



## COI QUERY

<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>PAKISTAN</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>'Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan' (IFRP)</b>
<b>Reference period</b>	1 October to 30 November 2023
<b>Topic(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <a href="#">Implementation of the 'Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan' (IFRP)</a></li><li>2. <a href="#">Profile of persons subject to the IFRP</a></li><li>3. <a href="#">Status of registered Afghans in Pakistan (PoR and ACC card holders)</a></li></ol>
<b>Date of completion</b>	14 December 2023
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<b>Contributing EU+ COI units (if applicable)</b>	DE (This query was peer-reviewed by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees)

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## COI QUERY RESPONSE – Pakistan

### ‘Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan’ (IFRP)

#### 1. Implementation of the ‘Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan’

On 26 September 2023, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) of Pakistan announced its internal plan to enact an Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan (IFRP),<sup>1</sup> which outlined the ‘repatriation’ of Afghan nationals in three phases: starting with undocumented Afghan nationals, followed by Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders and Proof of Registration (PoR) holders.<sup>2</sup> For more information on the status of registered Afghans in Pakistan, including ACC and PoR holders, see the EUAA COI report on [Pakistan – Situation of Afghan Refugees](#) published in May 2022. On 3 October 2023, the MoI formally set the deadline of 1 November 2023 for unregistered migrants to leave the country, announcing that, following this date, they would be deported.<sup>3</sup> On 10 October, the government issued a circular<sup>4</sup> stating that PoR and ACC holders could be repatriated only on a voluntary basis, and on 10 November it was announced that the validity of PoR cards would be extended until 31 December 2023.<sup>5</sup> Following the deadline of 1 November, the MoI issued an announcement stating that ‘The Government of Pakistan has decided that all the foreigners who are residing in Pakistan illegally, without valid documentation or those who overstayed their visas, shall be returned to their countries of origin’.<sup>6</sup> The MoI ‘has issued instructions to all provinces to deport foreigners without documentation under the Foreign Act 1946’.<sup>7</sup> For more information on laws and policies in Pakistan towards Afghan refugees, see the EUAA COI report on [Pakistan – Situation of Afghan Refugees](#) published in May 2022.

The decision by the Pakistani Government affected 1.7 million Afghan nationals,<sup>8</sup> including around 600 000 Afghans who fled to Pakistan following the Taliban takeover in 2021.<sup>9</sup> The IFRP decision was taken by the government of Pakistan following a surge in attacks by the Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), an armed group also referred to as the Pakistani Taliban, in

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<sup>1</sup> IOM, Pakistan, Bi-weekly flow monitoring of Afghan returnees (01 – 15 October 2023), 18 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #5, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 11 November 2023), 15 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #5, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 11 November 2023), 15 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; AI, Pakistan: stop deporting Afghan refugees, 15 November 2023, [url](#); SIGAR, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 30 October 2023, [url](#), p. 15; VoA, Pakistan turns up heat over cross-border attacks, 5 October 2023, [url](#); Dawn, Gov sets deadline of Nov 1 for illegal migrants to leave Pakistan, 3 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR, [Twitter], Important information for Afghan Refugees (PoR/ACC holders), posted on 10 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #5, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 11 November 2023), 15 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>6</sup> Pakistan, Ministry of Interior, Illegal Foreigners Repatriation from Pakistan [Screenshot], 1 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>7</sup> Radio Pakistan, Govt initiates nationwide operation to depart illegal foreign nationals, 1 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>8</sup> BBC, Pakistan orders Afghan asylum seekers out of country by November, 4 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>9</sup> AP, Pakistan announces big crackdown on migrants in the country illegally, including 1.7 million Afghans, 3 October 2023, [url](#); Al Jazeera, Pakistan wants undocumented migrants to leave by November 1 or get deported, 3 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>9</sup> SIGAR, Quarterly Report to the United States Congress, 30 October 2023, [url](#), p. 15



the country<sup>10</sup> and deteriorating relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan over the TTP.<sup>11</sup> The TTP leaders and fighters reportedly made Afghanistan their sanctuary<sup>12</sup> by using Afghan soil to carry out attacks against Pakistani security forces.<sup>13</sup> In October 2023, the interim Interior Minister of Pakistan, Sarfraz Bugti,<sup>14</sup> stated that ‘14 of 24 suicide bombings’ in the country during 2023 were carried out by Afghans.<sup>15</sup> Pakistan blamed Afghan migrants for the attacks.<sup>16</sup> Since the Afghan Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in August 2023, there has been a significant increase of ‘terrorist violence’ in Pakistan.<sup>17</sup> The recent TTP attacks in the country caused the deaths of hundreds of civilians and security forces.<sup>18</sup>

After the IFRP order was announced, house-to-house searches began across the country<sup>19</sup> by the police.<sup>20</sup> Local authorities used mosques in remote areas and villages to warn Afghans to leave their houses<sup>21</sup> and the country by 1 November 2023<sup>22</sup> or they would face arrest.<sup>23</sup> A day before the deadline, in Karachi, the police used loudspeakers in Afghan residential areas informing people ‘that undocumented migrants would be arrested by midnight on November 1, placed in detention centers and then deported’.<sup>24</sup>

The MoI asked Pakistani citizens ‘to report to the authorities about the presence of illegal foreigners in their localities’.<sup>25</sup> The government also asked people to report to the authorities holders of illegal ID cards in the country.<sup>26</sup> According to Pakistani authorities, they have used ‘advanced mapping and geofencing techniques to identify and track individuals lacking legal authorization across the country’.<sup>27</sup> The process of identification and geo-fencing of

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<sup>10</sup> AP, Pakistan says its planned deportation of 1.7 million Afghan migrants will be ‘phased and orderly’, 6 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>11</sup> Al Jazeera, Pakistan’s top court hears petition to halt deportations of Afghans, 1 December 2023, [url](#); FP, Why Pakistan is pushing out refugees, 13 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>12</sup> AP, Pakistan’s army says it killed 8 militants during a raid along the border with Afghanistan, 27 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>13</sup> Dawn, Govt reveals plan to expel documented immigrants, 10 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>14</sup> Dawn, Gov sets deadline of Nov 1 for illegal migrants to leave Pakistan, 3 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>15</sup> Tolonews, Kabul denies Pakistan’s claim of Afghans involved in suicide bombings, 4 October 2023, [url](#); BBC, Afghan refugees fear as Pakistan prepares for deportations, 1 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>16</sup> MEI, Afghan refugees as victims of Pakistan and Afghanistan’s clashing security interest, 7 November 2023, [url](#);

Al Jazeera, As Pakistan deports refugees, tense Afghanistan ties come in sharp focus, 7 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>17</sup> Dawn, Terrorist attacks increased in Pakistan after Taliban takeover of Afghanistan: report, 1 June 2023, [url](#)

<sup>18</sup> VoA, Pakistan turns up heat over cross-border attacks, 5 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>19</sup> FT, Pakistan’s expulsion order pushes uprooted Afghans into crises under Taliban, 6 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>20</sup> AP, More than a million Afghans will go back after Pakistan begins expelling foreigners without papers, 17 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>21</sup> Khyber News, Last day for voluntarily repatriation of Illegal Foreign Residents in Pakistan, 31 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>22</sup> FT, Pakistan’s expulsion order pushes uprooted Afghans into crises under Taliban, 6 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>23</sup> AP, More than a million Afghans will go back after Pakistan begins expelling foreigners without papers, 17 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>24</sup> Le monde, Pakistan deports thousands of refugees: ‘I was born here, I don’t know anyone in Afghanistan. Only God can help me’, 5 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>25</sup> Pakistan, Ministry of Interior, Illegal Foreigners Repatriation from Pakistan [Screenshot], 1 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>26</sup> Dawn, Gov sets deadline of Nov 1 for illegal migrants to leave Pakistan, 3 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>27</sup> Khyber News, Thousands voluntarily depart as Pakistan gears up for mass deportation of illegal foreigners, 28 October 2023, [url](#); Guardian (The), Pakistan starts mass deportation of undocumented Afghans, 1 November 2023, [url](#)



undocumented Afghans by the security forces has reportedly been completed by 1 November 2023.<sup>28</sup>

The MoI reported that businesses and properties of unregistered foreigners ‘may be subjected to legal scrutiny that might lead to confiscation’ immediately before they leave the country.<sup>29</sup> According to Amnesty International, ‘Houses of Afghan refugees have been demolished, and properties seized’.<sup>30</sup> As of 31 October 2023, houses of Afghan refugees were destroyed by Pakistani authorities in Islamabad.<sup>31</sup> Afghans were not allowed to return to Afghanistan with more than 50 000 Pakistani rupees (173 USD) in cash.<sup>32</sup>

## Arrests and detention

As of 30 October 2023, 49 holding centres (detention centres<sup>33</sup>) were created<sup>34</sup> across the country, where Afghans were ‘detained and held’<sup>35</sup> before being returned to their country.<sup>36</sup> 36 holding centres were established in Punjab province (one per district), one in Peshawar, one in Haripur and one in Landi Kotal areas of Pakhtunkhwa province, one in Kemari, one in Malir areas of Sindh province, one in Quetta, one in Chagai, one in Pishin areas of Baluchistan, one in Islamabad and one in Gilgit.<sup>37</sup> Some of the holding centres had the capacity to hold thousands of people.<sup>38</sup> Adyala jail in Rawalpindi, Central jail in Peshawar<sup>39</sup> and Landhi jail in Karachi<sup>40</sup> were also used to detain ‘undocumented migrants’.<sup>41</sup> According to Amnesty International, ‘authorities have not allowed access to detention centres recently set up for deportation purposes’.<sup>42</sup>

According to Human Rights Watch, the police in Pakistan carried out night raids to detain Afghans after beating and threatening them.<sup>43</sup> According to media reports, even Afghans who resided legally in Pakistan were detained or went into hiding to avoid detention.<sup>44</sup> On 31 October 2023, Human Rights Watch reported on the use of ‘threats, abuse, and detention’ by the government of Pakistan to force Afghan asylum seekers, who lack legal status, to return to their country.<sup>45</sup> According to Amnesty International, as of November 2023, authorities in Pakistan have ‘increased the crackdown on unregistered Afghan refugees, which has resulted

<sup>28</sup> Radio Pakistan, Govt initiates nationwide operation to depart illegal foreign nationals, 1 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>29</sup> Pakistan, Ministry of Interior, Illegal Foreigners Repatriation from Pakistan [Screenshot], 1 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>30</sup> AI, Pakistan: stop deporting Afghan refugees, 15 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>31</sup> RFE/RL, Islamabad ahead of deportation deadline from Pakistan, 1 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>32</sup> UNHCR, Forced returns from Pakistan deepen Afghanistan’s humanitarian crises, 17 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>33</sup> AI, Pakistan: halt mass deportation and detention of Afghan refugees, 10 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>34</sup> News International (The), Thousands of illegal foreigners leave Pakistan as deadline expires today, 31 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>35</sup> VOA, Pakistan: 200,000 Afghan nationals returned home, 30 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>36</sup> Al Jazeera, Settled Afghans forced to flee Pakistan, 31 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>37</sup> Radio Pakistan, Comprehensive plan finalized for repatriation of illegal foreigners, 31 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>38</sup> France 24, Afghans in Pakistan face deportation, 1 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>39</sup> Khyber News, Over 7 000 illegal immigrants deported, 2 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>40</sup> GDP, Afghan refugees ordered to leave Pakistan, or face deportation, 5 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>41</sup> Khyber News, Over 7 000 illegal immigrants deported, 2 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>42</sup> AI, Pakistan: stop deporting Afghan refugees, 15 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>43</sup> HRW, Pakistan: Widespread abuses force Afghans to leave, 28 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>44</sup> Guardian [The], ‘We’re so fearful’: Pakistan rounds up Afghan refugees for deportation, 14 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>45</sup> HRW, Pakistan: Afghans detained, face deportation, 31 October 2023, [url](#)



in arbitrary arrests, unlawful detentions of refugees and separation of families, including minors, women, and older people'.<sup>46</sup>

On 15 November 2023, the UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk stated that 'he was alarmed by reports that the arbitrary expulsion of Afghan nationals from Pakistan has been accompanied by abuse, including ill-treatment, arbitrary arrests and detention, destruction of property and personal belongings, and extortion.'<sup>47</sup> During the same period, 'UNHCR and IOM received reports of Afghan nationals facing forcible eviction, extortion, and harassment' in Pakistan.<sup>48</sup>

As of 23 November 2023, UNHCR reported on some issues faced by Afghans in Pakistan, including waiting long hours at checkpoints, detention, harassment, request of bribes to pass police check points, physical abuse, not being allowed to cross with property or live-stock, extortion of money, family separation, security incidents, lease not extended, confiscation of documents and interrogation.<sup>49</sup>

### **Prevalence and location of arrest**

According to UNHCR and IOM joint updates on arrests and detention of Afghans in Pakistan, between 1 January and 28 October 2023, 2 400 PoR (Proof of Registration)/asylum seekers and 998 ACC (Afghan Citizen Card)/undocumented Afghans were arrested in Pakistan. On 18 November this number reached 4 206 for PoR/asylum seekers and 17 402 for ACC/undocumented Afghans; on 25 November 2023, the number reached 4 250 for PoR/asylum seekers and 21 849 for ACC/undocumented Afghans.<sup>50</sup> According to the same source, 'prior to 2023, there was no data collected on the arrest and detention of ACC holders or undocumented Afghan nationals'. The source further indicated that IOM has started to collect data on arrest and detention of Afghans in Pakistan, 'which should be considered indicative at this point', according to the source, particularly numbers related to 'undocumented Afghan nationals, should be considered underreported.' In 2023, a total number of 26 099 Afghans were arrested in Pakistan, which represented an increase of almost eleven times higher than the same period in 2022.<sup>51</sup> For more information on the status of PoR cardholders, ACC cardholders, asylum seekers and undocumented Afghans in Pakistan, see the EUAA COI report on [Pakistan – Situation of Afghan Refugees](#) published in May 2022.

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<sup>46</sup> AI, Pakistan: stop deporting Afghan refugees, 15 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>47</sup> UN OHCHR, Türk alarmed by reports of human rights abuses against Afghans forced to leave Pakistan, 15 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>48</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #5, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 11 November 2023), 15 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>49</sup> UNHCR, Pakistan-Afghanistan, returns emergency response as of 23 November 2023, 24 November 2023, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>50</sup> UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #3, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 28 October 2023), 1 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #6, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (1 October – 18 November 2023), 22 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #7, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 25 November 2023), 29 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>51</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #7, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 25 November 2023), 29 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1



According to a local news outlet, on 1 November, 200 000 undocumented foreigners were identified in Sindh, 300 000 undocumented Afghans were subject to transfer to detention centres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while in Punjab and Balochistan the deportation of Afghans had already begun.<sup>52</sup> During the same period, 7 380 Afghans were registered at Landi Kotal holding centre before being ‘deported’ to Afghanistan.<sup>53</sup> No other source could be found to corroborate this information within the time constraints of this query.

Between 1 October and 25 November 2023, the number of arrested and detained PoR/asylum seekers and ACC/undocumented Afghans by location fluctuated between Punjab and Balochistan while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Islamabad and Azad Kashmir remained more or less stable.<sup>54</sup> For instance, between 1 and 27 October 2023, Balochistan had the highest rate of overall arrests (41 %), followed by Punjab (22 %).<sup>55</sup> As of 3 November 2023, Punjab shifted to 44 % and Balochistan to 39 %.<sup>56</sup> However, as of 11 November 2023, Balochistan has shifted to 64 %, and Punjab to 15 %.<sup>57</sup> As of 22 November 2023, Balochistan increased to 65 %, followed by Punjab with 16 %.<sup>58</sup> However, as of 25 November 2023, the overall percentage of arrests in Balochistan reached 63 %, remaining the top province by the number of arrests and detained Afghans, followed by Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Islamabad and Azad Kashmir.<sup>59</sup>

## Forced return

As of June 2023, UNHCR reported an estimated 3.7 million Afghans living in Pakistan,<sup>60</sup> 1.32 million of whom were Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders, 13 770 were registered refugees under UNHCR’s mandate and 58 062 were registered asylum seekers under UNHCR’s mandate.<sup>61</sup> During the same period, there were 840 000 Afghan Citizenship Card

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<sup>52</sup> Radio Pakistan, Govt initiates nationwide operation to depart illegal foreign nationals, 1 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>53</sup> Khyber News, Over 7 000 illegal immigrants deported, 2 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>54</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #1, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 15 October 2023), 19 October 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #2, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 21 October 2023), 25 October 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #3, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 28 October 2023), 1 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #4, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 4 November 2023), 8 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #5, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 11 November 2023), 15 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #6, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (1 October – 18 November 2023), 22 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #7, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 25 November 2023), 29 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>55</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #3, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 28 October 2023), 1 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>56</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #4, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 04 November 2023), 8 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>57</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #5, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 11 November 2023), 15 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>58</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #6, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (1 October – 18 November 2023), 22 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>59</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #7, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 25 November 2023), 29 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>60</sup> UNHCR, Afghanistan Situation RRP – Mid-year Report 2023, January-June 2023, [url](#), p. 16

<sup>61</sup> UNHCR, Pakistan, overview of refugees and asylum seekers population as of 31 October 2023, 17 November 2023, [url](#)



(ACC) holders, 775 000 undocumented, 146 240 unregistered members of registered families. As of 31 January 2023, the Government of Pakistan, as reported by UNHCR, estimated that about 600 000 Afghans arrived in Pakistan following the Taliban takeover in 2021.<sup>62</sup>

Authorities in Pakistan reportedly planned the return of Afghans in three phases: firstly with undocumented migrants, secondly with ACC cardholders and thirdly with PoR cardholders.<sup>63</sup> Officials of the Pakistan Customs, National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) are in charge to collect data on the deportation of Afghans.<sup>64</sup>

Following the IFRP announcement<sup>65</sup> in October 2023, daily border crossings of Afghans from Pakistan to Afghanistan has surged significantly,<sup>66</sup> with an increase in daily border crossings from 200 to 17 000 individuals.<sup>67</sup> As of 31 October 2023, four crossing points in Balochistan, including Chaman, Noor Wahab, Badini and Barab Chah, were used to return Afghans.<sup>68</sup> The latter three border crossing points in Balochistan<sup>69</sup> were newly opened in Qila Saifullah area and Chagai district<sup>70</sup> to accelerate the deportation of Afghans<sup>71</sup> as the Chaman crossing point was overwhelmed due to the large number of crossings.<sup>72</sup> In addition to Torkham, three more border crossing points were used in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including Kharlachi, Ghulam Khan and Angoor Adda crossing points.<sup>73</sup> As of 1 November 2023, IOM has been collecting data on returns via Ghulam Khan and Badini border crossing points in addition to Torkham and Chaman.<sup>74</sup> On 21 November 2023, Torkham border crossing was closed by Afghan *de facto* authorities following Pakistan's decision imposing mandatory visa for Afghan drivers trading between the two countries.<sup>75</sup> On 22 November 2023, the Torkham border crossing point reportedly reopened.<sup>76</sup> During the reporting period and based on the information published by

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<sup>62</sup> UNHCR, Data, Afghanistan situation, data monitored on 15 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>63</sup> UNHCR, Emergency update #2 : Pakistan-Afghanistan, return response as of 16 November 2023, 17 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; Dawn, Gov decides to evict over 1M foreigners illegally residing in Pakistan: state media, 2 October 2023, [url](#); International Crisis Group, Pakistan's mass deportation of Afghans poses risk to regional stability, 13 November 2023, [url](#); UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #4, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 04 November 2023), 8 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>64</sup> Frontier Post (The), Over 550,000 Afghans leave Pakistan as crackdown enters its second day, 2 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>65</sup> UNHCR, Emergency update #2: Pakistan-Afghanistan, return response as of 16 November 2023, 16 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>66</sup> UNHCR, Emergency update #2: Pakistan-Afghanistan, return response as of 16 November 2023, 16 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>67</sup> IOM, Mass forced return from Pakistan to Afghanistan overwhelm borders, stretch resources, 22 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>68</sup> Radio Pakistan, Comprehensive plan finalized for repatriation of illegal foreigners, 31 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>69</sup> AP, Pakistan opens 3 new border crossings to deport Afghans in ongoing crackdown on migrants, 13 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>70</sup> Dawn, More border crossings to open for repatriation, 13 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>71</sup> AP, Pakistan opens 3 new border crossings to deport Afghans in ongoing crackdown on migrants, 13 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>72</sup> Dawn, More border crossings to open for repatriation, 13 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>73</sup> Radio Pakistan, Comprehensive plan finalized for repatriation of illegal foreigners, 31 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>74</sup> IOM, Pakistan, Bi-weekly flow monitoring of Afghan returnees, Data collection period: 1 – 15 November 2023, 15 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>75</sup> Khyber news, Afghanistan closes Torkham border over visa dispute with Pakistan, 21 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>76</sup> Pajhwok, Torkham crossing reopens for transit trade, 22 November 2023, [url](#)

UNHCR on 1 December 2023, there have been three official crossing points between Pakistan and Afghanistan, namely: Torkham (bordering Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the Pakistan side and Nangarhar province on the Afghanistan side); Spin Boldak/Chaman (bordering Balochistan on the Pakistan side and Kandahar on the Afghanistan side); Khost/Ghulam Khan (bordering Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the Pakistan side and Khost province on the Afghanistan side).<sup>77</sup> From 15 September to 30 November 2023, a total number of 428 400 Afghans returned from Pakistan to Afghanistan, 25 700 of whom were forcibly returned, according to UNHCR.<sup>78</sup> According to IOM, between 1 and 15 October 2023, authorities in Pakistan ‘forcibly returned’ 614 Afghans to their country ‘due to a lack of valid documentation’<sup>79</sup> and 345 Afghans between 16 and 31 October 2023,<sup>80</sup> while between 1 and 15 November 2023, the number of ‘forcibly returned’ Afghans reached 15 171, according to the source<sup>81</sup>, and 9 335 between 16 and 30 November 2023.<sup>82</sup>

As of 25 November 2023, the number of forced returns from Pakistan to Afghanistan accounted for 24 533 and it remained high during the mentioned period with important daily fluctuation.<sup>83</sup> On 28 November 2023, Human Rights Watch reported on the destruction of ‘identity documents to expel thousands of Afghan refugees and asylum seekers’.<sup>84</sup> On 30 November 2023, AP cited authorities in Balochistan province stating that the police was ordered to arrest and deport ten thousand ‘illegal’ Afghans per day.<sup>85</sup> For more information on the number of returnees from Pakistan, see the EUAA query response on the [Situation of Afghan returnees from Pakistan amid the campaign linked to the ‘Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan’ \(IFRP\)](#) published in December 2023.

## 2. Profile of persons subject to the IFRP

According to UNHCR, as of 31 October 2023, 31.3 % of Afghans in Pakistan were living in refugee villages and 68.7 % outside the refugee villages in Pakistan.<sup>86</sup> For more information on places of residence of Afghans in Pakistan, see the EUAA COI report on [Pakistan – Situation of Afghan Refugees](#) published in May 2022.

Various profiles of Afghans have based themselves in Pakistan, including those who worked for the US or other Western countries,<sup>87</sup> former interpreters,<sup>88</sup> former Afghan

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<sup>77</sup> UNHCR, External update: Afghanistan situation #29, as of 1 November 2023, 1 December 2023, [url](#)

<sup>78</sup> UNHCR, Pakistan-Afghanistan, returns emergency response as of 30 November 2023, 1 December 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>79</sup> IOM, Pakistan, Bi-weekly flow monitoring of Afghan returnees (01 – 15 October 2023), 18 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>80</sup> IOM, Pakistan, Bi-weekly flow monitoring of Afghan returnees (16 – 31 October 2023), 8 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>81</sup> IOM, Pakistan, Bi-weekly flow monitoring of Afghan returnees, Data collection period: 1 – 15 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>82</sup> IOM, Bi-weekly flow monitoring of Afghan returnees, data collection period: 16 – 30 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1

<sup>83</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #7, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 25 November 2023), 29 November 2023, [url](#), p. 2

<sup>84</sup> HRW, Pakistan: Widespread abuses force Afghans to leave, 28 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>85</sup> AP, A Pakistani province aims to deport 10,000 Afghans a day, 30 November 2023, [url](#)

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National Security Forces (including ANA, ANP and NDS),<sup>89</sup> journalists,<sup>90</sup> civil and human rights activists, LGBTQ+, advocates, judges, former government personnel, Shia Hazara,<sup>91</sup> Ismailis,<sup>92</sup> women and girls,<sup>93</sup> including former female prosecutors.<sup>94</sup> As of 31 October 2023, women and girls constituted 49.6 % of the ACC cardholders and undocumented Afghans<sup>95</sup> and 47 % of registered Afghans;<sup>96</sup> former Afghan employees of the US in Afghanistan were reported to be in the thousands,<sup>97</sup> Afghan journalists over 200<sup>98</sup> and former Afghan National Security Forces over tens of thousands.<sup>99</sup> Some of these profiles went to Pakistan following the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan in August 2021.<sup>100</sup>

Concerning ethnic groups of registered Afghans in Pakistan, as of 31 October 2023, there were 1 170 813 Pashtun, 83 337 Tajik, 41 361 Uzbek, 37 310 Hazara, 23 291 Baloch, 14 146 Turkman.<sup>101</sup> For information on the situation of some of the aforementioned profiles in Afghanistan, see the EUAA COI report on [Afghanistan – Country Focus, published in December 2023](#).

As of 2 November 2023, the government of Pakistan issued a letter informing security forces not to arrest Afghan Ismailis, who were undergoing the Canadian relocation process.<sup>102</sup> On 6 November 2023, 25 000 Afghans, who were undergoing the process of relocation to the US received letters from the US embassy in Pakistan and their names were shared with the authorities to allow them staying while awaiting resettlement to the US.<sup>103</sup>

As of 16 November 2023, over 300 Afghan refugees were relocated to Canada from Pakistan<sup>104</sup> while an Afghan couple has reportedly been deported to Afghanistan while

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<sup>89</sup> RFE/RL, 'I'm very worried': former Afghan soldiers fear forced return to Taliban-ruled homeland, 13 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>90</sup> RSF, RSF urges Pakistani government not to deport Afghan journalists, 3 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>91</sup> FP, Why Pakistan is pushing out refugees, 13 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>92</sup> Chitral today, Police directed not to arrest Afghan Ismailis in Pakistan, 10 November 2023, [url](#); Dawn, Documented Afghan family returns voluntarily, 12 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>93</sup> RFE/RL, 'I won't be free': Afghan women, girls face grim future after expulsion from Pakistan, 15 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>94</sup> RFE/RL, Afghan female prosecutors fear being sent back to Afghanistan under Pakistan's deportation program, 21 November 2023, [url](#)

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<sup>96</sup> UNHCR, Pakistan, overview of refugees and asylum seekers population as of 31 October 2023, 17 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>97</sup> Guardian (The), Pakistan starts mass deportation of undocumented Afghans, 1 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>98</sup> RSF, RSF urges Pakistani government not to deport Afghan journalists, 3 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>99</sup> RFE/RL, 'I'm very worried': former Afghan soldiers fear forced return to Taliban-ruled homeland, 13 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>100</sup> HRW, Pakistan: Widespread abuses force Afghans to leave, 28 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>101</sup> UNHCR, Pakistan, overview of refugees and asylum seekers population as of 31 October 2023, 17 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>102</sup> Chitral today, Police directed not to arrest Afghan Ismailis in Pakistan, 10 November 2023, [url](#); Dawn, Documented Afghan family returns voluntarily, 12 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>103</sup> Dawn, US move to stop deportation of 25,000 Afghan workers, 6 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>104</sup> Pajhwok, Over 300 Afghans transferred to Canada from Pakistan, 16 November 2023, [url](#)

awaiting resettlement to Canada.<sup>105</sup> On 29 November 2023, 295 Afghans arrived in Canada from Pakistan.<sup>106</sup>

According to Human Rights Watch, authorities in Pakistan imposed an exit fee of 830 USD on those Afghans who were waiting for resettlement in third countries including to the US, United Kingdom, and other countries if they lacked a valid visa at the time of departure.<sup>107</sup> Visas of many Afghans have reportedly expired in Pakistan due to the ‘delays in the Pakistan registration system’ and significantly slow relocation process to western countries.<sup>108</sup>

### **3. Status of registered Afghans in Pakistan (PoR and ACC cardholders)**

As of 10 October 2023, the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions of Pakistan reportedly informed national and regional authorities in the country ‘that Afghan Refugees with valid Proof of Registration (PoR) card and Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) [...] are allowed to reside temporarily in Pakistan and can only be repatriated on voluntary basis’.<sup>109</sup> On 14 November 2023, UNHCR reported that PoR cards were extended until 31 December 2023.<sup>110</sup> For more information on status of registered Afghans in Pakistan, see the EUAA COI report on [Pakistan – Situation of Afghan Refugees](#) published in May 2022.

According to UNHCR and IOM joint reports, between 1 October and 30 November 2023, numerous PoR and ACC cardholders were forcibly returned to Afghanistan.<sup>111</sup> For more information on the number of arrests and forced returns of PoR and ACC cardholders, see section [1. Implementation of the ‘Illegal Foreigners’ Repatriation Plan’](#)

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<sup>105</sup> Janice Dickson, [Twitter], posted on 20 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>106</sup> IRCC, posted on 29 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>107</sup> HRW, Pakistan: Widespread abuses force Afghans to leave, 28 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>108</sup> France 24, Long wait for freedom: Afghan refugees in limbo in Pakistan, 30 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>109</sup> UNHCR, [Twitter], Important information for Afghan Refugees (PoR/ACC holders), posted on 10 October 2023, [url](#)

<sup>110</sup> UNHCR, [Twitter], Important information for Afghans, posted on 14 November 2023, [url](#)

<sup>111</sup> UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #1, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 15 October 2023), 19 October 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #2, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 21 October 2023), 25 October 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #3, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 28 October 2023), 1 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #4, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 4 November 2023), 8 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #5, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 11 November 2023), 15 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #6, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (1 October – 18 November 2023), 22 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; UNHCR, IOM, UNHCR-IOM, Flash update #7, arrest and detention, flow monitoring, (15 September – 25 November 2023), 29 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1; IOM, Bi-weekly flow monitoring of Afghan returnees, data collection period: 16 – 30 November 2023, [url](#), p. 1



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