

# PAKISTAN

## FLOW MONITORING OF UNDOCUMENTED AFGHAN MIGRANTS SUMMARY REPORT 2020

REGIONAL EVIDENCE FOR MIGRATION ANALYSIS AND POLICY (REMAP)  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)  
DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX (DTM)



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### Disclaimer

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## Concepts and Definitions

**Afghan Citizen Card (ACC):** Registration cards issued to undocumented Afghan individuals living in Pakistan by the Government of Pakistan during a 2017-18 documentation exercise. ACC holders are required to return to Afghanistan and can only return to Pakistan after receiving a Pakistani visa in an Afghan Passport.

**Afghan Citizen Card Token:** Receipt issued to undocumented Afghan individuals who come to the documentation centers to register for an Afghan Citizen Card. This receipt acts as proof that the holder has completed the documentation process and can use the receipt to receive their card at a later date.

**Children:** Individuals below 18 years of age.

**Family:** A group of people travelling together (either related or not) who habitually live under the same roof and have luggage with them during the return journey.

**Proof of Registration (POR):** Identification cards issued by the Pakistani National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) on behalf of the Government of Pakistan. POR card holders are legally recognized as registered refugees by the Government of Pakistan and UNHCR.

**Returnee:** Individuals returning to their place of origin.

**Tazkira:** Afghan National Identification Card.

**Undocumented Individual:** Individual of Afghan origin who falls into one of the following categories: 1) Individuals with no valid documents (POR, ACC, or visa), 2) Individuals with Tazkira (Afghan ID card) but no documentation from the Government of Pakistan, 3) Individuals with a Proof of Registration Card that expired before 2015 and 4) Individuals without a passport or with a passport that either doesn't contain a visa or contains an expired visa.

**Vulnerable Individual:** Elderly (60 years or above), disabled, chronically ill, widowed persons, pregnant women, drug addicts, unaccompanied minors and female headed families.

**NOTE:** When the label "Multiple answers possible" appears above a graph, it means that a single respondent was allowed to provide more than one answer. For this reason, totals do not add up to 100%.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In 2020, thousands of undocumented Afghan nationals returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan. Many of those returning have lived outside Afghanistan for decades and some were born in Pakistan. This population will need support from the Afghan government and humanitarian actors, both on arrival, and as they seek to reintegrate into a country faced with widespread conflict, displacement and scarce economic opportunities. With co-funding from the European Union and the Government of Australia, IOM collects information on the volume, profiles and vulnerabilities of returnees especially undocumented Afghan migrants from Pakistan at two official border points between the two countries.

This information is collected as part of the Flow Monitoring (FM) component of the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), which has been implemented in Pakistan since 2017. More specifically, FM tracks flows of migrant groups and individuals as they cross two transit locations, the Torkham and Chaman/Spin Boldak (further referred to in this report as “Chaman”) border crossings. At these locations, information on the numbers, socio-economic profiles and vulnerabilities of undocumented Afghan returnees and Afghan Citizen Card holding returnees is collected, analyzed and disseminated bi-weekly.

This report aims to contribute to a better understanding of the return movements of undocumented Afghan returnees by conducting more in-depth analysis on the data that was collected in 2020 at the Torkham and Chaman border crossings. The data, which is collected at regular intervals, gives us the unique opportunity to uncover specific trends regarding the volume of flows, profiles and vulnerabilities of undocumented Afghan returnees.

The report is divided into two main sections. The first section starts with a description of the methodology and includes the research method, sampling information and limitations. The second section presents the findings of the data that was collected in 2020. The findings are further subdivided into six sections. The first section displays the demographics and socio-economic profiles of the undocumented Afghan returnees. This is followed by a section on the specific documentation statuses of the returnees. The third section explores the reasons cited to return to Afghanistan, both in terms of push factors (the reasons to leave Pakistan) and pull factors (the reasons to return to Afghanistan). Next, the travel conditions are examined, followed by an exploration of the types of settlements that Afghan nationals were living in in Pakistan and what types of settlements they expect to live in in Afghanistan, as well as their settlement priorities in Afghanistan. Finally, the last section looks into the most commonly reported areas of origin (Pakistan) and destination (Afghanistan).

## II. KEY FINDINGS

The analysis of the data, which was collected in 2020 at the two border crossing points, indicates that the number of returnees has decreased significantly in comparison to the previous year, 6,661 individuals in 2020 compared to 17,286 in 2019. Besides a variety of push and pull factors, the steep decline in return movements can also be attributed to the closure of the borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which made it more difficult for Afghan nationals to return to their home country.



# 1. METHODOLOGY

## 1.1 Research and Sampling Method

The comparison report is based on data collected in 2020 through the Flow monitoring (FM) methodology. FM is a component of IOM’s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), which was developed to track the flows of groups and individuals through key points of origin, transit and destination. The purpose of FM is to provide regularly updated information on the scale of population flows and profiles of mobile populations, in the case of this report: undocumented Afghan migrants, through specific locations. The information and analysis provided through the flow monitoring methodology also helps to identify gaps and priorities in the provision of assistance along migration routes and upon destination.

The FM exercise in Pakistan provides key insights into the overall return migration trends of Afghan migrants, as well as an overview of the situation of Afghan returnees and their mobility patterns, exploring routes, vulnerabilities and demographic and social characteristics.

DTM experts in the field identify strategic locations for the establishment of monitoring locations/points where data collection will take place. IOM’s DTM team in Pakistan identified two key transit locations: Torkham and Chaman. DTM teams collect daily data at the selected official border crossings to map information on Afghan returnees and provide analysis through bi-weekly rounds of reports.

DTM’s border monitoring teams in Pakistan conducted Flow Monitoring Surveys (FMS) with undocumented Afghan returnees at the abovementioned border crossing points (Chaman and Torkham). These surveys collect information on the number, demographic breakdown, vulnerabilities, migration intentions, reasons for migration and nationality of migrants.

In 2020, the DTM identified 6,661 undocumented Afghan returnees at the two border crossings. Included in this number

are 705 individuals that border authorities facilitated the return of due to the lack of legal documentation to remain in Pakistan. Information concerning these 705 individuals is not included in the report analysis. For this study, only the representatives of the head of the family were interviewed. This means that the number of interviews conducted by the enumerators is lower than the number of returnees recorded by the DTM. In 2020, enumerators interviewed 1,296 respondents.

To reduce potential biases, data quality checks are rigorously conducted by the team during the data collection, processing and analysis processes.

## 1.2 Limitations

This document is based on data from individuals passing through the DTM flow monitoring points located at the Torkham and Chaman border crossings in 2020. As a result, data should not be generalized and may not represent a full picture of inter- and intra-regional migration in the country, but rather is representative of migration flows at the specific locations monitored (in the case of this study: Torkham and Chaman).

The COVID-19 pandemic also affected operations at the border. Due to COVID-19 precautionary measures on maintaining safe distance, border monitor teams were unable to verify the information that was obtained during the interviews as in previous years.

It should be also noted that most of the visualizations are only representative for the respondents to the survey as interviews were only conducted with the head of the family. This will be clearly indicated in the visualization/question with an asterisk (\*).

### TOTAL AFGHAN RETURNEES FROM PAKISTAN TO AFGHANISTAN



**6,661**

Undocumented migrants returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan

### TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS











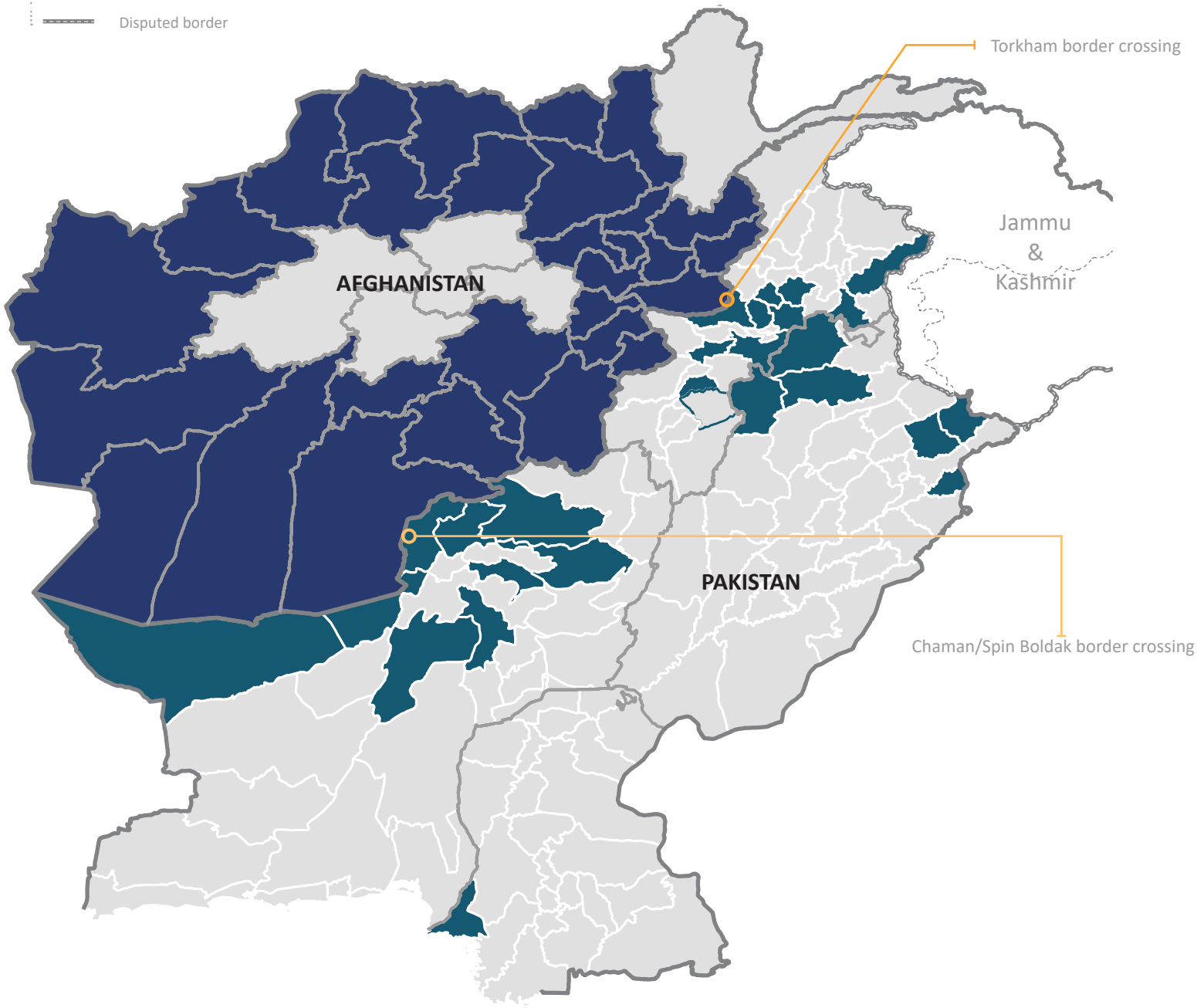
**1,296**

Respondents to the flow monitoring survey in 2020

PROVINCE AND DISTRICT MAP OF AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

Legend

-  International border
-  Province border
-  District border
-  Line of control
-  Disputed border
-  Province of intended destination (Afghanistan)
-  Origin district of returnees (Pakistan)
-  District without returnees (in Pakistan) and non-intended province of destination (in Afghanistan)



*Disclaimer:*  
Dotted line represents approximately the line of control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM or United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

## 2. FINDINGS

### 2.1 Demographics and socio-economic profile

IOM Pakistan’s Flow Monitoring of Undocumented Afghan Migrants Summary Report 2020 includes information from face-to-face interviews with 1,296 heads of households at the Torkham and Chaman border crossings during the year 2020. Overall, 6,661 undocumented returnees were reported crossing the two borders, of which 51% were females and 49% were males. Included in the figures above are 705 individuals whom border authorities facilitated the return of due to the lack of legal documentation to remain in Pakistan. Information concerning these 705 individuals is not included in the report analysis.

In 2020, a majority of Afghan migrants (5,026, 84%) returned through the Chaman border crossing. Only 930 (16%) Afghan migrants returned through the Torkham border crossing. The proportion of female and male returnees was approximately the same across the two border crossings. The return movements of undocumented Afghan nationals dropped drastically in comparison to the previous years. This is most likely due to the frequent closure of the border because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chaman border crossing was closed to the voluntary return of undocumented Afghan nationals between 2 March and 21 August 2020, while the Torkham border crossing was continuously closed from 13 March until the end of 2020.

The average household size was approximately 7 persons. The highest proportion of returnees were under 18 years of age (53%), followed by adults between the age of 18 and 59 (43%) and people older than 60 (4%). The age composition in 2020 is similar to that of previous years.

**5,956<sup>1</sup>**  
UNDOCUMENTED  
RETURNEES

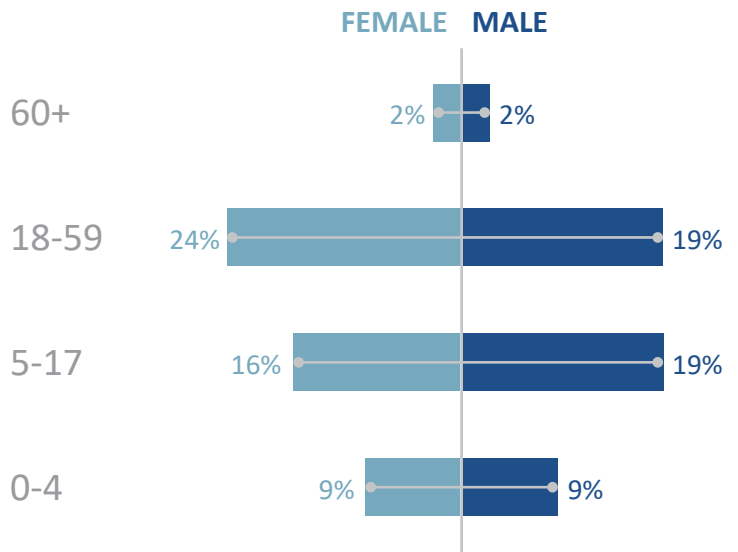


**FEMALE**  
51%



**MALE**  
49%

#### POPULATION PYRAMID OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES



Average household size among respondents

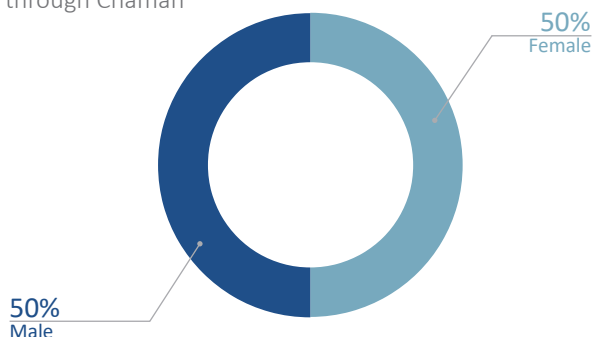
<sup>1</sup> As mentioned in the narrative, this number does not include the 705 individuals whose return was facilitated by border authorities due to the lack of legal documentation to remain in Pakistan.

#### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES BY BORDER CROSSING

##### Chaman

**5,026**

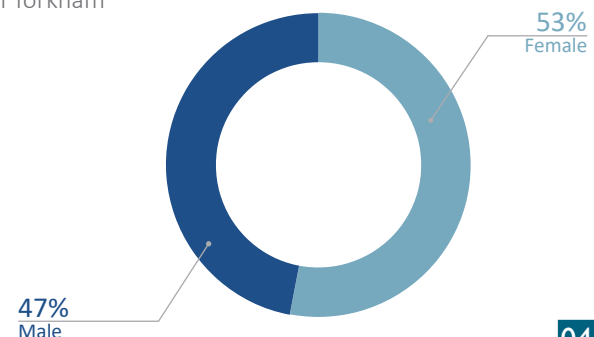
Undocumented returnees travelled through Chaman



##### Torkham

**930**

Undocumented returnees travelled through Torkham





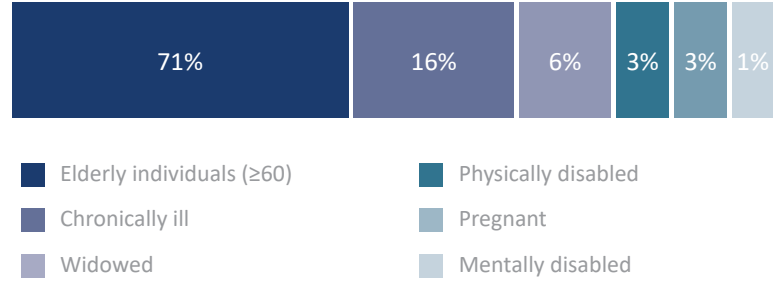
The data collected at the borders indicates an increase in returnees categorized as vulnerable, from 10 per cent in 2018 and 2019 to 21 per cent in 2020. The top three vulnerable groups were elderly persons (71%), chronically ill persons (16%) and widowed persons (6%). The top three composition found in 2020 is similar to the finding in 2018 and 2019.

The analysis shows that 93 per cent of returnees were employed when they were in Pakistan. This number rose from 69 per cent in 2018 and 74 per cent in 2019. Most returnees were working as unskilled daily labor (48%), skilled labor (26%) and business (15%). A small percentage of returnees were working in a salaried job (4%).

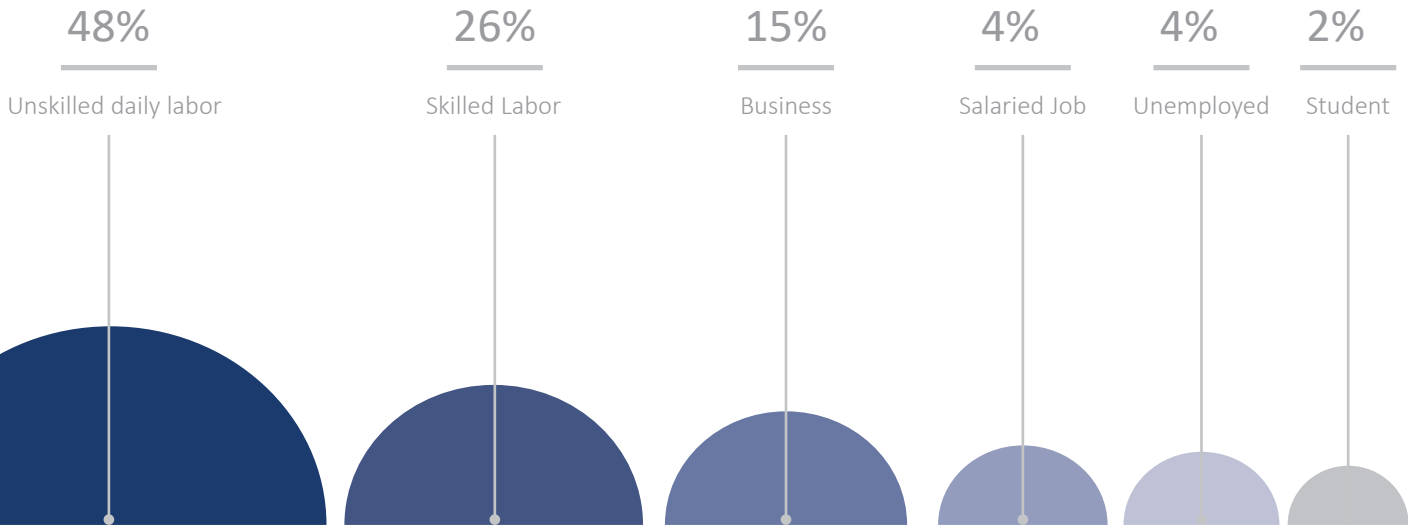
The remaining returnees who did not have a job in Pakistan were composed of unemployed persons (4%), students (2%) and housewives (1%).

## VULNERABILITIES OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEEES

**21%** Vulnerable undocumented returnees



## TYPE OF OCCUPATION OF RETURNEEES\*



\*This question was only answered by the head of the family.



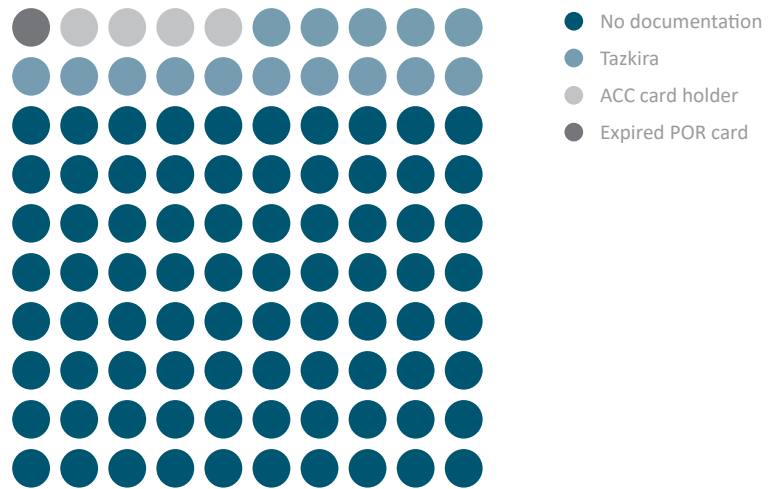
## 2.2 Documentation status

Eighty per cent of the returnees recorded by DTM in 2020 did not possess any legal documentation, which is one per cent lower than in 2019. The remaining 20 per cent were made up of Afghan returnees with some sort of documentation, including a Tazkira, an ACC Card holder or an expired POR Card. Of those returnees with documentation, returnees with a Tazkira represented the largest group (15%). The second largest group were returnees with an ACC card (4%). Returnees with an expired POR Card constituted the smallest group of returnees with documentation in 2020 (1%).

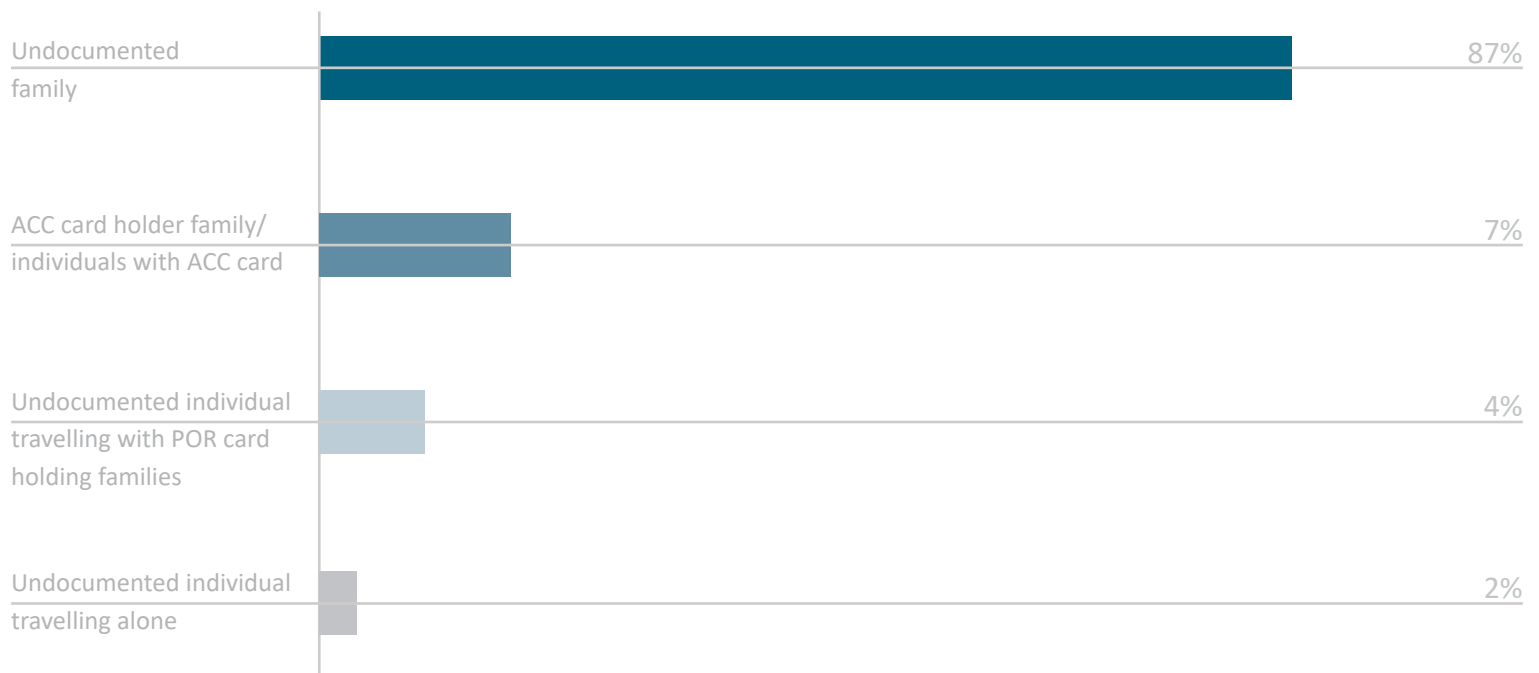
On the family level, undocumented families made up the largest group (87%), followed by families or individuals holding an ACC card (7%) and undocumented individuals travelling with a family that has one or more members holding a POR Card (4%). The final group was composed of undocumented individuals travelling alone (2%).

## DOCUMENTATION STATUS OF AFGHAN RETURNEES

**80%** Of respondents had no documentation



## DOCUMENTATION STATUS OF UNDOCUMENTED FAMILIES\*



\*This question was only answered by the head of the family.

## 2.3 Reasons and drivers of return

This section examines the reasons for return by analyzing the push factors, the reasons that encourage Afghan nationals to leave Pakistan, and the pull factors, the reasons that encourage Afghan nationals to return to Afghanistan.

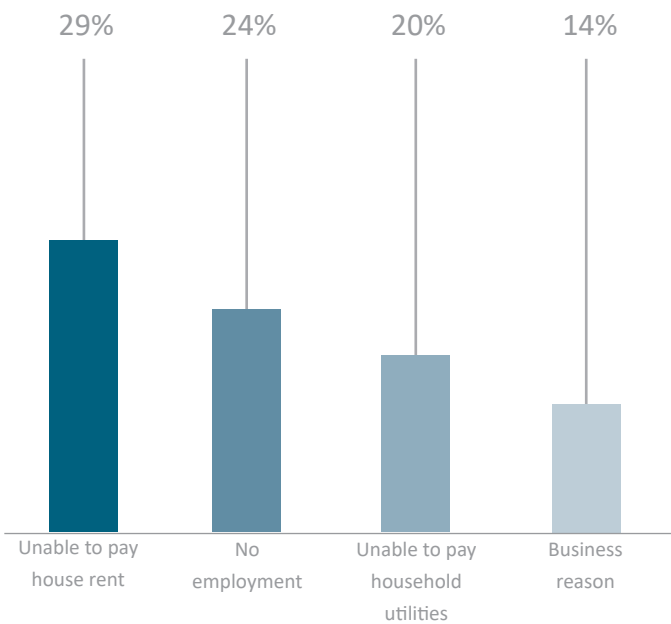
With regard to the push factors, 29 per cent of returnees interviewed by DTM reported that being unable to pay house rent was the main factor behind leaving Pakistan. Twenty-four per cent indicated that they returned because they have no employment in Pakistan. Other reasons for return were: unable to pay household utilities (20%), business reason (14%), fear of arrest or deportation (8%), under employment (3%), communal

pressure to return (2%), financial debt (1%) and other reasons (9%)<sup>2</sup>.

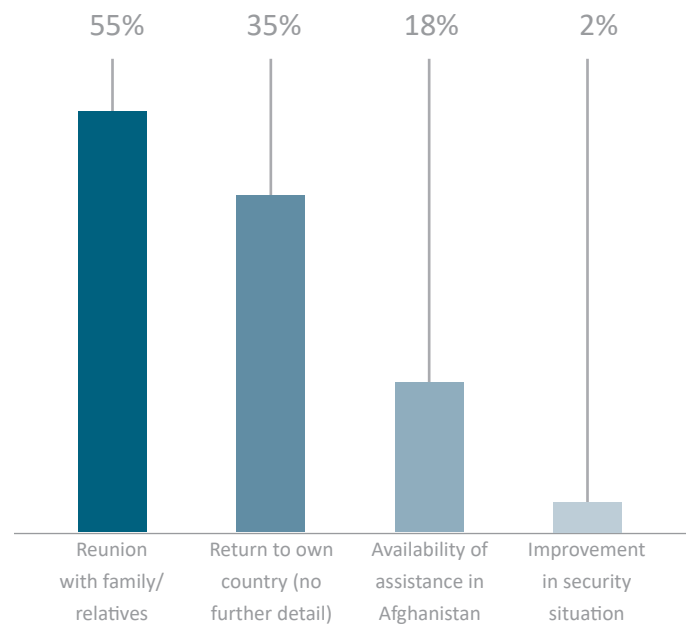
Regarding pull factors, 55 per cent of returnees interviewed stated that reunion with family and relatives was the main reason that encouraged them to return. Thirty five per cent stated returning to their own country without further details as to the main reason of return. Eighteen per cent stated availability of assistance in Afghanistan to be the reason for their departure from Pakistan, and two per cent of the respondents wanted to return because of improvements in the security situation in Afghanistan.

### MAIN REASONS FOR RETURNING TO AFGHANISTAN OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES\* (multiple answers possible)

#### PUSH FACTORS (top 4 answers only)



#### PULL FACTORS (top 4 answers only)



<sup>2</sup> Under employment (underemployment in this report means that salary/wages are lower compared to the workload), unable to pay house rent, unable to pay household utilities and financial debt were reasons added to the survey since 21 August 2020 as respondents consistently provided more detailed reasons for return. Therefore, the figure may not accurately present the push factors of the sample as a whole.

\*This question was only answered by the head of the family.





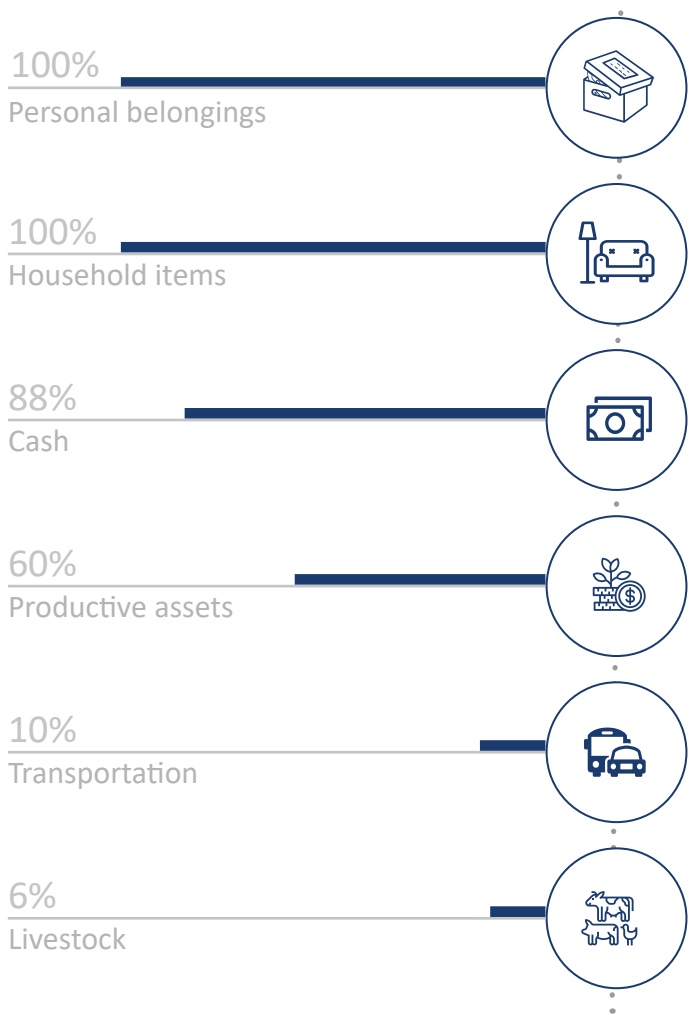
## 2.4 Travel conditions

When crossing the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Afghan returnees indicated that they travelled either by truck, bus or pick-up. Pick up (42%) was the preferred mode of transportation, followed by truck (32%) and bus (26%). These findings are similar to the findings in 2019 but different to the findings in 2018 where returnees selected truck as their main mode of transportation. The mode of transportation did not vary significantly between the two border crossing points.

Almost all of the returnees that were interviewed by DTM brought their personal belongings, household items and a high proportion reported also bringing cash. Less frequently reported were productive assets, transportation and livestock.

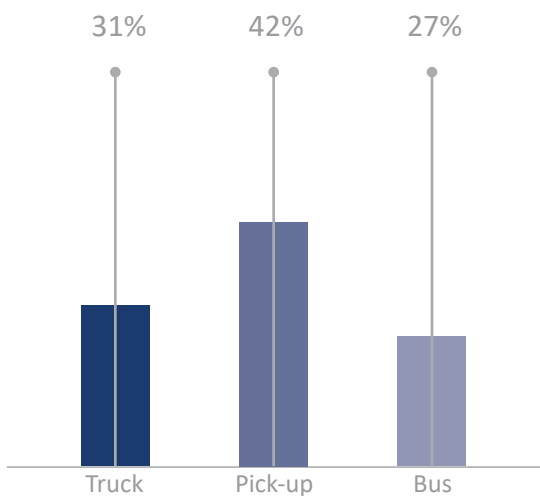
The total average cost for the journey from Pakistan to Afghanistan through the Chaman border crossing was higher than through the Torkham border crossing, namely 10,474 PKR compared to 8,159 PKR. The average travelling cost in 2020 is smaller compared to the average travelling cost reported in 2018 and 2019. The main factor in cost difference is the distance between the origin in Pakistan and the destination in Afghanistan. In 2020, the majority of returnees departed from the district in which the border crossing is located in Pakistan and returned to the province in Afghanistan where the border crossing is located.

### GOODS BROUGHT TO AFGHANISTAN\* (multiple answers possible)



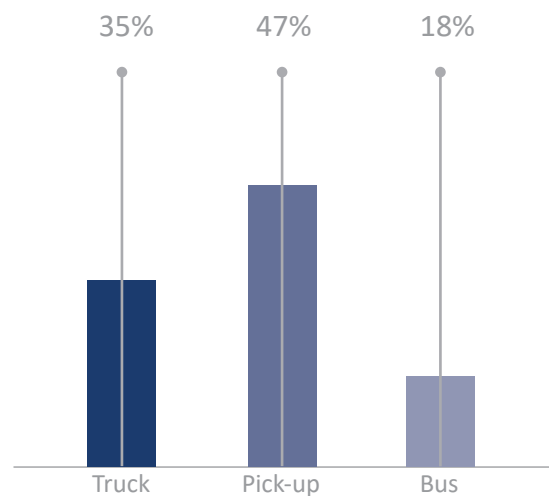
### MODE AND COST OF TRANSPORTATION OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES (CHAMAN)\*

**PKR 10,474** average cost of travelling through Chaman (USD 65)\*\*



### MODE AND COST OF TRANSPORTATION OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES (TORKHAM)\*

**PKR 8,159** average cost of travelling through Torkham (USD 51)\*\*



\*This question was only answered by the head of the family.

\*\*Exchange rates are 160.98 PKR to 1 USD according to the UN Operational Rates of Exchange in December 2020.

## 2.5 Type of settlement and settlement priorities

While residing in Pakistan, the highest proportion of respondents reported residing in rented houses (93%). Rented houses were also the most reported type of settlement in 2018, though the proportion reported in 2020 is even higher than in previous years. The second most commonly reported type of settlement in Pakistan was residing in camps/camp like settings (5%). Other types of settlements reported were Afghan migrants residing with relatives in Pakistan (1%) and residing in temporary settlements (1%).

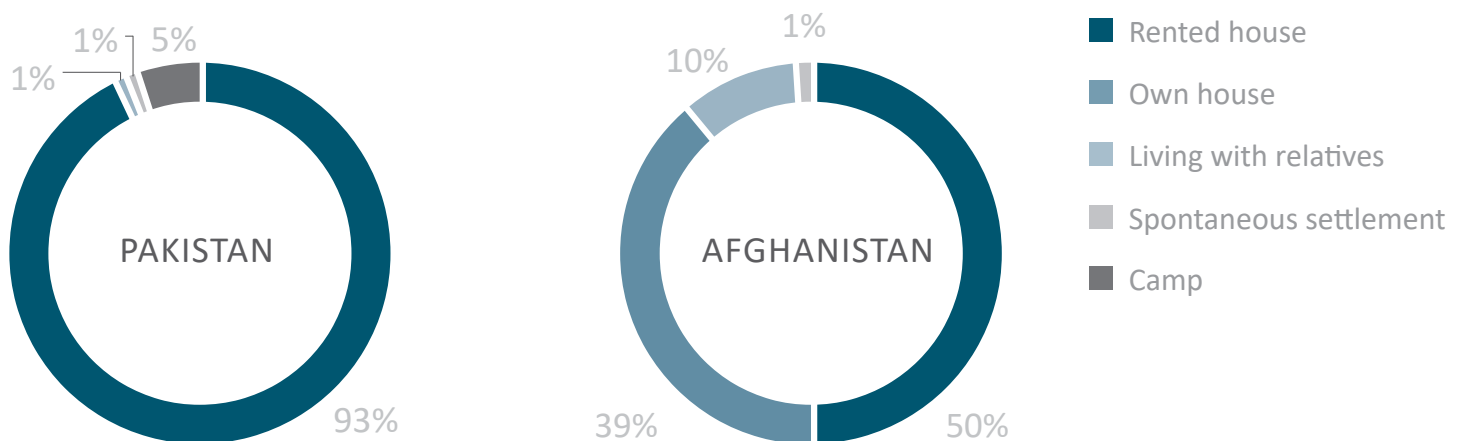
When asked about expected types of settlement in Afghanistan, most returnees specified that they intend to rent a house after arrival in their city of destination (50%). The second most common expected type of settlement specified by returnees was living in their own house (39%), which rose by four per cent when compared to the percentage from 2019. Other types of settlement options mentioned by returnees were planning to reside with their relatives (10%) and looking for options to live in spontaneous settlements (1%).

Detailed analysis of the flow monitoring data also points out the settling priorities of returnees. Ninety-four per cent of the returnees plan to resettle in a new city in Afghanistan, 93 per cent plan to try to arrange for livelihood, 90 per cent were concerned about the income opportunities in Afghanistan and 55 per cent indicated a need for shelter. Other settlement priorities described by returnees were education (24%), medical and health (14%), security (9%) and drinking water (8%).

## SETTLEMENT PRIORITIES OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES\* (multiple answers possible)

	Resettle in a new city	94%
	Arrange for livelihood	93%
	Income opportunities	90%
	Arrange for shelter	55%
	Education	24%
	Availability of medicine and health facilities	14%
	Security challenges	9%
	Availability of clean drinking water	8%

## TYPE OF SETTLEMENT IN PAKISTAN AND EXPECTED TYPE OF SETTLEMENT IN AFGHANISTAN OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES\*



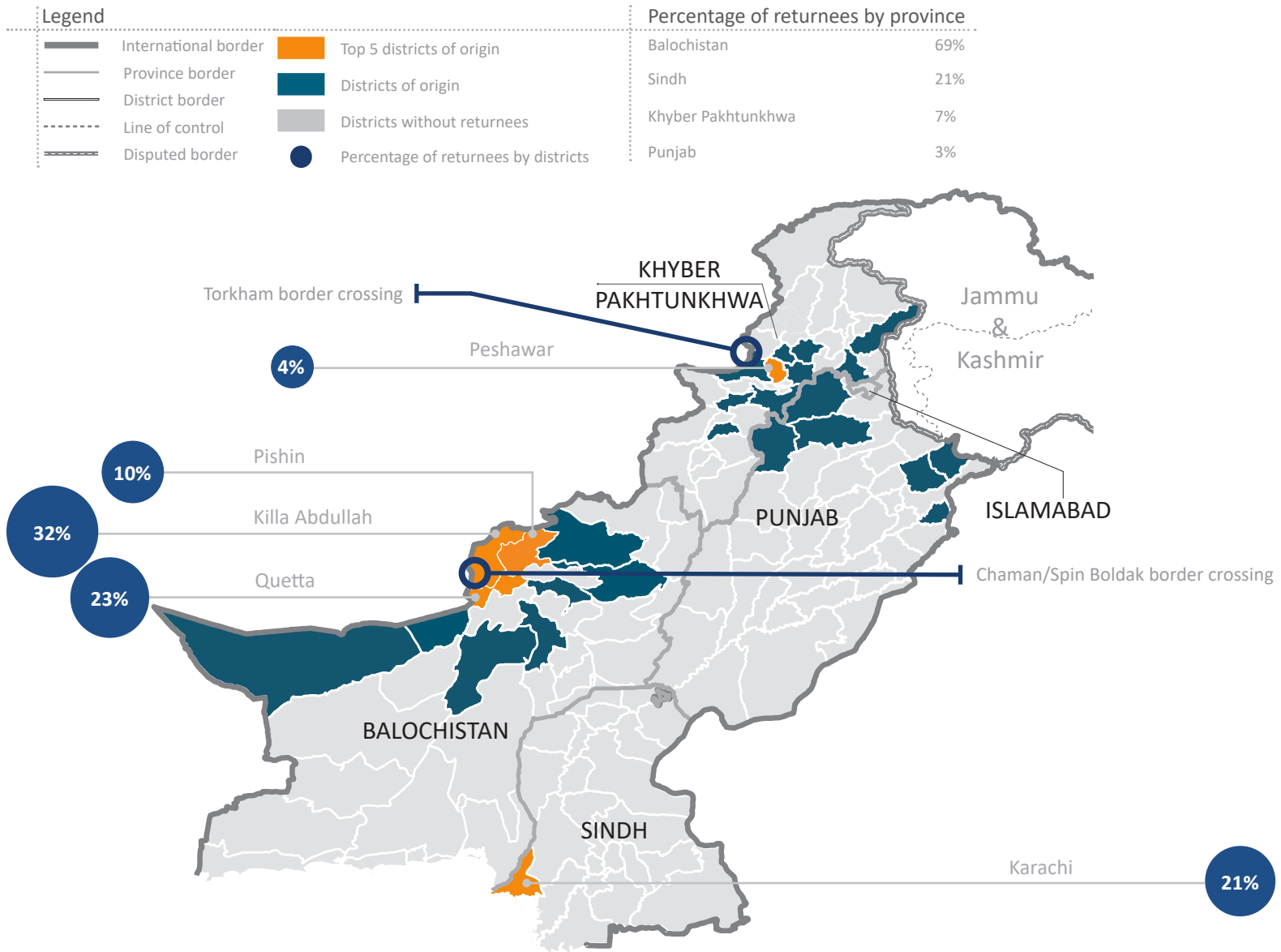
\*This question was only answered by the head of the family.

## 2.6 Areas of origin and destination

In 2020, returnees reported living in four provinces in Pakistan prior to return: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh. The highest number of returnees in 2020 departed from Balochistan (69%), followed by Sindh (21%), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (7%) and Punjab (3%). This finding is completely different than the findings from 2018 and 2019 where the majority of returnees departed from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This is most likely due to the fact that the Torkham border crossing, located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, was closed to the return of undocumented Afghan migrants for much of the reporting period in the wake of COVID-19.

On the district level, the top five districts of origin in Pakistan were Killa Abdullah (32%), Quetta (23%), Karachi (21%), Pishin (10%) and Peshawar (4%). Most likely due to the closure of the Torkham border crossing for much of the reporting period, Peshawar, which was the most commonly reported district of departure in 2018 and 2019, fell to the fifth most common district of departure in 2020.

### PROVINCES AND DISTRICTS OF ORIGIN IN PAKISTAN OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEEES



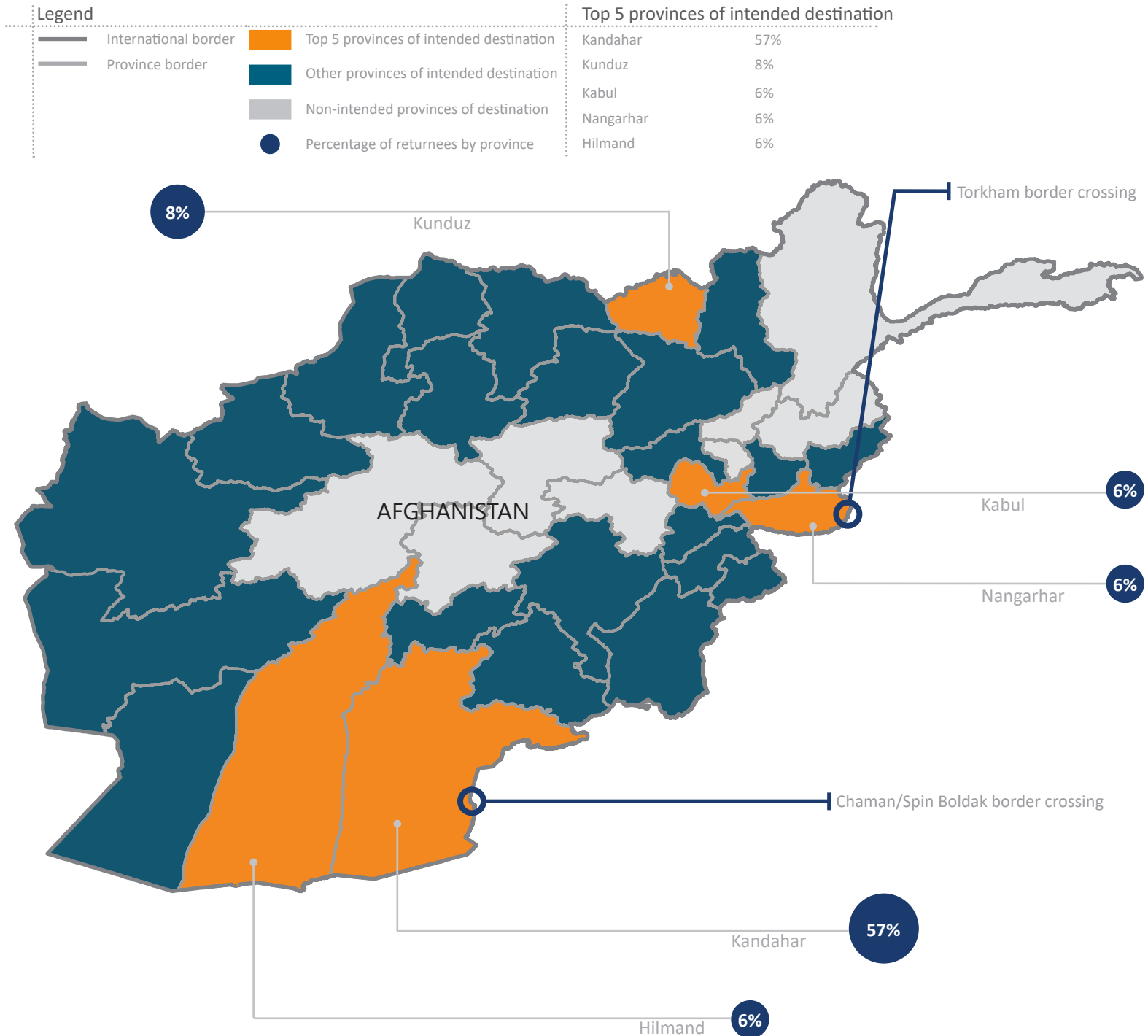
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## INTENDED DESTINATION IN AFGHANISTAN OF UNDOCUMENTED RETURNEES (top 5 answers)

More than half of returnees (57%) in 2020 reported that Kandahar is their province of intended destination in Afghanistan. Four other major provinces of intended destination of returnees are Kunduz (8%), Kabul (6%), Nangarhar (6%) and Hilmand (6%). The composition of provinces of intended destination in 2020

is similar to findings in 2018 and 2019, though the percentage of returnees planning to return to the province close to the Torkham border crossing is smaller in 2020 (6%) than in 2019 (21%) or 2018 (17%). It is likely that this is due in some part to the periodic closure of the Torkham border during 2020.





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