

Completed by: Community World Services Asia (CWSA)

Date completed: 25th January 2024

Forum: Partners in Afghanistan

Type of emergency: Afghan Returnees Response

Date of emergency (if rapid onset):

1. The nature of the emergency

On October 3rd 2023, Pakistan's interim government announced the repatriation of "illegal" refugees and migrants, citing security concerns but were later also found to be targeting Afghan Citizen Card holders and even those with Proof of Registration cards. Since then, according to UNHCR, more than 450,000 people have returned to Afghanistan¹.

Afghan deportees are extremely vulnerable, particularly women and children are at risk of losing their lives in a harsh winter if left without adequate shelter.

In Phase one of the government's plan, effective from November 1st, the focus was on "illegal" Afghans—those lacking documentation, possessing fake Pakistani papers, or overstaying visas. The subsequent phases are targeting Afghan Citizen Card holders and even those with Proof of Registration cards, although no specific timeline has been announced. Pakistani authorities have declared intentions to confiscate money and property from "illegal foreigners" and are taking punitive measures against locals sheltering them. A hotline established by the Interior Ministry has been encouraging reporting, leading to fines for landlords and firms employing Afghans without proper documents which has resulted in local law enforcement harassing Afghans indiscriminately. Registered refugees have reported police raids, property confiscation, destruction of documents, arrests without charges, and bribe demands.

The enforcement measures have raised international human rights concerns, and the situation is further complicated by the inadequate preparedness of Afghanistan to accommodate a large number of deportees amidst existing crises.

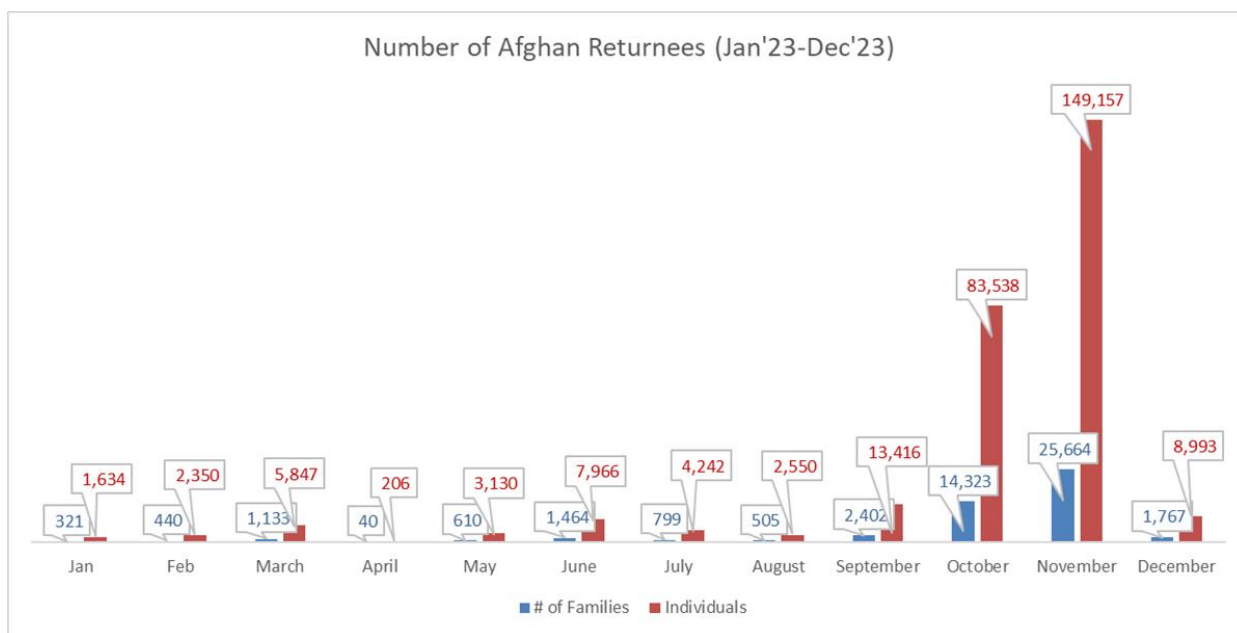
2. The impact and scale of the emergency *(please include your source of information)*

- i) From January to December 2023, 49,468 families and 283,029 individuals had returned to Afghanistan². The month wise breakdown can be seen in the graph.

¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/12/14/pakistan-extends-deadline-for-afghans-awaiting-third-country-resettlement>

² IOM

In Nangarhar, 58,241 females (35387 children and 22854 adults) and 63433 males (40388 children and 23045 adults) have returned.



Whereas, till January 15th, 2024, 386 families and 1913 individuals have returned to Afghanistan³.

In Nangarhar, 58,241 females (35387 children and 22854 adults) and 63433 males (40388 children and 23045 adults) returned.

- ii) The Pakistani government has imposed restrictions on returnees, requiring them to leave behind livestock and cash exceeding 50,000 rupees (about \$175). However, complaints have surfaced about law enforcement seizing amounts below this threshold and personal items like jewellery. There are also reports of property confiscation and destruction of documents.⁴
- iii) Based on the initial findings of a Multi-Sectoral Need Assessment (MSNA) survey (please refer to the attached report) conducted by CWSA in Laghman and Nangarhar provinces, the expulsion of Afghan nationals has significantly and adversely affected the well-being of thousands, rendering them more susceptible and impeding their access to fundamental needs such as food, shelter, education, water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH), nutrition, livelihood, and protection.
 100% of the people are reportedly food insecure and urgently need food assistance. Nearly all respondents i.e., 98% reported anxiety, uncertainty and insufficiency of food. 42% mentioned that they have no income, 37% mentioned selling households' assets, and 21% mentioned humanitarian assistance as their source of income after the resettlements. 48% reported they have lost all of their livestock due to deportation. Children remain particularly vulnerable as 59% have reportedly noticed visible signs of malnutrition among children in their households and roughly 55% girls and 46% boys have reported that their families are unable to provide for their basic needs. (Annex 1-CWSA Multisector Assessment in Laghman and Nangarhar)

3. Local and national capacity

³ Ibid

⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/pakistan/pakistans-mass-deportation-afghans-poses-risks-regional-stability>

Afghanistan does not have a national response plan to respond to the returnees but the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is being followed. Due to its restrained budget, ANDMA’s role is limited to coordination efforts on ground. Despite humanitarian agencies mobilizing their resources, the need on ground is quite huge and the response provided so far is inadequate. Therefore there is an urgent need for additional support.

The surge in returns has intensified the strain on already-limited resources, including shelter and basic services, creating an urgent need for additional support. The local structure for responding to the returnees from Pakistan in Nangarhar province consists of UN organizations, and NGOs that are working together to provide assistance and support to the returnees.

15 UN cluster system and working groups have been activated. They are meeting on a regular basis to discuss the evolving situation. CWSA regularly participates in UN led cluster meetings, Technical Working Groups (TWGs) and general coordination meetings to contribute to as well as benefit from other’s experiences and to avoid overlap/duplication. CWSA is also member of Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) which is a National and regional level coordination body for NGOs in Afghanistan and works closely with Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) and Directorates of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR).

4. Key needs and gaps

According to UN OCHA, a surge in returns is expected to continue, with projections indicating over 1.46 million Afghans from Pakistan and Iran will return in 2024.⁵ This will further strain border points and pose additional demands on limited resources among host communities, necessitating increased humanitarian assistance. Meanwhile, the latest report from UNCHR states that people arriving at the border are exhausted and require urgent assistance as well as psychosocial support. As winter temperatures start to dip to -4°C in some locations, many Afghan returnees are left vulnerable, including women and children, who could lose their lives in a harsh winter if left without adequate shelter.

According to the initial assessment conducted by CWSA, the priority needs are;

- a. Emergency shelter (tents, as well as longer-term solutions to withstand winter),
- b. Cash assistance,
- c. WASH (latrines, potable water and storage containers),
- d. Food assistance and protection,
- e. Healthcare and medicines,
- f. Livelihood,
- g. Quality & accountability (Q&A),
- h. Education.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund (<i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i>)	X
Appeal (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	

⁵ <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-2024-december-2023>

If you indicate an intention to launch an appeal, the secretariat will activate an Emergency Steering Committee meeting within two working days on receipt of this alert.

Capacity details of forum members with the intention to respond are given below. *Please refer to your EPRP and Contingency Plan.*

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise	Support required	Estimated Budget range
Community World Service Asia	District Kuz Kunar of Nangarhar	Emergency Response	Financial support	USD 150,000

5. Potential

CWSA is proposing the provision of multipurpose cash assistance (MPCA). This response will enable returnees to purchase essential food items and address their medical needs. CWSA intends to provide assistance for the total duration of 3 months, to estimated 410 Households returning families through two tranches of \$140 each. The cash distribution is based on Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) Afghanistan Cash & Voucher Working Group (CVWG): (MEB). ⁶This cash assistance can be utilized for food and other essential items such as clothing, tentage, rent, transport etc.