

# Voluntary Repatriation Update

## September 2016



### Number of voluntarily repatriated refugees in 2016:

Note: During September 2016, the number of exit interviews conducted at the VRC Chamkani (KP) was limited, primarily due to lack of staff available at the VRC

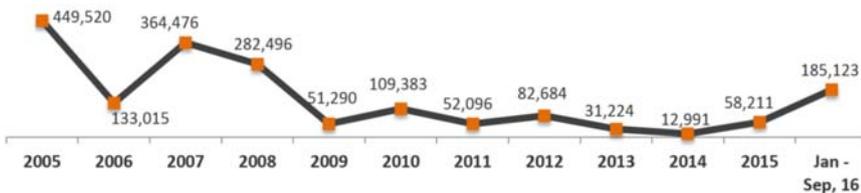
**185,123**

#### Overview of Voluntary Repatriation from Pakistan to Afghanistan

UNHCR facilitates the Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan refugees as part of UNHCR's mandate to provide comprehensive durable solution options.

UNHCR Pakistan operates three Voluntary Repatriation Centres (VRCs) one in Quetta and two in Peshawar. Families who want to repatriate are de-registered at the VRC, and their Proof of Registration (PoR) card, an identity card for Afghan refugees that grants their temporary legal stay in Pakistan and protection against *refoulement*, is cut in the corner. Returnees receive a cash grant once they have reached one of the three UNHCR Encashment Centres in Afghanistan. The cash grant has been increased, as of 25 June 2016, from an average 200 USD per family member to 400 USD per family member. The increase in the reintegration cash grant will continue for all Afghans currently in possession of a valid PoR card, as a concrete step to show UNHCR's continued support to returnees for sustainable reintegration as well as to Pakistan in assisting the 1.45 million registered Afghans currently residing in the country.

In September UNHCR opened another VRC in Azakhel (KP) in addition to VRC Chamkani to respond to the increased numbers of refugees wishing to return from KP and facilitate their return to Afghanistan in safety and dignity. With the opening of the new centre in Azakhel, Nowshera, about 40 kilometres east of Peshawar, UNHCR now has the capacity to facilitate the return of up to 10,000 refugees every day through the Torkham border crossing.



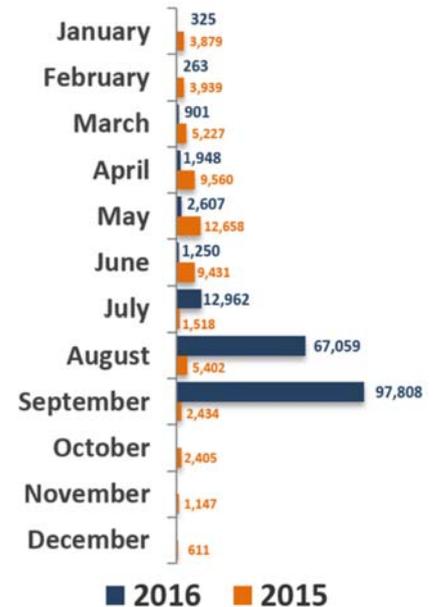
Since 2002, 4,105,019 Afghan refugees have repatriated from Pakistan with UNHCR's assistance (see chart above). Interviews with refugees and returnees reveal a confluence of factors affecting the decision to return, including: (1) introduction of a tight border management regime at the Torkham border which limits the previously free cross-border movements to persons with valid travel documents and visas, (2) short-term extensions of the validity of PoR cards resulting in heightened anxiety and lack of predictability, (3) enhanced implementation of the National Action Plan against Terrorism (NAP) and intensification of security operations against undocumented aliens, including Afghans, (4) intimidation and harassment by the authorities (particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and lesser acceptance of Afghans by local communities, with sub-regional geo-political dynamics impacting the public opinion; (5) doubling of the voluntary repatriation and reintegration cash grant, and (6) strong appeal by President Ghani for refugees to return and the pro-active Volrep campaign by the Afghan Ambassador and the MoRR in Pakistan to that effect.

Rapid survey pre-return assessment questionnaire has been developed for additional insight on the factors currently affecting the decisions of refugees to return to Afghanistan, as well as for protection interventions. Results of the pilot surveys conducted in RVs, Baluchistan as well as at Rawalpindi PCM will be reported in due course.

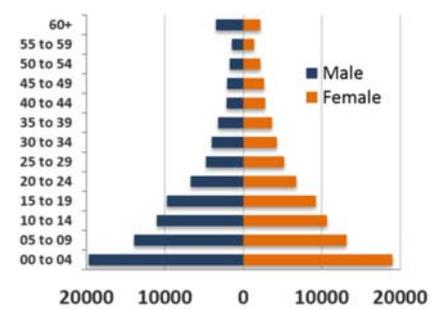
Protection referral form developed in the context of VolRep has been shared with Afghanistan for further referral for specific protection cases reported at Encashment centres that require follow-up in Pakistan.

Up until the end of September 2016, 185,123 refugees repatriated, consisting of 30,698 families which is the highest recorded number of returns since 2009. 97,808 individuals repatriated between 1 September and 30 September 2016 alone which is also the highest number of returns in September since 2006. The daily average number of returnees in September was around 4,500, an increase to the average approx. 2,600 daily returns in August. This increase was due to the opening of a third VRC (Azakhel) during the month.

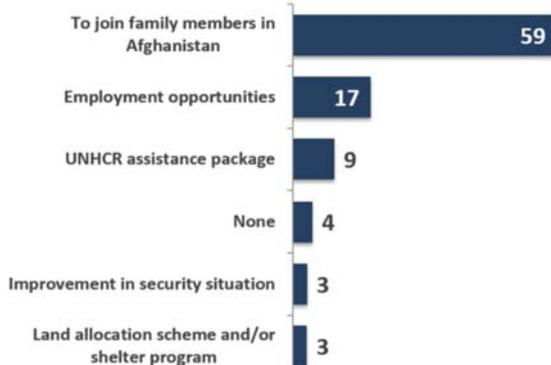
#### Repatriation by month



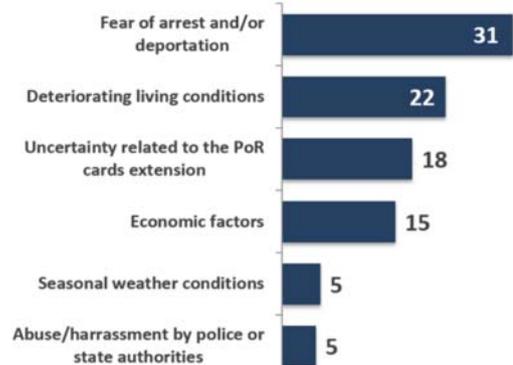
#### Repatriating individuals



#### Pull factors towards Afghanistan (%) \*



#### Push Factors from Pakistan (%) \*

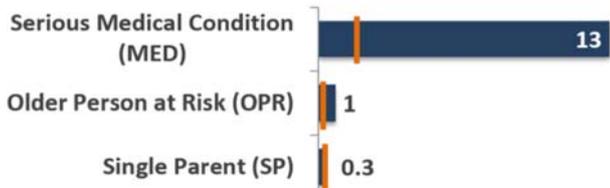


\* From June 2013 exit interviews have been conducted with returnees in the VRCs in order to better understand the reasons for returning to Afghanistan and the analysis in this report is derived from these interviews. Data shown in this report is until the end of September 2016.

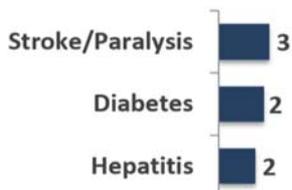
\*\* The Tripartite Commission meets on the basis of the 2007 Tripartite Agreement on the Voluntary Repatriation of Afghan Citizens between the Governments of Pakistan and Afghanistan, and UNHCR.



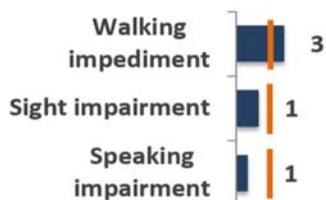
### Vulnerable families (%)\*



### Families with at least one member with a serious medical condition (%)\*



### Families with at least one member with functional disabilities (%) \*

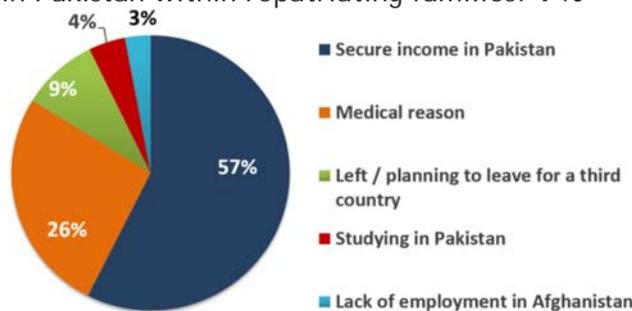


Baseline from 2011 PPVR data

\* Most common three

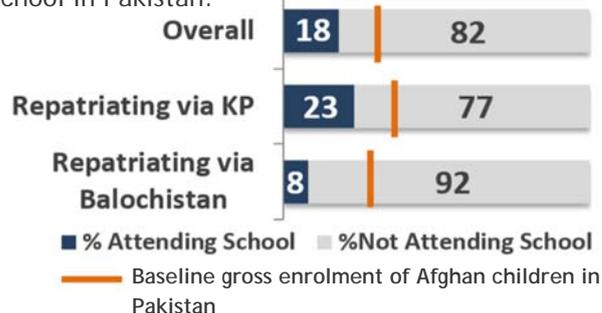
### Reasons for staying in Pakistan

Percentage of family members who remained in Pakistan within repatriating families: 7%



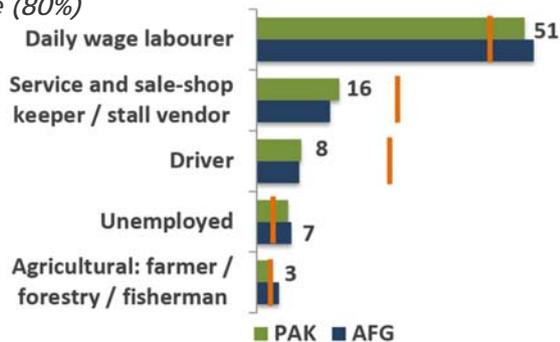
### School enrolment

Children of repatriating families that attended school in Pakistan:

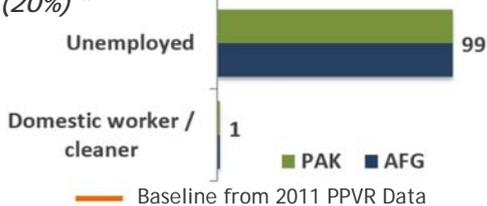


### Professions of heads of households

Male (80%)



Female (20%) \*



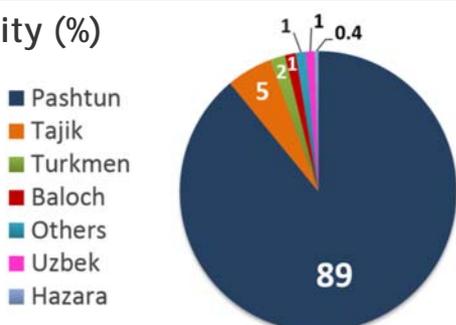
Baseline from 2011 PPVR Data

\* Note that 10% of female headed households repatriated to join their husband in Afghanistan and 75% have a husband remaining in Pakistan.

### Issues of concern as expressed by repatriating families (%)

In Pakistan:	
Recent arrests and detentions	2%
Lease agreement problems with landlords	1%
Bribery incidents on the way to the VRC	2%
Movement restricted outside of the refugee villages	2%
Outstanding financial or legal problems	1%
Access to health	6%
Legal aid	1%
Documentation	0%
In Afghanistan:	
Lack of shelter and land	38%
Lack of livelihoods	8%
Access to health	10%
Legal aid	2%
Assistance to person with specific needs	0%

### Ethnicity (%)



### Sources of Information for returning refugees:



