

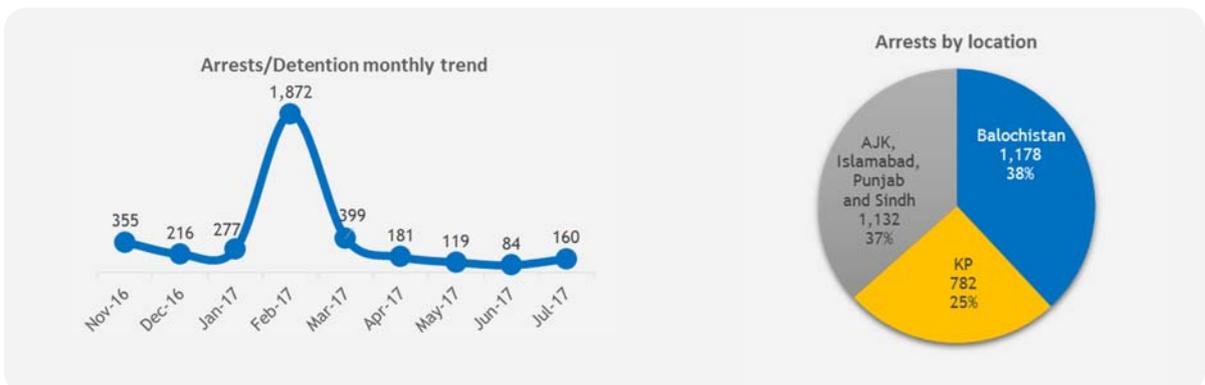
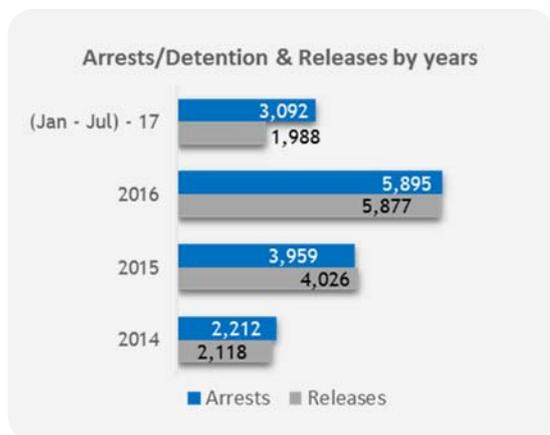
UNHCR Pakistan Monthly Protection Trends Reporting July 2017

Repatriation had increased dramatically in 2016 for several reasons, including positive pull factors and some negative push factors. In order to more systematically monitor these factors and provide an objective analysis of the situation, UNHCR Pakistan is compiling a monthly note in order to inform key stakeholders of emerging trends and to raise formally and consistently any protection concerns that may arise.

Analysis of Trends

UNHCR-facilitated voluntary repatriation continues. 10,377 families (42,154 individuals) have returned to Afghanistan since the beginning of April 2017. Of the total number of families processed for voluntary repatriation, 85 per cent repatriated from voluntary repatriation centre Chamkani while 15 per cent repatriated from voluntary repatriation centre Baleli. According to IOM, 78,664 undocumented Afghans have returned to Afghanistan since the start of the year.

The pilot for the documentation of undocumented Afghans started on 20 July at two locations - Islamabad and Peshawar. Some 1,501 individuals were registered during the pilot exercise. The nationwide documentation exercise commenced on 16 August at 21 sites.



Summary of Events

1. Arrests & Detention

In July 160 PoR card holders were arrested compared with 84 in June indicating a slightly deteriorated protection situation which UNHCR will monitor closely. There were also instances of detention of PoR cardholders for document checks and release upon confirmation of their documents. Upon arrest, UNHCR ALAC lawyers provided legal assistance to the arrested refugees and were able to secure their release.

2. Evictions/ Eviction Notices

UNHCR field teams were informed about a planned protest against the stay/presence of Afghan refugees in Haripur. A procession of locals planned to walk from Kalabat Township towards Padhana refugee village. UNHCR asked the district office of Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees (CAR) about the proposed protest and also met with the elders of the refugee village close to the protest area and urged them to make sure that the refugee community refrains from confronting the protestors. The protest was cancelled after the district police officer intervened and informed the protestors about the legal status of the refugee villages. The Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees for KP informed the overall situation in the refugee villages of Haripur district was satisfactory with no reports of harassment or undue coercion either from the locals or government authorities.

A refugee representative from Gadap town reportedly went missing when he left his house to visit the Afghan Consulate. UNHCR met with the Commissioner ARRC and family members of the missing refugee representative. The community and relatives showed strong anger about this incident. The relatives were counselled by UNHCR and were informed about the steps that have been taken to find him. The Commissioner ARRC sent a letter to IG Police for locating the individual PoR card holder. The case is on-going.

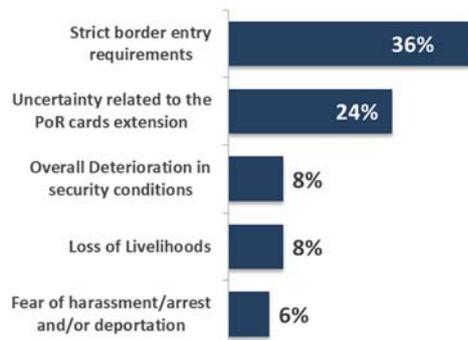
3. Reports from Exit Interviews/Encashment Centre Reporting

UNHCR Afghanistan has analyzed the data of interviews conducted with the Afghan returnees in 2017 so far. The biggest push factors cited were economic reasons (73 per cent) followed by harassment (13 per cent) while the biggest pull factors cited were an improvement in the security situation (54 per cent) and UNHCR assistance package (17 per cent). On the security point, 31 per cent of returnees said they did not return to their place of origin due to insecurity. The responses validate the notion that Afghans get their information on Afghanistan from the Afghan community in Pakistan with only seven per cent stating that they got information directly from UNHCR. Slightly more than half of the returnees reported that they gained information on situation in Afghanistan through their visits to Afghanistan despite the stricter border controls at Torkham.

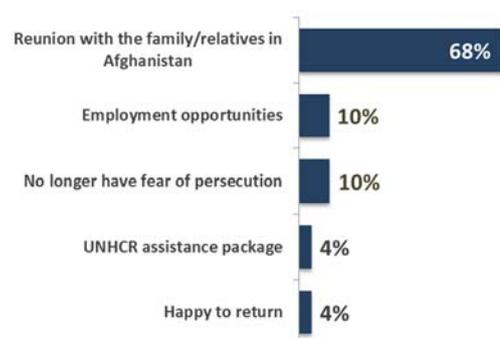
In the interviews conducted at the Baleli voluntary repatriation centre in Quetta major pull factors were sense of safety in their country of origin, prospects of better economic opportunities and employment in Afghanistan, reunification with family members and fear of harassment by law enforcing agencies. Some returnees indicated that they expect support from the Afghan government when they get back home in the form of land.

At the Torkham border, some returnee families informed border monitors that police harassment/mistreatment had led them to repatriate while others reported that the new border management regime had led them to return to Afghanistan; for example, obtaining passports, visas for visiting Pakistan and the associated administrative procedures.

Push Factors



Pull Factors



4. Negative Media/Public Statements of Political or Government Officials

Impact Level for Refugees & Asylum Seekers



Low



Medium



High

The political administration of Mohmand Agency has ordered unregistered Afghan refugees, mostly living in Ekkaghund sub-division, to leave the tribal region within six days.



Dawn 5 July: <https://www.dawn.com/news/1343337>

Summary of significant actions to counter push factors

Following the government's plans to relocate of three refugee villages in Mansehra to make way for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) road project, a joint task force was constituted to come up with solutions. The team comprised of CAR, UNHCR, MoRR and the Home Department and recommended that the government has already extended the stay of PoR card holders till December 2017. It was further observed that one of the refugee villages is a considerable distance from the road project, therefore it may not be relocated. However, the other two refugee villages may be merged into the third one. In case of a merger, all the allied facilities (schools, hospitals) will be relocated along with the existing staff and equipment.