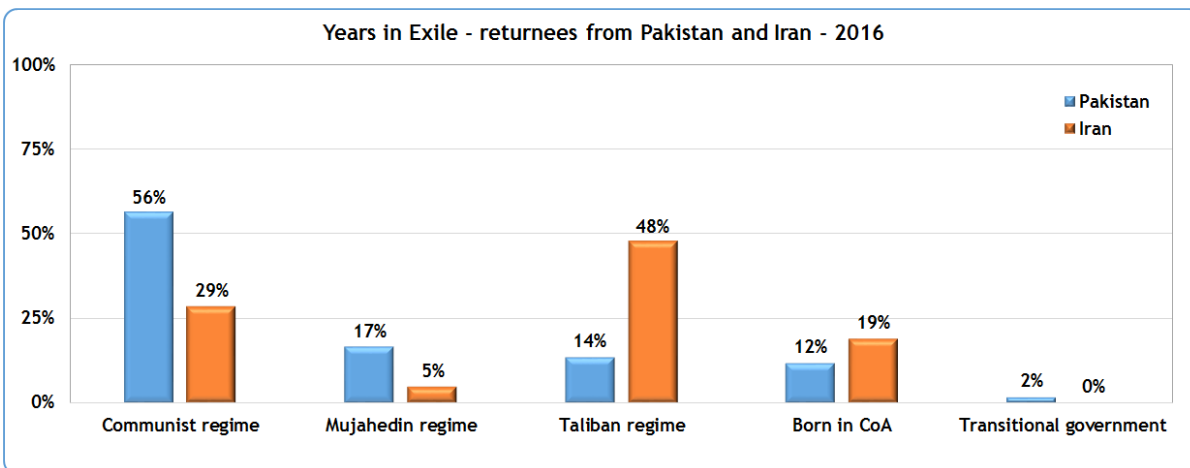
**Other represents 17 interviews; responses provided included lack of health care and education facilities.



*Other: 80 responses: included professions such as engineer, carpet weaver, medical doctor, and shopkeeper.



*Other: 9 responses: included professions such as carpet weaver and shopkeeper.



Challenges for refugees in Pakistan

During the month of June, newly-arrived returnees raised concerns regarding search operations without due notice by the Military and Police, particularly at night. Interviewed returnees alleged that during such search operations, the Police or Military arrest the male members of the family for unknown reasons. PoR cards are not considered as a valid document and normally the holder is kept in police custody for a short period of time. According to returnees, Punjab and KPK are the provinces where the episodes occur most frequently. With the exception of one family, bribery/money extortion on the way to the VRC and en route to Torkham was not reported during the month of June.

Deportation of registered Afghan refugees from Iran and Pakistan

34 registered Afghan refugees (Amayesh holders/claimants) have been deported from Iran in 2016, including 4 cases in June. Among these, 28 are families (overall 110 individuals) and 6 are single individuals. UNHCR and/or partners record these deportation cases to understand the circumstances of the event and to advocate with the Iranian authorities a possible re-admission/family reunification in Iran. The majority of the arrested cases were not considered for re-admission, on grounds that they were arrested while trying to illegally cross the Uromyeh border between Iran and Turkey; or were apprehended due to the failure to present their Amayesh cards when requested by Officials; or as a result of being found in non-designated (“no-go”) areas for which they had failed to obtain prior movement authorization from the local authorities (BAFIA). UNHCR and partners provide deported Afghan refugees with the necessary assistance at the UNHCR encashment/transit center in Herat. Deported refugees and other undocumented Afghans can also benefit from the assistance provided by IOM if they meet the eligibility criteria.

BORDER MONITORING

DEPORTATION OF UNDOCUMENTED AFGHAN NATIONALS (NON-REFUGEES)

Undocumented Afghan nationals returning from Iran or Pakistan due to eviction, conflict, military operations, natural disasters, or other reasons do not fall under UNHCR's mandate, and all international response to their needs will be led by IOM. However, UNHCR, in coordination with other protection actors, monitors their protection situation to ensure that registered refugees are not deported.

IRAN:

1 - 30 June 2016: A total of 18,040 undocumented Afghan nationals (non-refugees) were deported via Islam Qala (69%) and Zaranj (31%), from Iran. This figure is 45% higher compared to 12,445 deportees during May 2016.

1 Jan–30 June 2016: In the first six months of 2016, a total of 88,404 undocumented Afghans were deported from Iran. This figure is 20% lower compared to 110,323 Afghans were deported from Iran during the same period in 2015.

A total number of 239,992 Afghans were deported from Iran in 2015.

The vast majority of deportees (90-95%) were single males who entered Iran illegally, to look for work and or move to Europe.

IOM is present in Islam Qala and Zaranj border crossing points and has procedures in place to identify vulnerable deported undocumented Afghans (non-refugees).

IOM provides extremely vulnerable cases with transportation, transit and health services at the border and assists with their transportation costs from the cities of Herat and Zaranj to their final destinations.

Deportations from Iran												
Reporting Period	Entry Point	Family Groups				Single				Total Individuals		
		Families	Individuals			Male		Female			Total	
			M	F	Total	Adult	UAM	Adult	UAM			
01 - 30 Jun 2016	Zaranj	98	256	241	497	4,943	75	0	0	5,018	5,515	
	Islam Qala	75	125	190	315	12,100	110	0	0	12,210	12,525	
Total		173	381	431	812	17,043	185	0	0	17,228	18,040	
01 Jan -30 Jun 2016	Zaranj	818	2,008	1,949	3,957	35,038	687	0	0	35,725	39,682	
	Islam Qala	605	1,034	1,329	2,363	44,811	1,548	0	0	46,359	48,722	
Total		1,423	3,042	3,278	6,320	79,849	2,235	0	0	82,084	88,404	

PAKISTAN:

1 - 30 June 2016: A total of 1,711 undocumented Afghan nationals (non-refugees) were deported via Torkham (1,035) and Spin Boldak (676) border points. This figure is 30% lower compared to 2,440 deportees during May 2016.

1 January - 30 June 2016: In the last six months of 2016, a total of 8,642 undocumented Afghan nationals (non-refugees) were deported via Torkham Border. This figure is 12% higher compared to 7,713 deportees from Pakistan (via Torkham) during the same period in 2015.

Since November 2012, IOM has established a transit centre in Torkham to identify and assist vulnerable deported undocumented Afghans (non-refugees). IOM provides vulnerable cases with NFIs and free transportation from Torkham to their final destination.

In addition, 6,144 undocumented Afghan nationals (non-refugees) were deported via Spin Boldak between 01 Jan and 30 June 2016.

A total of 19,330 Afghans were deported from Pakistan via Torkham (13,323) and Spin Boldak (6,007) in 2015.

Deportations from Pakistan												
Reporting Period	Entry Point	Family Groups				Single				Total Individuals		
		Families	Individuals			Male		Female			Total	
			M	F	Total	Adult	UAM	Adult	UAM			
01 - 30 Jun 2016	Torkham	0	0	0	0	1,035	0	0	0	1,035	1,035	
	Spin Boldak	0	0	0	0	676	0	0	0	676	676	
Total		0	0	0	0	1,711	0	0	0	1,711	1,711	
01 Jan -30 Jun 2016	Torkham	3	5	4	9	8,633	0	0	0	8,633	8,642	
	Spin Boldak	1	6	3	9	6,135	0	0	0	6,135	6,144	
Total		4	11	7	18	14,768	0	0	0	14,768	14,786	

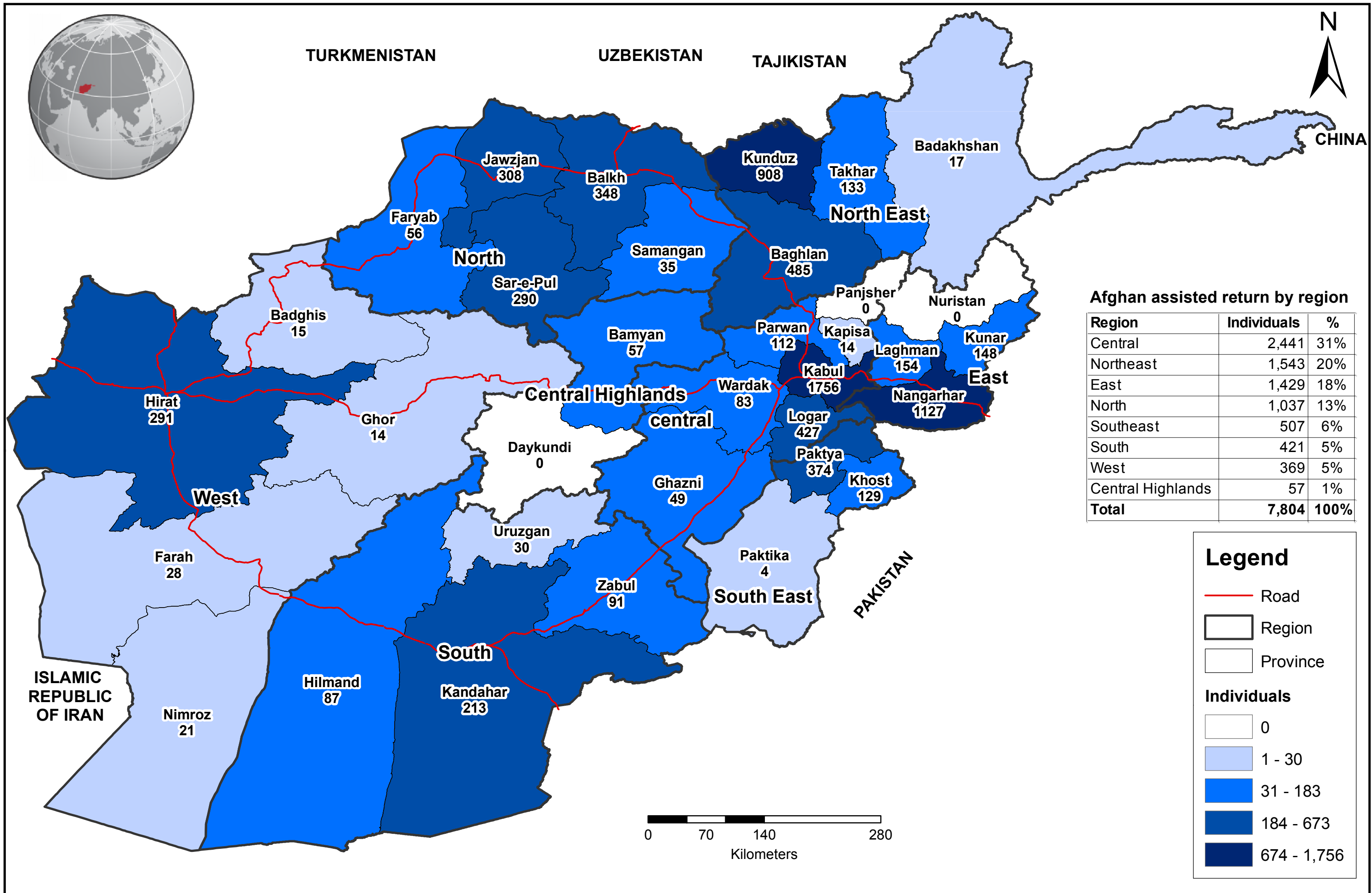
Contact for suggestion and queries:

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Assisted Voluntary Repatriation to Afghanistan

Return by Province of Destination - 01 January - 30 June 2016



Afghan assisted return by region

Region	Individuals	%
Central	2,441	31%
Northeast	1,543	20%
East	1,429	18%
North	1,037	13%
Southeast	507	6%
South	421	5%
West	369	5%
Central Highlands	57	1%
Total	7,804	100%

Legend

- Road
 - Region
 - Province
- Individuals**
- 0
 - 1 - 30
 - 31 - 183
 - 184 - 673
 - 674 - 1,756

