

Please note that neither the PoR card nor the UNHCR-issued documents can be used to cross international borders, including into Afghanistan.

12. Does ALACs provide other services in addition to legal assistance?

Yes, ALACs provides information on voluntary repatriation procedures and UNHCR's return package to individuals and groups, as well as on birth registration and the related procedure to be followed. ALACs also assists through legal intervention in case of any obstacle to voluntary repatriation.

13. How can a PoR card verification from NADRA be obtained (to open a bank account, rent a house, obtain a SIM card etc.)?

ALACs can facilitate the verification of PoR cards in coordination with NADRA. For such a request, the applicant needs to provide a valid PoR card number to ALAC. It will take approximately one week for the request to be processed.

Helpline numbers and addresses of ALAC legal services

Islamabad Office

House # 2, CMT Road, Golra Morr, Office: (051) 2315171, 2315132
Helpline: 0334-1112004

Mianwali Office

House # 5-A, Rehman Street, Muslim Colony,
Office: (0459) 232237
Helpline: 0334-1112006

Lahore Office

House # 365, Pak Block, Allama Iqbal Town,
Office: (042) 37800710, 34800711
Helpline: 0334-1112005

Karachi Office

House # B 204/A, Block 10 K.D.A, Scheme # 24, Gulshan-e-Iqbal,
Office: (021) 34811571
Fax: (021) 34812184
Helpline: 0334-1112008

Peshawar Office

House # 253, Hadi Lane opposite VIP Guest house, Old Bara Road,
Office: (091) 5702102
Helpline: 0300-8580417

Haripur Office

Nawaz House, Street No.1, near Railway Crossing, Talokar Road,
Office: (0995) 61 20 23
Helpline: 0315-5009501

Mardan Office

House # 162, Street 5, Sector-K, Sheikh Maltoon, Town
Office: (0937) 840379
Helpline: 0315-5009502

Kohat Office

House # 111, 112, Sector-9, Near Bangash House,
Office: (0922) 513 792
Helpline: 0315-5009503

Quetta Office (ILAC)

Khaizai Chowk Samungli Road,
Office: (081) 288 5175
Helpline: 0300-8389995 or 0334-2324935

Quetta Office (ALAC)

House # 263-B, Chiltan Housing Scheme, Airport Road
Helpline: 0333-7819143

ALAC timings

ALACs Official Working Days/Hours

Monday to Thursday from 08:00 am to 05:00 pm / 9:00 am to 05:00 pm (ILAC).

Friday from 08:00 am to 12:30 pm / 9:00 am to 01:00 pm (ILAC).

A protection helpline is active on weekends and official holidays from 08:00 am to 10:00 pm.

UNHCR Helpline Numbers

UNHCR Peshawar: 0300-8585600

UNHCR Quetta: 0333-7819601

UNHCR Islamabad: 0300-5018568

UNHCR Karachi: 0342-2704888



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

UNHCR's Advice and Legal Aid Programme



1. What kind of services are provided by the Advice and Legal Aid Centers (ALACs) and Information and Legal Assistance Centre (ILAC)?

The ALACs offer legal assistance and legal representation to refugees and asylum-seekers across the main refugee-hosting areas in Pakistan. ALACs activities are focused on cases of unlawful arrest/detention on immigration grounds, civil/family matters and legal response to victims of sexual or gender-based violence. Furthermore, legal advice is provided to refugees through legal camps, shura meetings, community sessions, door-to-door visits and indoor counselling services on issues related to their stay in Pakistan, their documentary status including Proof of Registration (PoR) card validity, renewal or modification, birth registration, police harassment, access/referral to available public services and facilitated voluntary repatriation. ALACs work in close coordination with law enforcement authorities and provide regular training sessions to them as well as members of the judiciary on refugee law and refugees' rights in Pakistan.

Refugees and asylum-seekers are also supported by providing legal representation in cases where charges are brought against them for reasons related to the legality of their stay in the country as well as where their freedom of movement is restricted under various provisions of Pakistani legislations such as sections 107/151, 144, 55/109 of the Criminal Procedure Code and section 188 of the Pakistan Penal Code. In addition, assistance is provided in pursuing legal action where refugees/asylum-seekers have been subjected to sexual/gender-based or domestic violence as well as where they need a court intervention for seeking child custody or divorce.

The legal assistance in criminal cases is limited to refugees and asylum-seekers who are falsely charged linked to their vulnerable status as non-nationals or where a serious crime has been committed against them such as child sodomy, man slaughter or forced marriage and they are discriminated in having access to legal assistance. In such cases prior consultation is mandatory between UNHCR and the concerned ALAC partner and a decision is taken based on the particular circumstances prevailing in the concerned case.

2. Who is implementing this programme?

Different non-governmental organizations listed at the end of this document are providing these services with funding and support from UNHCR.

3. Who is eligible to obtain legal assistance through this programme?

Asylum-seekers carrying a Certificate for Asylum-Seekers issued by

UNHCR, Afghan refugees holding a valid PoR card and refugees who have been recognized under UNHCR's mandate and are holding a UNHCR Refugee Identity Card, are eligible to benefit from legal assistance through the ALACs programs.

4. How can help be requested from ALACs?

Eligible individuals can call the ALACs protection helpline numbers provided here below or approach directly the nearest ALACs centers to request for legal advice or assistance.

5. Does ALACs provide advice, information and legal assistance to persons who are unable to visit the ALACs?

Yes, UNHCR and the ALACs teams conduct regular community outreach visits and arrange community gatherings referred to as legal camps and shura meetings as well as door-to-door visits in the field in order to create awareness about the services provided by ALACs and address advice and legal assistance needs of the communities.

6. Are any fees or charges for these services required?

All ALACs services are free of charge, including documentation and other court charges. However, arranging personal sureties or bail bonds on the courts' instructions, particularly in cases where bail is granted in favour of a refugee or asylum-seekers, is the sole responsibility of the applicant.

In case any fee for the assistance is requested/charged by ALACs staff, this should be immediately reported either by using the complaints boxes available in all ALACs and UNHCR offices, which are securely locked and emptied exclusively by designated UNHCR staff, or by e-mail at pakisprt@unhcr.org. Such reports will be dealt with in strict confidentiality and without exposing the author of the report to any possible risks.

7. What basic information is required from the applicant for urgent legal intervention, particularly in case of arrest/detention?

A person requesting legal assistance must provide his/her name, father's name, identity document number (PoR card/ refugee ID card/ asylum-seeker certificate), contact number and – in case of arrest or detention - the location/name of the concerned police station/court. If the identity document number is not available, the applicant's age, name and place of origin (as stated on the PoR card, refugee ID card or asylum-seeker certificate) or any other information known to the applicant must be provided for verification purposes. The number of a PoR/refugee ID card held by any other individual registered with the same family can also help, if available.

Whenever possible, refugees and asylum-seekers are encouraged to provide as much information and documentation available to them with regard to their case to the ALACs lawyers. However, if documents are not available, ALACs is still able to intervene on the basis of the aforementioned key information.

8. Does ALACs provide legal assistance to individuals who lost their identity document?

Yes, ALACs provides legal assistance in case the original identity document is not available. However, in order to verify the legal status of an individual in Pakistan, it is helpful to provide the reference/card number. The lack of a reference/card number may cause delays as a profile check about the applicant will be required before any legal assistance can be extended.

9. How can a duplicate of the lost identity document be obtained?

In case of loss of an identity document such as the PoR card, identity document of the country of origin and passport, if any, ALAC can prepare an affidavit and lodge a report in the police station, which is essential for reapplying to secure these documents. In case of loss of a PoR card, ALAC can also obtain a verification letter from the Ministry for Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) of the Government of Afghanistan in Pakistan, which needs to be submitted to the closest NADRA Proof of Registration Card Modification (PCM) center for issuance of a duplicate PoR card. By contrast, requests for duplicate identity documents that have been issued by UNHCR should be directly submitted to UNHCR.

10. How is legal assistance delivered in case of arrest/detention?

When a refugee/asylum-seeker is arrested or detained based on immigration law, the information should be immediately shared with ALACs or UNHCR through the helpline numbers. The ALACs lawyers will promptly approach the concerned police check point or police station to arrange for the individual's release. If a First Information Report (FIR) under the Foreigners Act or other preventive provisions is lodged by the police in these circumstances, the ALACs lawyers will pursue the case in the court of law, at all levels.

11. How can a refugee/asylum-seeker avoid to be arrested or detained under immigration law?

The original PoR card or UNHCR-issued identity document for refugees and asylum-seekers should be carried at all times when travelling within the area of residence or over longer distances. It is advised to keep a photocopy of the identity document at home in case of loss of the original.