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Focus Afghanistan

Return from abroad



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Question

This report answers the following questions:

- How do the Taliban interim authorities deal with people returning from abroad?
- What are the entry and exit procedures at land borders and airports?
- What challenges and problems do returnees face?

Main findings

Since the Taliban seized power in August 2021, many Afghan nationals have returned to their home country. A large proportion are people who had previously lived in the neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Iran, with or without residence status. They were either forcibly repatriated or left the neighbouring country voluntarily, the latter often out of fear of forced repatriation. Turkey has also repatriated thousands of Afghan nationals, mostly by air. A few Afghans voluntarily travelled from Western countries back to their country of origin. Forced returns have only occurred in isolated cases so far, such as the deportation of 28 criminal offenders by charter flight from Germany in August 2024.

Returnees from neighbouring countries almost exclusively enter the country by land, as do those who are forcibly repatriated. The border controls of the Taliban interim authorities are generally superficial. Afghan nationals are always allowed to enter, regardless of whether they have valid travel documents or not. With few exceptions, there are no documented cases of arrests or other abuses of returnees at the official border crossings.

Similarly, there are hardly any reported problems at airports when entering the country.. Numerous passengers enter the country every day at airports, including from Western countries. Most of them are business travellers and visitors from the Afghan diaspora. At the beginning, people deported from Turkey were questioned more thoroughly than others, but now they can enter the country without any disturbances. Most of those deported from Germany were initially detained and questioned for some time, but have since also been released.

At the border crossings there are reception structures that are run by the Afghan authorities and international organisations as well as NGOs. They offer returnees temporary shelter, food, healthcare and other services. However, returnees reported to the Country Analysis SEM that these services are not always accessible to everyone.

The biggest challenge for returnees is access to livelihood, primarily to work. The labour market in Afghanistan has shrunk considerably and is hardly able to absorb the returnees. Without or with only a meager salary, access to housing, education and medical services is often difficult. In such circumstances, a person's local social network plays an important role. Persecution or other abuses by the Taliban interim authorities are reported mainly in the case of a few risk groups, and even in their case not systematically: former senior officials and politicians, former security forces, human rights activists. Women and girls who return to Afghanistan mostly lose access to education and employment opportunities.

1. Sources/methodology

Only a few COI reports specifically on the Taliban interim government's handling of returnees from abroad have been published to date. The most detailed is the report from the Belgian country analysis unit CEDOCA of December 2023.¹ Further information can be found in COI

¹ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

reports from Norway, the Netherlands and EUAA. The *Afghanistan Analysts Network* has also published some reports that deal with aspects of the present topic.

International organisations and NGOs operating in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries primarily publish reports on their own activities. They concern assistance provided by these organisations mainly to returnees from Pakistan and Iran, but hardly any other countries. These reports provide some detailed information on the situation at the land borders.

There are some gaps in knowledge from these public sources. Little is known about the longer-term situation of returnees, as there is no local monitoring apart from the border crossings. Information is now difficult to access, especially in the remote rural areas of Afghanistan, as many local media had to close after the Taliban took power. Other gaps in information concern, for example, the question of double jeopardy and other detailed questions.

In order to supplement the existing information and fill the gaps in information, the Country Analysis SEM conducted research trips to Pakistan (June/July 2024) and Afghanistan (November 2024). In Islamabad and Peshawar, it had conversations with people who have returned from Pakistan to Afghanistan (and have since left the country again) and other Afghan migrants with contacts in Afghanistan. There were further discussions with agents of international organisations as well as with diplomatic and academic sources related to Afghanistan. In Kabul, the Country Analysis SEM had discussions with representatives for Afghan authorities and international organisations. In addition, the Country Analysis SEM evaluated local and international media reports for this report, including interviews with people repatriated from Turkey and Germany in Afghan online media.

Findings on the Taliban's handling of forced repatriations from Western countries are still sparse because, with few exceptions, such repatriations have not yet taken place, and there is probably no established Taliban practice.² There is also no information yet on some issues such as the question of possible Taliban persecution of returnees in rural areas. A lack of information does not necessarily rule out the occurrence of such cases. The incomplete information available does not yet allow a conclusive assessment to be made. On the other hand, it is unlikely that there is a systematic persecution of returnees, as this would certainly appear in the sources consulted.

2. Position of the Taliban interim government

Representatives of the Taliban interim government have repeatedly emphasised that the Afghan population should remain in Afghanistan or return to Afghanistan to contribute to the country's reconstruction after forty years of war.³ The Deputy Minister of Refugees and Repatriation stated in December 2021 that the interim government is committed to finding solutions to the problems of Afghan migrants so that everyone can return to their homeland.⁴ In June 2023, the Minister of Refugees and Repatriation called on all Afghan nationals abroad to return home.⁵ With regard to returnees from Pakistan, the interim government declared in

² ARD Tagesschau, Berlin. Was mit den Abgeschobenen passiert ist. 14.02.2025.

<https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/asien/abgeschobene-afghanen-100.html> (14.02.2025).

³ EUAA, Malta. Afghanistan – Country Focus, December 2023, p. 97. https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_12_EUAA_COI_Report_Afghanistan_Country_Focus.pdf (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 32, 37.

<https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power>

(14.02.2025) / Khaama Press, Kabul. Afghan Migrants Are Welcome to Return to their Country, Says Refugee Minister, 22.06.2023. https://www.khaama.com/afghan-migrants-are-welcome-to-return-to-their-country-says-refugee-minister/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter (14.02.2025).

⁴ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 7. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

⁵ Khaama Press, Kabul. Afghan Migrants Are Welcome to Return to their Country, Says Refugee Minister. 22.06.2023. <https://www.khaama.com/afghan-migrants-are-welcome-to-return-to-their-country-says-refugee-minister/> (14.02.2025).

the fall of 2023 that they would all be treated equally, and that the amnesty⁶ declared in August 2021 also applied to them.⁷

The Afghan interim government founded the "Commission for the Return of and Communications with Former Afghan Officials and Political Figures" in March 2022. Its goal is to persuade high-ranking former officials who left the country immediately after the Taliban took power to return to Afghanistan.⁸ The Taliban has repeatedly stated that their safety is guaranteed.⁹ Afghan media repeatedly reported that hundreds of such people have in fact returned in consultation with this commission, including some known individuals.¹⁰ According to an August 2024 report, 952 former officials had returned through this path by then.¹¹ It seems they have mostly had no problems with the Taliban authorities since their return. However, they have been denied access to their previous work, and many are unemployed.¹² As a result, and out of fear for their safety, some of these returnees have now left the country again. There have indeed been attacks by the Taliban against them in isolated cases (see [Chapter 5.2.4.](#)).¹³

Following the Pakistani announcement of large-scale repatriations (see [Chapter 3.1.](#)), Taliban Emir Haibatullah Akhundzada decreed the establishment of a commission for returnees from Pakistan in October 2023. Among other things, it is responsible for receiving them and supporting them in accessing the country or a job. The Taliban interim government has also called on businessmen, officials and others to support returnees with donations. It has also asked authorities to cooperate with international organisations and NGOs in receiving returnees.¹⁴ The Afghan consul in Peshawar also told the Country Analysis SEM that his

⁶ Cf. State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Bern-Wabern. Focus Afghanistan: Verfolgung durch Taliban: Potentielle Risikogruppen, 15.02.2022, p. 7-10. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/internationales/herkunftslaender/asien-nahost/afg/AFG-risikoprofile-taliban-d.pdf.download.pdf/AFG-risikoprofile-taliban-d.pdf> (14.02.2025).

⁷ Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 6. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

⁸ Landinfo, Oslo. Query response Afghanistan: Departures and returns after Taliban's takeover of power, 29.09.2022, p. 4. <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Query-response-Afghanistan-Departure-and-return-after-the-Talibans-takeover-of-power-29092022.pdf> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 30-32. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025) / Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Prag. The Azadi Briefing: Fear, Disillusionment Undermine Taliban's Efforts To Woo Exiled Former Afghan Officials, 28.07.2024. <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-woos-former-officials/32524328.html> (14.02.2025).

⁹ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 30. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹⁰ TOLO News, Kabul. 25 Political Figures, Officials Returned Last Month: Commission, 30.06.2023. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-183993> (14.02.2025) / TOLO News, Kabul. Over 100 Political Figures Returned to Afghanistan in 3 Months: Commission, 15.01.2023. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-181614> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 31. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹¹ TOLO News, Kabul. 952 Ex-Officials Return to Afghanistan Via Contact Commission, 20.08.2024. <https://tolonews.com/index.php/afghanistan-190325> (14.02.2025).

¹² Landinfo, Oslo. Query response Afghanistan: Departures and returns after Taliban's takeover of power, 29.09.2022, p. 4. <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Query-response-Afghanistan-Departure-and-return-after-the-Talibans-takeover-of-power-29092022.pdf> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 32. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹³ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Kabul. The Azadi Briefing: Fear, Disillusionment Undermine Taliban's Efforts To Woo Exiled Former Afghan Officials, 28.07.2024. <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-woos-former-officials/32524328.html> (14.02.2025) / Afghanistan International. London. Former Official Who Returned to Afghanistan at Taliban's Invitation Forced to Flee Again, 16.05.2024. <https://www.afintl.com/en/202405167769> (14.02.2025).

¹⁴ Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 3-4, 8. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 25. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

government supported the return of Afghan nationals from Pakistan. However, he is opposed to doing this with coercion and in a hasty manner.¹⁵

With regard to repatriations from European states, there have been few statements from representatives of the Taliban interim government. Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen stated in an interview with *Focus Online* in September 2024 that Afghanistan was fundamentally willing to accept repatriated people from Germany. However, direct negotiations would be necessary for this. He suggested that for this purpose, consulates in Germany should be run by delegates of the Taliban interim government and not the previous government.¹⁶

The Taliban interim government is fundamentally opposed to the departure of Afghans willing to migrate, as they fear a weakening of the country due to the outflow of skilled workers (brain drain). Taliban representatives have made multiple public statements about this.¹⁷ However, they allow travellers with the necessary documents to depart the country, citing freedom of travel in Islam as a justification for this.¹⁸ According to Taliban Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, all Afghan nationals are allowed to travel abroad, but should not seek asylum there.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the Minister of Refugees and Repatriation has called on the destination countries of Afghan migrants to treat them with dignity and to respect the principles of the Geneva Refugee Convention.²⁰ The Taliban in fact still make it hard to depart the country, for example by making it difficult to obtain travel documents: the waiting time for passports can be long, and bribes often have to be paid.²¹ Conversely, the Taliban have established semi-legal routes for land migration to Iran, which they monitor and control.²²

3. Origin and profile of returnees

The vast majority of returnees to Afghanistan since the Taliban took power are people who returned independently or forcibly from neighbouring Pakistan and Iran, as well as from Turkey. Voluntary returnees and repatriations from Europe have been comparatively rare to date.

3.1. Return from Pakistan

Statistic: Nearly one million people have returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan since the Taliban took power, including approximately 45,000 in the course of forced repatriations. Below are the statistics per year (the values may differ slightly depending on the source):²³

¹⁵ Consul of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Peshawar. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024.

¹⁶ Focus Online, Berlin. Nach Abschiebung von Kriminellen macht Taliban-Sprecher Ansage an Deutschland. 16.09.2024. https://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/soleil-shahin-im-interview-nach-abschiebung-von-kriminellen-macht-taliban-sprecher-ansage-an-deutschland_id_260315659.html (14.02.2025).

¹⁷ Landinfo, Oslo. Query response Afghanistan: Departures and returns after Taliban's takeover of power, 29.09.2022, p. 3-4. <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Query-response-Afghanistan-Departure-and-return-after-the-Talibans-takeover-of-power-29092022.pdf> (14.02.2025) / France24, Paris. Taliban say no more evacuations until life improves for Afghans abroad, 27.02.2022. <https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220227-taliban-say-no-more-evacuations-until-life-improves-for-afghans-abroad> (14.02.2025) / U.S. Department of State, Washington. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2023, 22.04.2024, p. 24-25. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/afghanistan/> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 37. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹⁸ U.S. Department of State, Washington. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2023, 22.04.2024, p. 25. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/afghanistan/> (14.02.2025).

¹⁹ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 32. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

²⁰ Khaama Press, Kabul. Afghan Migrants Are Welcome to Return to their Country, Says Refugee Minister. 22.06.2023. <https://www.khaama.com/afghan-migrants-are-welcome-to-return-to-their-country-says-refugee-minister/> (14.02.2025).

²¹ EUAA, Malta. Afghanistan – Country Focus, December 2023, p. 98. https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_12_EUAA_COI_Report_Afghanistan_Country_Focus.pdf (14.02.2025).

²² Reuter, Christoph, Munich. «Wir waren glücklich hier», Afghanistan nach dem Sieg der Taliban, Ein Roadtrip, 2023, p. 245-268.

²³ IOM, Geneva. Pakistan Flow Monitoring of Undocumented Afghan Migrants Summary Report 2021, 2022, p. 2. https://pakistan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11121/files/documents/pak_fm_2021_yearly-report_2021_final.pdf (14.02.2025) / IOM, Geneva. Pakistan Flow Monitoring of Afghan Nationals, 2024, p. 9.

Year	Total returnees	of which are repatriations
2021	27 829	n/a
2022	71 155	2 977
2023	524 799	33 413
2024	315 100	8 954

Route: Returns and repatriations from Pakistan occur almost exclusively by land. To date, 65% of return trips or repatriations under Pakistan's *Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan* have occurred via Torkham, 31% via Spin Boldak/Chaman, 3.2% via Ghulam Khan, 0.6% via Bahramcha and 0.2% via Badini.²⁴

Trends: A large portion of these returns and repatriations occurred in the last three months of 2023. This was due to the Pakistani government's *Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan*. This had been announced at the beginning of October 2023 and stipulated that all illegal foreigners should leave the country by 1 November 2023.²⁵

Pakistani authorities consequently only forcibly returned a relatively small portion of these people to Afghanistan. Numerous Afghans without legal residence travelled to Afghanistan independently for fear of arrest.²⁶ Of those who returned to Afghanistan in the last months of 2023, 90% cited fear of arrest and only 5% cited forced repatriation as the reason. Other reasons mentioned (more than one could be specified) were lack of work (23%), social pressure (18%) and lack of means to live in Pakistan (6%) or pay home rent (5%).²⁷ Meanwhile (as of January 2025), the proportion of people fearing arrest has fallen to 64%, with almost half claiming difficulties to pay for rent or household goods.²⁸ A similar picture is shown in the study conducted by UNHCR in 2024 among returnees to Afghanistan.²⁹ In some cases, people residing legally in Pakistan have also returned to Afghanistan to prevent family separation.³⁰ In addition to these push factors, there are pull factors such as the improved security situation in Afghanistan, job opportunities and the desire to make a living in one's home country.³¹

Profile: Returnees from Pakistan have different profiles:

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- <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/pakistan-flow-monitoring-afghan-nationals-annual-report-2023> (14.02.2025) / UNHCR/IOM, Geneva. UNHCR-IOM Pakistan Flash update # 35 on Arrest and Detention/Flow Monitoring, 15 Sep 2023 to 31 January 2025, 07.02.2025. <https://pakistan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1121/files/documents/2025-02/unhcr-iom-flash-update-35.pdf> (07.02.2025).
- ²⁴ UNHCR, Geneva. Pakistan-Afghanistan - Returns Emergency Response (as of 6 February 2025), 07.02.2025. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/pakistan-afghanistan-returns-emergency-response-6-february-2025> (12.02.2025).
- ²⁵ State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Bern-Wabern. Focus Pakistan. Rückkehr und Rückführung afghanischer Staatsangehöriger 2023-2024, 05.04.2024, p. 14-16. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/internationales/herkunftslaender/asien-nahost/pak/PAK-rueckfuehrungen-afg-2023-2024.pdf.download.pdf/PAK-rueckfuehrungen-afg-2023-2024.pdf> (14.02.2025).
- ²⁶ Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.
- ²⁷ IOM, Geneva. Pakistan Flow Monitoring of Afghan Nationals, 2024, p. 15. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/pakistan-flow-monitoring-afghan-nationals-annual-report-2023> (14.02.2025) / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025).
- ²⁸ UNHCR/IOM, Geneva. UNHCR-IOM Pakistan Flash update # 35 on Arrest and Detention/Flow Monitoring, 15 Sep 2023 to 31 January 2025, 07.02.2025. <https://pakistan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1121/files/documents/2025-02/unhcr-iom-flash-update-35.pdf> (07.02.2025).
- ²⁹ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 6. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).
- ³⁰ Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.
- ³¹ Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 137. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

- A large portion of them had previously lived in Pakistan for decades or were even born there. Some of these people have little knowledge of Afghanistan and no social network there.³² Some returnees also have inadequate knowledge of Afghan languages.³³
- Others had only fled to Pakistan after the Taliban took power in 2021 and had no possibility to obtain a legal status in Pakistan from that point on. This includes many former government employees, military and police personnel, and employees of international agencies and organisations.³⁴
- As of August 2021, people or families with ties to the Taliban have also returned from Pakistan. Some of these people had spent time at madrasas in Pakistan for training purposes.³⁵

In addition to permanent returns, there are also many border crossings for round-trip purposes. So there is a lot of traffic of traders at the border crossings.³⁶ In addition, many families that have established bases in both Afghanistan and Pakistan occasionally commute between the two countries. However, Pakistan's consistent enforcement of its visa requirement (see [Chapter 4.4.](#)) has made this impossible in many cases, which is why some of these families are now ultimately settling in Afghanistan.³⁷

Detailed information on this topic can be found in the topical report "Pakistan: Return and repatriation of Afghan nationals from 2023-2024".³⁸

3.2. Return from Iran

Statistic: Returns from Iran occur in three different ways: as part of a formal repatriation through an official border crossing, through informal deportation that force people to climb over border fences back into their home country, and as push-backs immediately upon or after illegal entry.³⁹ It can be assumed that only the first type is recorded in the official statistics. Below are the available statistics per year:⁴⁰

³² Academic source from Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024 / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Representative of the NGO SHARP Pakistan, Islamabad. Telephone Interview with Country Analysis SEM, 11.07.2024 / Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 5.

<https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025) / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025).

³³ Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

³⁴ Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 6. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

³⁵ Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 6. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

³⁶ Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

³⁷ Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024. / Representative of an international organization (5). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024.

³⁸ State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Bern-Wabern. Focus Pakistan: Rückkehr und Rückführung afghanischer Staatsangehöriger 2023-2024, 05.04.2024. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/internationales/herkunftslaender/asien-nahost/pak/PAK-rueckfuehrungen-afg-2023-2024.pdf.download.pdf/PAK-rueckfuehrungen-afg-2023-2024.pdf> (14.02.2025).

³⁹ Amnesty International, London. Afghanistan: "They don't treat us like humans": Unlawful returns of Afghans from Turkey and Iran, 31.08.2024, p. 16, 27-29, 34-35. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5897/2022/en/> (14.02.2025).

⁴⁰ UN OCHA, New York. Afghanistan: Snapshot of Population Movements (January - December 2024) January 2025, 21.01.2025. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-snapshot-population-movements-january-december-2024-january-2025> (07.02.2024). / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 23. <https://www.cqrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025). / UNHCR, Geneva. Afghanistan: Border Monitoring Report - January-December 2024, 27.01.2025. p. 1.

Year	Total returnees	of which are repatriations
2021	1 236 000	n/a
2022	848 000	485 000
2023	977 000	690 000
2024	1 215 000	764 000

Route: The returns are always made by land. For formal repatriations, the two main border crossings of Islam Qala (near Herat) and Rah-i Abrisham⁴¹/Milak (near Zaranj) are usually used. These are often accompanied by UNHCR and/or IOM.⁴² According to a report by *Amnesty International*, Afghan nationals were also forced to climb over border fences outside of official border crossings and thus return to Afghanistan.⁴³ In most cases, there was no way for the repatriated people to apply for protection in Iran beforehand.⁴⁴ Representatives of Taliban interim authorities stated in September 2024 that Iran was returning 3,000 people a day.⁴⁵

Trends: After welcoming or at least tolerating Afghan migrants in Iran for decades, the tone of the media and politicians towards them has become harsher in recent years. Iranian media is increasingly polemicising the presence of Afghan migrants, and there is increasing aggression and attacks by Iranian security forces and private individuals against Afghans.⁴⁶ Access to government services and the labour market has recently been restricted. Since June 2024, Iranian authorities have required adult male Afghans to obtain a *Smart Card* for the price of 1 billion Iranian Rials (ca. 1000 CHF) to maintain legal residence in the country.⁴⁷

Repatriation have also been intensified. In October 2023, the Iranian Minister of the Interior announced that all Afghan nationals without legal residence status would have to leave Iran.⁴⁸ In September 2024, a bill was discussed in the Iranian parliament that would require the foreign population in Iran to be reduced by 10% annually. Iranian police chief Ahmad Reza Radan said the country plans to repatriate 2 million people by March 2025.⁴⁹ In fact, Iran subsequently intensified the repatriation of Afghan migrants, including those holding *Amayesh* cards, which

<https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-monitoring-report-january-december-2024> (13.02.2025).

⁴¹ Often referred to in reports as 'Silk Bridge'.

⁴² CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 22-23. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025). / IOM, Geneva. Afghanistan - Flow Monitoring Quarterly Report 4 (October- December 2024), 21.01.2025. p. 3. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/afghanistan-flow-monitoring-quarterly-report-4-october-december-2024-eng?close=true> (11.02.2025).

⁴³ Amnesty International, London. Afghanistan: "They don't treat us like humans": Unlawful returns of Afghans from Turkey and Iran, 31.08.2024, p. 28. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5897/2022/en/> (14.02.2025).

⁴⁴ Amnesty International, London. Afghanistan: "They don't treat us like humans": Unlawful returns of Afghans from Turkey and Iran, 31.08.2024, p. 16, 36. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5897/2022/en/> (14.02.2025).

⁴⁵ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Prague. 'Treated Like Criminals': Iran Intensifies Deportation Of Afghans, 30.09.2024. <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-iran-migrants-refugees-deportation/33137746.html> (14.02.2025).

⁴⁶ Foreign Policy, Washington. Afghan Asylum Seekers Face Hostility in Iran, 03.07.2024. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/07/03/iran-afghan-refugees-election-discrimination-deportation/> (07.02.2025). / Hengaw. Hengaw Warns of Increasing State-Sanctioned and Social Racism Against Afghan Migrants in Iran, 05.08.2024. <https://hengaw.net/en/news/2024/08/article-19> (08.02.2024). / Deutsche Welle, Bonn. Iran: Kooperation mit Taliban bei Abschiebung von Afghanen. 28.01.2025. <https://www.dw.com/de/iran-kooperation-mit-taliban-bei-abschiebung-von-afghanen/a-71433027> (11.02.2025).

⁴⁷ Iran International. Iran's smart card scheme exploits Afghan migrants amid deportations, 27.08.2024. <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202408267235> (08.02.2024).

⁴⁸ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 23. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

⁴⁹ Iran International. Iran unveils plan to cut Afghan immigrant population by 10% per year, 05.09.2024. <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202409049018> (07.02.2025) / Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Prag. 'Treated Like Criminals': Iran Intensifies Deportation Of Afghans, 30.09.2024. <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-iran-migrants-refugees-deportation/33137746.html> (14.02.2025). / Deutsche Welle, Bonn. Iran plans to deport 2 million Afghan refugees. 14.09.2024. <https://www.dw.com/en/iran-plans-to-deport-2-million-afghan-refugees/a-70201549> (08.02.2024).

allow Afghans to legally reside in Iran.⁵⁰ In addition, Iran began building a wall along the 921-kilometre border with Afghanistan. By January 2025, 75 kilometres of this wall were completed.⁵¹

Profile: Most of the returnees or repatriates from Iran are men between the ages of 18 and 49 who had previously stayed in Iran for economic reasons.⁵² 56% of returnees in 2024 reported to IOM that they had been repatriated from Iran. Two-thirds of them had previously resided in Iran for a year or longer.⁵³ Due to Iran's difficult economic situation, many Afghan migrants have voluntarily returned in recent years. Some of the returnees are also migrant workers who never intended to remain in Iran.⁵⁴

3.3. Return from Turkey

Statistic: Turkish authorities have not published complete statistics on returns of Afghan nationals since 2023. The following figures are known:⁵⁵

Year	Total returnees
2022	68 290
2023 (January – September)	22 600
2024 (figures from IOM ⁵⁶)	24 301

Route: The majority of Afghan nationals returning from Turkey are sent by air. These are officially voluntary returns. In fact, these people are often arrested beforehand and held in detention centres for weeks or months. Consent to the "voluntary" return is given there under pressure and sometimes under the pretence of false facts and without legal assistance. Most of these people are not given the opportunity to apply for asylum either.⁵⁷ Approximately one

⁵⁰ Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024 / Representative of an international organization (8). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 27.11.2024 / Amu TV, Virginia. Iran says it has deported more than one million Afghan migrants, 08.02.2025. <https://amu.tv/155024/> (08.02.2025).

⁵¹ Amu TV, Virginia. Iran completes 75 kilometers of border wall with Afghanistan, 10.01.2025. <https://amu.tv/150042/> (07.02.2025). / TOLO News, Kabul. Iran Implements Plan to Erect Wall Along Afghan Border, 25.07.2024. <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan-189906> (08.02.2024).

⁵² Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024 / IOM, Geneva. Afghanistan - Flow Monitoring Quarterly Report 4 (October- December 2024), 21.01.2025. p. 2, 6. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/afghanistan-flow-monitoring-quarterly-report-4-october-december-2024-eng?close=true> (11.02.2025).

⁵³ IOM, Geneva. Afghanistan - Flow Monitoring Quarterly Report 4 (October- December 2024), 21.01.2025. p. 3. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/afghanistan-flow-monitoring-quarterly-report-4-october-december-2024-eng?close=true> (11.02.2025).

⁵⁴ Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 5. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

⁵⁵ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 20. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025) / State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Bern-Wabern. Focus Türkei: Rückführung von Afghaninnen und Afghanen, 19.01.2024, p. 15-16. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/internationales/herkunftslaender/europa-gus/tur/TUR-rueckfuehrung-afghanen-d.pdf.download.pdf/TUR-rueckfuehrung-afghanen-d.pdf> (14.02.2025).

⁵⁶ IOM, Geneva. Afghanistan - Flow Monitoring Snapshot (29 December 2024 - 04 January 2025), 09.01.2025. p. 9. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/afghanistan-flow-monitoring-quarterly-report-4-october-december-2024-eng> (07.02.2025).

⁵⁷ State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Bern-Wabern. Focus Türkei. Rückführung von Afghaninnen und Afghanen, 19.01.2024, p. 10, 15-16. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/internationales/herkunftslaender/europa-gus/tur/TUR-rueckfuehrung-afghanen-d.pdf.download.pdf/TUR-rueckfuehrung-afghanen-d.pdf> (14.02.2025) / Human Rights Watch, New York. "No One Asked Me Why I Left Afghanistan", Pushbacks and Deportations of Afghans from Turkey, November 2022, p. 49-50. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2022/11/turkey1122_web.pdf (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 20-21. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025) / Amnesty International, London. Afghanistan: "They don't treat us like humans": Unlawful returns of Afghans from Turkey and Iran, 31.08.2024, p. 32, 39-41. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5897/2022/en/> (14.02.2025).

third of the returns are made on scheduled flights, two thirds on charter flights.⁵⁸ In addition, there are reports of repatriations by land from the eastern Turkish border areas to Iran and onwards to Afghanistan.⁵⁹

Trends: Similar to Pakistan and Iran, Turkey has also stepped up its efforts to identify, arrest and transfer irregular migrants, including from Afghanistan, to detention centres. "Mobile Migration Points" have been established in major cities with the goal of arresting people without a legal residence permit.⁶⁰ In 2024, Turkish authorities identified 65,815 Afghan nationals without a valid residence permit, although this is not an increase compared to previous years.⁶¹

Profile: 97% of people returned from Turkey are men between the ages of 18 and 54. 61% of them had previously resided in Turkey for a year or longer. Around two-thirds reported to IOM that they had left Afghanistan for security reasons, and about half of them mentioned a lack of economic prospects and natural disasters (multiple mentions were possible). Almost all of them reported to IOM that they had travelled to Turkey in search of work.⁶²

Detailed information on this topic can be found in the topical report "Turkey: Repatriation of Afghans".⁶³

3.4. Return from other countries

Repatriations and voluntary returns from European countries and North America have only occurred in isolated cases since the Taliban took power. In 2022 and the first months of 2023, there were no forced repatriations to Afghanistan from here.⁶⁴

- **Tajikistan** repatriated 12 people across the land border to Afghanistan in 2023. In 2024, the number of people was 99, including 96 in December 2024 alone.⁶⁵
- In August 2024, **Germany** returned 28 people to Afghanistan on a charter flight. These were convicted offenders who were obliged to leave Germany. Germany did not negotiate directly with the Taliban interim government on this but indirectly through the mediation of Qatar.⁶⁶

⁵⁸ State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Bern-Wabern. Focus Türkei: Rückführung von Afghaninnen und Afghanen, 19.01.2024, p. 15. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/internationales/herkunftslaender/europa-gus/tur/TUR-rueckfuehrung-afghanen-d.pdf.download.pdf/TUR-rueckfuehrung-afghanen-d.pdf> (14.02.2025).

⁵⁹ Amnesty International, London. Afghanistan: "They don't treat us like humans": Unlawful returns of Afghans from Turkey and Iran, 31.08.2024, p. 26, 37. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5897/2022/en/> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 21. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

⁶⁰ ECRE, Aida Asylum Information Database. Türkiye, Removal and Refoulement. 20.08.2024. <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/turkiye/asylum-procedure/access-procedure-and-registration/removal-and-refoulement/> (07.02.2025).

⁶¹ Republic of Turkey, Presidency of Migration Management [Göç İdare Başkanlığı]. Statistics, Irregular Migration. 30.01.2025. <https://en.goc.gov.tr/irregular-migration> (07.02.2025).

⁶² IOM, Geneva. Afghanistan - Flow Monitoring Snapshot (29 December 2024 - 04 January 2025), 09.01.2025. p. 9. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/afghanistan-flow-monitoring-quarterly-report-4-october-december-2024-eng> (07.02.2025).

⁶³ State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Bern-Wabern. Focus Türkei: Rückführung von Afghaninnen und Afghanen, 19.01.2024. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/internationales/herkunftslaender/europa-gus/tur/TUR-rueckfuehrung-afghanen-d.pdf.download.pdf/TUR-rueckfuehrung-afghanen-d.pdf> (14.02.2025).

⁶⁴ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 17-19, 26-27. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025) / EUAA, Malta. Afghanistan – Country Focus, December 2023, p. 98. https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_12_EUAA_COI_Report_Afghanistan_Country_Focus.pdf (14.02.2025) / Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 136. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

⁶⁵ UNHCR, Geneva. Afghanistan: Border Monitoring Report - January-December 2024, 27.01.2025. p. 5. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-monitoring-report-january-december-2024> (13.02.2025).

⁶⁶ Bayerischer Rundfunk, Munich. Abschiebungen nach Afghanistan: Plötzlich geht es schnell, 30.08.2024. <https://www.br.de/nachrichten/deutschland-welt/abschiebungen-nach-afghanistan-plotzlich-geht-es-schnell>. [UMvepKm](https://www.dw.com/en/deportation-flight-leaves-germany-for-afghanistan/a-70087498) (14.02.2025) / Deutsche Welle, Bonn. Deportation flight leaves Germany for Afghanistan, 30.08.2024. <https://www.dw.com/en/deportation-flight-leaves-germany-for-afghanistan/a-70087498>

- In October 2024, **Switzerland** returned two Afghan nationals to Afghanistan on a scheduled flight via Istanbul. They were convicted criminals who had been banned from the country.⁶⁷ In total, Switzerland returned three people to Afghanistan between 2022 and 2024.⁶⁸
- In the summer of 2022, the **US** repatriated an Afghan national who had illegally entered California from Mexico back to Afghanistan. In February 2023, a court ordered his re-entry into the US, at which point a return ticket was paid for him. The person in question is said to have been hiding in Afghanistan in the meantime for fear of the Taliban.⁶⁹ Already in February 2022, US media reported on the repatriation of a person who had previously been evacuated from Kabul by the US, in this case due to criminal offences.⁷⁰
- **Sweden** repatriated five people to Afghanistan via Uzbekistan in 2023 according to German media reports. This practice was abandoned in March 2024.⁷¹
- **Belgium** carried out an unaccompanied forced repatriation by scheduled flight to Afghanistan in February 2023.⁷²
- In March 2023, a convicted criminal returned independently from **France** to Afghanistan. After serving an 18-month prison sentence, he was required to depart the country due to being banned from it.⁷³
- According to a report by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in June 2023, ten people from the **Netherlands** had voluntarily returned to Afghanistan since the Taliban took power.⁷⁴
- In 2023, **Rwanda** returned two Afghans to Afghanistan via Nairobi and Dubai according to a newspaper report.⁷⁵

(14.02.2025) / ZDF, Mainz. Abgeschobene Straftäter teils auf freiem Fuß, 06.09.2024. <https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/ausland/afghanistan-taliban-abschiebung-straftaeter-100.html> (14.02.2025).

⁶⁷ SRF, Zurich. Schweiz schafft zwei Afghanen nach Kabul aus – erstmals seit 2019, 14.02.2025. <https://www.srf.ch/news/schweiz/rueckfuehrung-nach-afghanistan-schweiz-schafft-zwei-afghanen-nach-kabul-aus-erstmal-seit-2019> (11.02.2025). / Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Zurich. Die Schweiz schafft kriminelle Afghanen nach Kabul aus. 14.02.2025. <https://www.nzz.ch/schweiz/die-schweiz-schafft-kriminelle-afghanen-nach-kabul-aus-id.1852686> (11.02.2024). / Blick, Zurich. «Ich habe Angst, ich will zurück in die Schweiz.» 01.12.2024. <https://www.blick.ch/schweiz/ausgeschaffter-afghane-meldet-sich-aus-kabul-ich-habe-angst-ich-will-zurueck-in-die-schweiz-id20369083.html> (11.02.2025).

⁶⁸ Blick, Zurich. «Ich habe Angst, ich will zurück in die Schweiz.» 01.12.2024. <https://www.blick.ch/schweiz/ausgeschaffter-afghane-meldet-sich-aus-kabul-ich-habe-angst-ich-will-zurueck-in-die-schweiz-id20369083.html> (11.02.2025).

⁶⁹ Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles. ICE deported him to Afghanistan, then flew him back to L.A., 13.04.2023. <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2023-04-13/ice-deported-afghanistan-asylum-seeker-mistake> (14.02.2025).

⁷⁰ Axios, Arlington. Scoop: U.S. deports first Afghan back to Afghanistan. 28.02.2022. <https://www.axios.com/2022/03/01/afghan-deportation-afghanistan-ice-immigration-taliban> (14.02.2025).

⁷¹ T-Online, Cologne. Schweden rudert zurück. 06.06.2024. https://www.t-online.de/nachrichten/ausland/internationale-politik/id_100421066/messerattacke-in-mannheim-abschiebungen-selbst-schweden-tritt-auf-die-bremse.html (14.02.2025).

⁷² CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 18. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

⁷³ Franceinfo, Paris. Pour la première fois depuis le retour des Talibans au pouvoir, un Afghan condamné en France pour apologie du terrorisme renvoyé en Afghanistan, 19.04.2023. https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/afghanistan/pour-la-premiere-fois-depuis-le-retour-des-talibans-au-pouvoir-un-afghan-condamne-en-france-pour-apologie-du-terrorisme-renvoye-en-afghanistan_5779361.html (14.02.2025).

⁷⁴ Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 136. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

⁷⁵ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 19. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

- **Austria** intends to resume repatriations to Afghanistan.⁷⁶ A delegation from the Ministry of the Interior travelled to Kabul for this purpose in January 2025 for negotiations.⁷⁷ No returns are known to date, however.
- Authorities in **Denmark** announced in February 2023 that they were considering repatriations to Afghanistan. They began technical discussions with the Afghan Consulate in Istanbul for this purpose. No returns from Denmark are known to date, however.⁷⁸

Multiple European countries are discussing resuming repatriations to Afghanistan. In September 2024, the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum (BFA) declared that, in view of the improved security situation in Afghanistan, repatriations would again be permissible in individual cases.⁷⁹ The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs assumes that the Taliban interim government does not recognise the cooperation agreements between the EU and the previous Republican government.⁸⁰

It can be assumed from this that even after the Taliban took power, individuals from various Western countries voluntarily or independently returned to Afghanistan.⁸¹ In some cases, voluntary returnees first negotiate the terms of their return with the Taliban.⁸² This can be seen, for example, in reports on the return of numerous high-ranking former officials, some of whom had been partially evacuated after the change of power,⁸³ including the former mayor of Maidan Shahr, Zarifa Ghafari, who had been evacuated to Germany.⁸⁴ She has since left the country again, however.⁸⁵ The Afghanistan Analysts Network interviewed a former NGO employee who had been evacuated to Denmark but later returned to Afghanistan independently.⁸⁶

In addition, because of the improved security situation, there are numerous Afghan nationals residing abroad who are temporarily returning to Afghanistan for visit or business purposes (see [Chapter 5.3](#)).

⁷⁶ ARD/Das Erste, Munich. Auch Österreich will nach Afghanistan abschieben. 31.08.2024.

<https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/europa/oesterreich-abschiebungen-102.html> (10.02.2024).

⁷⁷ Die Presse, Vienna. Österreich spricht mit Taliban über Rücknahme von afghanischen Flüchtlingen.

22.01.2025. <https://www.diepresse.com/19282796/oesterreich-spricht-mit-taliban-ueber-ruecknahme-von-afghanischen-fluechtligen> (10.02.2025).

⁷⁸ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 19.

<https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

⁷⁹ Euronews, Lyon. Austria joins Germany in deporting Afghans with criminal records back home, 01.09.2024.

<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2024/09/01/austria-says-it-will-work-with-germany-on-joint-deportations-of-criminals-to-afghanistan> (14.02.2025).

⁸⁰ Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023),

30.06.2023, p. 136. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

⁸¹ Landinfo, Oslo. Query response Afghanistan: Departures and returns after Taliban's takeover of power,

29.09.2022, p. 6. <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Query-response-Afghanistan-Departure-and-return-after-the-Talibans-takeover-of-power-29092022.pdf> (14.02.2025).

⁸² Danish Refugee Council, Copenhagen. Afghanistan conference. The Human Rights Situation after August

2021, 28.11.2022, p. 42. <https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/13vhsflb/drc-afghanistan-conference-report-28nov2022.pdf> (14.02.2025).

⁸³ TOLO News, Kabul. 952 Ex-Officials Return to Afghanistan Via Contact Commission, 20.08.2024.

<https://tolonews.com/index.php/afghanistan-190325> (14.02.2025).

⁸⁴ Voice of America, New York. Former Mayor's Return to Kabul Sparks Controversy, 10.03.2022.

<https://www.voanews.com/a/former-mayor-s-return-to-kabul-sparks-controversy/6479705.html> (14.02.2025).

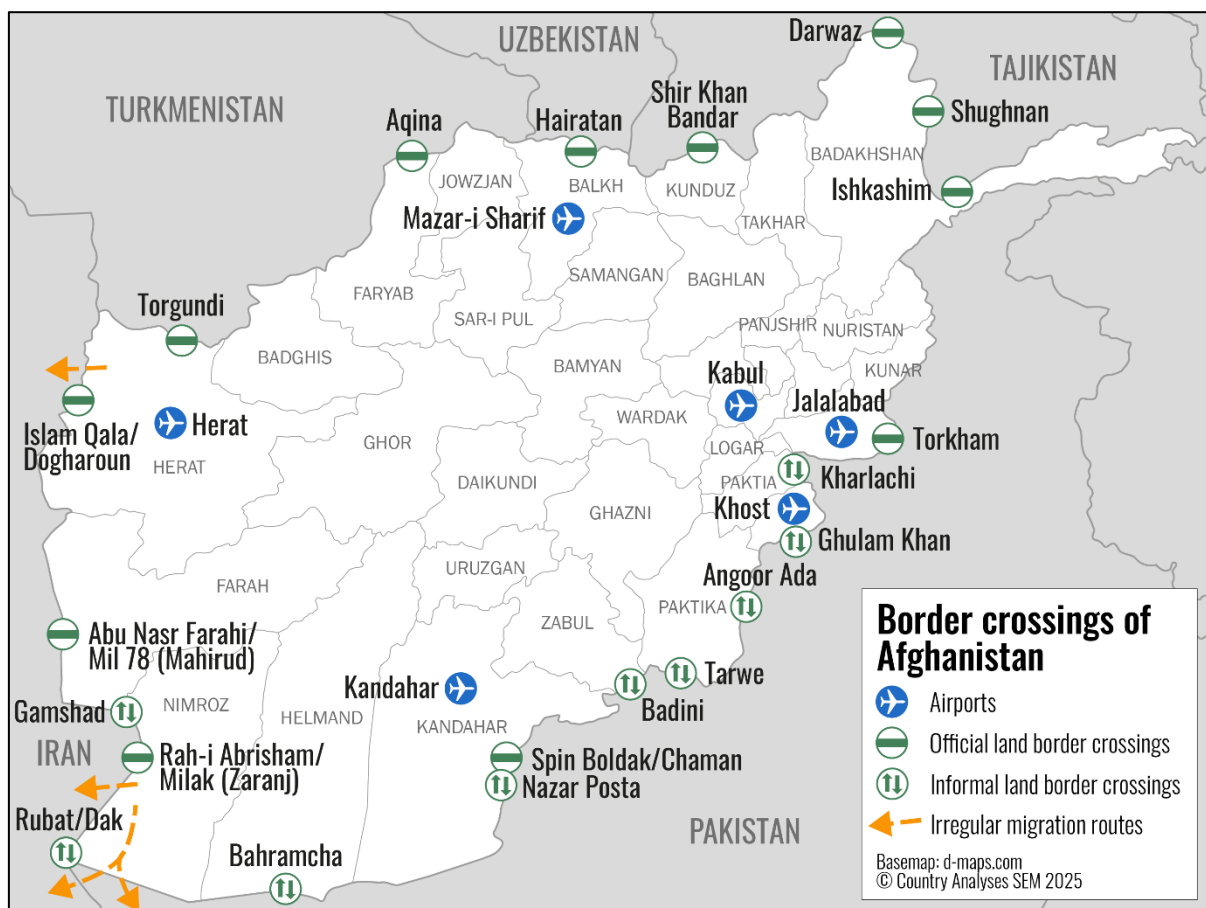
⁸⁵ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Kabul. The Azadi Briefing: Fear, Disillusionment Undermine Taliban's

Efforts To Woo Exiled Former Afghan Officials, 28.07.2024. <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-woos-former-officials/32524328.html> (14.02.2025).

⁸⁶ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: My life as a refugee – and choosing to return home,

20.01.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/the-daily-hustle-my-life-as-a-refugee-and-choosing-to-return-home/> (14.02.2025).

4. Entry and departure



4.1. Kabul Airport

Since the Taliban invaded Kabul on 15 August 2021, the surroundings of the airport have been under Taliban control. The Taliban immediately set up checkpoints to monitor who was arriving and departing.⁸⁷ In June 2023, a source mentioned that the Taliban operate five or six checkpoints outside the airport.⁸⁸

The Taliban did not enter the airport itself at first. It was reopened for international flights in late September 2021.⁸⁹ Only sporadic international flights were available at first, but normal operation has resumed since spring 2022.⁹⁰ According to a source of the Norwegian country analysis unit Landinfo, the Taliban were "completely invisible" at Kabul Airport in March 2022.⁹¹ Since the Taliban had little experience operating an international airport at that time, they initially relied on staff of the previous government and on private companies in cooperation

⁸⁷ Landinfo, Oslo. Query response Afghanistan: Departures and returns after Taliban's takeover of power, 29.09.2022, p. 3-5. <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Query-response-Afghanistan-Departure-and-return-after-the-Talibans-takeover-of-power-29092022.pdf> (14.02.2025).

⁸⁸ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 12-12. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

⁸⁹ Business Insider, New York. Taliban promising 'full cooperation' as it asks airlines to resume international flights to Afghanistan, 28.09.2021. <https://www.businessinsider.com/taliban-ask-international-airlines-to-return-to-afghanistan-2021-9?r=US&IR=T> (14.02.2025).

⁹⁰ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 10. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

⁹¹ Landinfo, Oslo. Query response Afghanistan: Departures and returns after Taliban's takeover of power, 29.09.2022, p. 5. <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Query-response-Afghanistan-Departure-and-return-after-the-Talibans-takeover-of-power-29092022.pdf> (14.02.2025).

with Turkey and Qatar.⁹² Since then, the situation has continuously changed. *Landinfo* wrote with regard to the situation in March 2022 that the Taliban were not visible in the airport itself, and that private companies were responsible for security.⁹³ In September 2022, the Taliban commissioned the company *GAAC Solutions* from Dubai with the operation and security of the airport.⁹⁴ In 2023, the Taliban finally took over airport security themselves.⁹⁵



Kabul International Airport (Photo: Country Analysis SEM, November 2024).

Initially, however, this only concerned security checks and not entry and departure checks. These were carried out at first by the existing employees of the former government. Sources have spoken of Taliban involvement since 2023. An expert interviewed in March 2023 by the Belgian country analysis unit *CEDOCA* mentioned that the same staff as before the Taliban takeover is still responsible for entry and departure checks and for security. The procedures are essentially unchanged. However, the existing staff is increasingly being replaced by Taliban staff. The Taliban had already been present at the airport at that time, including its intelligence service General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI), the successor organisation of the NDS. The latter also carried over staff from the NDS due to their technical skills.⁹⁶ According to a report in the *Los Angeles Times*, the Taliban interviewed a person deported from the US at Kabul Airport in January 2023.⁹⁷ In the summer of 2023, a source told EUAA that the Taliban now controlled or managed the entire airport grounds.⁹⁸ The Immigration

⁹² CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 12. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

⁹³ Landinfo, Oslo. Query response Afghanistan: Departures and returns after Taliban's takeover of power, 29.09.2022, p. 3-4. <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Query-response-Afghanistan-Departure-and-return-after-the-Talibans-takeover-of-power-29092022.pdf> (14.02.2025).

⁹⁴ The Diplomat, Tokyo. Taliban: UAE Firm to Run Flight Services on Afghan Airports, 09.09.2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/09/taliban-uae-firm-to-run-flight-services-on-afghan-airports/> (14.02.2025).

⁹⁵ EUAA, Malta. Afghanistan – Country Focus, December 2023, p. 99-100. https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_12_EUAA_COI_Report_Afghanistan_Country_Focus.pdf (14.02.2025).

⁹⁶ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 12. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

⁹⁷ Los Angeles Times, Los Angeles. ICE deported him to Afghanistan, then flew him back to L.A., 13.04.2023. <https://www.latimes.com/politics/story/2023-04-13/ice-deported-afghanistan-asylum-seeker-mistake> (14.02.2025).

⁹⁸ EUAA, Malta. Afghanistan – Country Focus, December 2023, p. 99-100. https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_12_EUAA_COI_Report_Afghanistan_Country_Focus.pdf (14.02.2025).

Department, which reports to the Ministry of the Interior, is responsible for border checks at the airport and other border checkpoints.⁹⁹

At the airports, a multi-level screening of incoming returnees is performed by the border check authorities and the Taliban interim government's secret service GDI.¹⁰⁰ According to one source, people entering from a Western country must answer more questions on entry than other travellers, especially if they are wearing Western clothing.¹⁰¹ Another source, on the other hand, mentioned that it occurred frequently, on a daily basis, that people entered from Western countries and that it did not lead to any problems with entry checks.¹⁰² In the course of its mission to Kabul in November 2024, the Country Analysis SEM found that border checks at Kabul Airport do not differ significantly from those at other airports. Systematic interviews by GDI personnel do not occur.¹⁰³ A CEDOCA source reports that, while Taliban authorities do try to determine who is entering the country, there are not many GDI employees at the airport, and the atmosphere does not feel threatening.¹⁰⁴

The Taliban or its secret service GDI has lists and biometric data of the former government's employees in security forces (police, army, intelligence service). They are thus generally able to identify such people during checks.¹⁰⁵ Isolated arrests are made in the course of the entry process at the airport.¹⁰⁶ Arrests are not systematic, however. Nevertheless, according to one source, if a connection to active resistance groups such as the National Resistance Front (NRF) or the Afghanistan Freedom Front (AFF) is suspected, this is possible.¹⁰⁷ Former secret service employees are also thought to be particularly at risk.¹⁰⁸ Among people with foreign passports, special attention is paid to possible spies and people connected to the organisation "Islamic State in the Khorasan Province" (ISKP).¹⁰⁹

4.1.1. Treatment of repatriated people

The findings in this report have primarily been made on how Taliban authorities deal with people repatriated from Turkey, since only a few repatriations have occurred by air from other countries to date. IOM is responsible for receiving returnees from Turkey and systematically interviews them.¹¹⁰ According to a source cited by the Belgian country analysis CEDOCA, returnees from Turkey were initially (in 2022) questioned and searched in an aggressive way.

⁹⁹ Representative of the Afghan Ministry of Interior. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 27.11.2024.

¹⁰⁰ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 12-13. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025) / Representative of an international organization with presence in Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Bern, 13.06.2024. / Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024.

¹⁰¹ Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 142. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

¹⁰² CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 12-13. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹⁰³ Personal observation. SEM Country Analysis visit to Kabul, 24-28.11.2024.

¹⁰⁴ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 21. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹⁰⁵ Academic source from Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024 / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 12-13. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025) / Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 140-141. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

¹⁰⁶ Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024.

¹⁰⁷ Academic source from Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024.

¹⁰⁸ Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 140-141. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

¹⁰⁹ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 13. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹¹⁰ IOM, Geneva. Afghanistan - Flow Monitoring Snapshot (29 December 2024 - 04 January 2025), 09.01.2025. p. 9. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/afghanistan-flow-monitoring-quarterly-report-4-october-december-2024-eng> (07.02.2025).

This is no longer the case now, as those repatriated from Turkey are regarded as "poor guys".¹¹¹ A media report on a scheduled flight to Kabul in May 2022 does not mention any complications for migrants returning from Turkey when entering Afghanistan. However, they were overwhelmed with the processes at the airport.¹¹² Since Turkey shares passenger lists with Afghan authorities, the names of people entering are already known to them.¹¹³ In 2024, only 2% of returnees from Turkey had a passport; 97.5% travelled with temporary travel documents issued specifically for their return.¹¹⁴ These are documents with passport photos that resemble a Tazkira.¹¹⁵

Only sparse information is available on the Taliban's treatment of people repatriated from Western countries, as the charter flight from Germany in August 2024 is the only one to clearly fall into this category.¹¹⁶ According to media reports, the repatriated offenders were initially detained in a building near Kabul Airport to be interrogated by the authorities for identity verification and were subsequently released. Their families had to sign a declaration that the men would not commit any more crimes.¹¹⁷ It is not clearly documented whether all of these men were released.¹¹⁸ According to *Spiegel*, some of them remained on a type of house arrest for the time being.¹¹⁹ Several of them later commented in Afghan media on detention in Germany, the conditions of repatriation, European migration policy, and the lack of economic prospects in Afghanistan. Their treatment at the airport was not discussed in the interviews.¹²⁰

4.2. Land border with Pakistan

The Afghanistan-Pakistan border is known as the Durand Line after the foreign minister of British India who established it in 1893. It cuts through the settlement areas of many Pashtun

¹¹¹ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 20. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹¹² Middle East Eye. On an Istanbul-Kabul flight, refugees and emigres prepare to see a new Afghanistan, 01.06.2022. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/afghanistan-istanbul-kabul-flight-refugees-emigres-prepare> (14.02.2025).

¹¹³ Diplomatic source (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024. / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 29. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹¹⁴ IOM, Geneva. Afghanistan Flow Monitoring 2024, Returnees from Turkey (Kabul Airport) – CB-PAHA 2024. 31.10.2024. <https://dtm.iom.int/online-interactive-resources/afghanistan-flow-monitoring-2024> (07.02.2025).

¹¹⁵ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 21. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹¹⁶ Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 141. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

¹¹⁷ BBC Pashto, London. له جرمني افغانستان ته لېږل شوی کس پر خپل جرم، تېر او سبا راته وايي. [A man sent from Germany to Afghanistan tells me about his crime, his past and his future], 02.09.2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3F1Fb92qVY> (14.02.2025) / BBC Farsi, London. آلمان اخراج مجرمان افغان به. [Germany starts to deport Afghan criminals to Afghanistan and returns 28 people], 03.08.2024. <https://www.bbc.com/persian/articles/cpd1853pny8o> (14.02.2025) / Deutsche Welle (Farsi), Bonn. طالبان مجرمان اخراج شده از آلمان را آزاد کردند. [Taliban release deported criminals from Germany], 07.09.2024. <https://www.dw.com/fa-ir/-طالبان-مجرمان-اخراج-شده-از-آلمان-را-آزاد-کردند/a-70162215> (14.02.2025) / ARD Tagesschau, Berlin. Was mit den Abgeschobenen passiert ist, 14.02.2025. <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/asien/abgeschobene-afghanen-100.html> (14.02.2025).

¹¹⁸ ZDF, Mainz. Abgeschobene Straftäter teils auf freiem Fuß, 06.09.2024. <https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/ausland/afghanistan-taliban-abschiebung-straftaeter-100.html> (14.02.2025).

¹¹⁹ Spiegel, Hamburg. Taliban lassen aus Deutschland abgeschobene Straftäter schon wieder frei. 06.09.2024. <https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/afghanistan-taliban-lassen-aus-deutschland-abgeschobene-straftaeter-wieder-frei-a-1181ca8f-23fc-4af9-bb2d-c49062f09c0c> (13.02.2025).

¹²⁰ Video 34. اخراج مهاجرین افغان از آلمان به افغانستان رسید دیپورت از آلمان ترکیه ایران به کابل رسید. [Deported Afghan immigrants from Germany arrived in Afghanistan. 15 families were deported from Germany, through Turkey, and Iran to Kabul.], 06.09.2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfpXBaynpil> (14.02.2025) / AF Journal. | آغاز عملی اخراج اجباری مهاجرین افغان از جرمنی. Forced deportation of Afghan immigrants from Germany, 05.09.2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bcTyP1K12Y> (14.02.2025) / Watandar Plus, Kabul. ؟ اخراج بی رحمانه دختر خانم های افغان از کشور ترکیه / اما چرا. [Afghan girls brutally deported from Turkey / but why?], 03.09.2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSZG6Bq08Xk> (14.02.2025).

and Baloch tribes and has not yet been recognised by any Afghan government, including the current Taliban interim government.¹²¹ For decades, the Durand Line, which was never precisely defined, remained porous and could be crossed without formalities.¹²²

Only in the last decade has the Pakistani government begun to control it as an effective border line with Afghanistan and to regulate border crossings. On the one hand, this was done from 2017 onwards through the construction of a border fence, which is now over 2,500 kilometres long and cuts through a large portion of the Pashtun border section, but which has hardly affected the southwestern Baloch border sections to date. On the other hand, Pakistan gradually increased the bureaucratic requirements for crossing the border at official border crossings (see also [Chapter 4.4.](#)).¹²³

The main official border crossings are:

- **Torkham:** main border crossing at the Khyber Pass on the road from Kabul and Jalalabad (Afghanistan) to Peshawar and Islamabad (Pakistan).
- **Spin Boldak** (called Chaman on the Pakistani side; the border gate is called *De Dosti Darwaza*, Gate of Friendship¹²⁴): major border crossing on the road from Kandahar (Afghanistan) to Quetta (Pakistan).

There are numerous smaller border crossings referred to as "informal border crossings" as well. Crossing borders there is generally not considered illegal, but there are no full border formalities either. It is not clearly documented in the sources at which of these places formal border crossings are also possible. Some of them (e.g. Badini and Bahramcha) are also used for repatriations from Pakistan.¹²⁵ Badini and Bahramcha border crossings were not under the Afghan government's control before 2021, so they were often used by Taliban fighters.¹²⁶ The following are the most important (listed descending from northeast to southwest, see map above):¹²⁷

- **Kharlachi** (also known as Pathan) in the Afghan province of Paktia;
- **Ghulam Khan** in Khost Province. Reports by the *Afghanistan Analysts Network* have referred to it as a small formal border crossing since 2019, i.e. with border, customs and security control.¹²⁸

¹²¹ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Durand line and the fence: How are communities managing with cross-border lives? 21.04.2024, p. 1-8. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/themed-reports/regional-relations-themed-reports/the-durand-line-and-the-fence-how-are-communities-managing-with-cross-border-lives/> (14.02.2025).

¹²² Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Durand line and the fence: How are communities managing with cross-border lives? 21.04.2024, p. 9-10, 19. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/themed-reports/regional-relations-themed-reports/the-durand-line-and-the-fence-how-are-communities-managing-with-cross-border-lives/> (14.02.2025).

¹²³ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Durand line and the fence: How are communities managing with cross-border lives? 21.04.2024, p. 10-18. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/themed-reports/regional-relations-themed-reports/the-durand-line-and-the-fence-how-are-communities-managing-with-cross-border-lives/> (14.02.2025). / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Gates of Friendship: How Afghans cross the Afghan-Pakistani border. 28.01.2020. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/regional-relations/the-gates-of-friendship-how-afghans-cross-the-afghan-pakistani-border/> (10.02.2024).

¹²⁴ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: Crossing the Durand Line to visit family in Pakistan, 11.09.2023. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/the-daily-hustle/regional-relations-the-daily-hustle/the-daily-hustle-crossing-the-durand-line-to-visit-family-in-pakistan/> (14.02.2025).

¹²⁵ Representative of an international organization (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Prag. Pakistan Opens More Border Points As Afghan Deportations Continue, 13.11.2023. <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-pakistan-border-refugees/32682738.html> (14.02.2025).

¹²⁶ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Jihadi Commuters: How the Taliban cross the Durand Line. 17.10.2017. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/regional-relations/jihadi-commuters-how-the-taliban-cross-the-durand-line/> (10.02.2024).

¹²⁷ IOM, Geneva. Informal Border Crossing Points Rapid Assessment, 01.02.2024. https://afghanistan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11071/files/documents/2024-01/informal-bcp_2812.pdf (14.02.2025) / Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Prag. Pakistan Opens More Border Points As Afghan Deportations Continue, 13.11.2023. <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-pakistan-border-refugees/32682738.html> (14.02.2025).

¹²⁸ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Gates of Friendship: How Afghans cross the Afghan-Pakistani border, 28.01.2020. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/regional-relations/the-gates-of-friendship-how-afghans-cross-the-afghan-pakistani-border/> (14.02.2025).

- **Angoor Ada** in Paktika Province;
- **Tarwe** in Paktika Province;
- **Badini** in Zabul Province, known on the Pakistani side as Qala Saifullah;
- **Nazar Posta** in Kandahar Province near the formal border crossing of Spin Boldak;
- **Bahramcha** in Helmand Province, known as Chagai on the Pakistani side. This border crossing comprises four border gates, some of which are located at a distance from each other.

There are usually 100 to 1000 crossings at these border crossings per week and direction; higher figures are also documented for Ghulam Khan and Bahramcha.¹²⁹ There are 18 informal border crossings in total that are passable by vehicles, as well as around 235 informal border crossings that can only be crossed on foot. Many of these crossing points are blocked due to the construction of the border fence.¹³⁰ However, in spite of the border fence, there are still many points where non-motorized border crossing by the local population through small gates in the border fence is tolerated. Some of these are also holes in the fence that are either unknown to Pakistani authorities or whose existence is tolerated in exchange for the payment of bribes.¹³¹ As of April 2024, many of these informal border crossings have been closed. Informal border crossings in the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar and Nuristan were already no longer accessible. There is still traffic across the Bahramcha border crossing.¹³² The current main route for illegal departure from Afghanistan is from Zaranj (Nimroz Province) to Taftan in the Pakistani province of Balochistan near the Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran border triangle (see [Chapter 5.4.](#)).

The Immigration Department of the Ministry of the Interior is responsible for border controls.¹³³ Other authorities are present at the border crossings as well and involved in the check process, including the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) and the secret service General Directorate of Intelligence (GDI).¹³⁴ Returnees are also registered and assisted by UNHCR or IOM (see [Chapter 5.1.1.](#)).

Afghanistan does not appear to impose travel document requirements on entry by land of Afghan nationals from Pakistan. People who can be identified as Afghan nationals are generally allowed to enter even if they do not have travel documents with them.¹³⁵ IOM statistics show that about a third of those entering from Pakistan do not carry identity documents. However, more than half travel with a passport, and just under 30% also have a Tazkira.¹³⁶ There were many entries without documents in particular in the first phase of

¹²⁹ IOM, Geneva. DTM Afghanistan: Weekly Flow Monitoring Snapshot (22 - 28 September 2024, Data updated as of 21:00 on 28 September), 14.02.2025. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/dtm-afghanistan-weekly-flow-monitoring-snapshot-22-28-september-2024-data-updated-2100-28-september-enpashto> (14.02.2025) / Further weekly reports from DTM Afghanistan from 2024, accessible via the website *Reliefweb*.

¹³⁰ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Gates of Friendship: How Afghans cross the Afghan-Pakistani border. 28.01.2020. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/regional-relations/the-gates-of-friendship-how-afghans-cross-the-afghan-pakistani-border/> (10.02.2024). / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Jihadi Commuters: How the Taliban cross the Durand Line. 17.10.2017. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/regional-relations/jihadi-commuters-how-the-taliban-cross-the-durand-line/> (10.02.2024).

¹³¹ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Durand line and the fence: How are communities managing with cross-border lives? 21.04.2024, p. 22-23. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/themed-reports/regional-relations-themed-reports/the-durand-line-and-the-fence-how-are-communities-managing-with-cross-border-lives/> (14.02.2025).

¹³² UNHCR, Geneva. Afghanistan: Border Monitoring Report - January-December 2024, 27.01.2025. p. 7. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-monitoring-report-january-december-2024> (13.02.2025).

¹³³ Representative of the Afghan Ministry of Interior. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 27.11.2024.

¹³⁴ Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024 / Representative of an international organization (8). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 27.11.2024.

¹³⁵ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 28. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹³⁶ IOM, Geneva. Afghanistan - Flow Monitoring Quarterly Report 4 (October- December 2024), 21.01.2025. p. 8. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/afghanistan-flow-monitoring-quarterly-report-4-october-december-2024-eng?close=true> (11.02.2025). / Further weekly reports from DTM Afghanistan (Weekly Flow Monitoring

returns/repatriations from Pakistan in the fall of 2023. Afghan border authorities were overwhelmed by crowds at the time and did not check people entering at all times.¹³⁷ If a person's Afghan nationality is in doubt, authorities have the option of contacting representatives of the person's (former) place of residence to confirm the information provided.¹³⁸ Whether someone has previously left illegally does not seem to matter when re-entering the country.¹³⁹ Up until the repatriation plan started in autumn 2023, there was a requirement on the Pakistani side to show a departure permit, which was sometimes very expensive. This has now been abolished.¹⁴⁰

A Country Analysis SEM interlocutor who travelled back and forth between Afghanistan and Pakistan in the summer of 2024 reported that, on the Afghan side, the procedure was limited to passport checks and stamping. However, the procedure changes every few months when the commander is replaced.¹⁴¹ Other sources also describe Afghan border checks in Torkham as cursory and unproblematic, with hardly any investigation into entrants' backgrounds.¹⁴²

Most interlocutors and sources do not mention evidence of arrests or targeted searches for specific profiles at the land border.¹⁴³ According to one source, interrogations by Taliban authorities at the border primarily serve to determine possible links with the organisation "Islamic State in the Khorasan Province" (ISKP).¹⁴⁴ Agents of an international organisation present at border crossings said they had not documented any arrests at the border.¹⁴⁵ Conversely, another international organisation mentioned cases of arrests by the secret service GDI.¹⁴⁶ One Country Analysis SEM interlocutor mentioned that he had worn a mask on his return from Pakistan in Torkham so as not to be recognised by anyone.¹⁴⁷ One source stated that the Taliban forces on the Afghan side were sometimes brutal and beat passers-by with sticks.¹⁴⁸

Travellers are generally not allowed to take cars across the border. Instead, it is common to cross the border on foot and look for transport on the other side.¹⁴⁹ The border crossing is closed at night, so travellers often have to stay locally overnight.¹⁵⁰

Snapshot), accessible via the website *Reliefweb*. / Vgl. UNHCR, Geneva. Afghanistan: Border Monitoring Report - January-December 2024, 27.01.2025. p. 5. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-monitoring-report-january-december-2024> (13.02.2025).

¹³⁷ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024.

¹³⁸ Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

¹³⁹ Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 141. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

¹⁴⁰ Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024.

¹⁴¹ Academic source from Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024.

¹⁴² Diplomatic source (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024 / Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 141. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 28, 36. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹⁴³ Representative of an international organization (5). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Representative of the NGO SHARP Pakistan, Islamabad. Telephone Interview with Country Analysis SEM, 11.07.2024 / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: 'Packing up a life' in Pakistan and being forcibly returned to Afghanistan, 07.01.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/the-daily-hustle-packing-up-a-life-in-pakistan-and-being-forcibly-returned-to-afghanistan/> (14.02.2025).

¹⁴⁴ Diplomatic source (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024.

¹⁴⁵ Representative of an international organization (5). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024.

¹⁴⁶ Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024.

¹⁴⁷ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024.

¹⁴⁸ Academic source from Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024.

¹⁴⁹ Academic source from Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024.

¹⁵⁰ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: 'Packing up a life' in Pakistan and being forcibly returned to Afghanistan, 07.01.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/the-daily-hustle/migration-the-daily-hustle-the-daily-hustle-packing-up-a-life-in-pakistan-and-being-forcibly-returned-to-afghanistan/>

4.3. Land border with Iran

The Afghan-Iranian border is more solid than that of Pakistan; largely informal entry and departure has not been the situation here for a long time. There are three official border crossings:

- **Islam Qala** on the road from Herat (Afghanistan) to Mashhad (Iran), the main border crossing between the two countries.
- **Rah-i Abrisham** (often referred to as "Silk Bridge" in English, on the Iranian side as Milak) near Zaranj, the provincial capital of Nimroz.
- **Abu Nasr Farahi**, a small border crossing in the Afghan province of Farah.¹⁵¹

UNHCR reports also show an informal border crossing at Rubat/Ghargharook in the Iran-Afghanistan-Pakistan border triangle, as well as an official but closed border crossing at Gamshad north of Zaranj.¹⁵²

IOM statistics show that even at these border crossings, almost half of Afghan returnees enter without valid travel documents, the rest often only with a Tazkira. Among those forcibly repatriated in 2024, 58% had no documents at all.¹⁵³

There are also informal border crossing points along the border with Iran. However, these are almost exclusively used for illegal entry into Iran and hardly in the other direction (see [Chapter 4.4.](#)).

4.4. Legal departure

Although the Taliban are in general opposed to leaving the country for the purpose of migration (see [Chapter 2](#)), they do not generally take active steps to prevent it. This is evidenced, for example, by the fact that they tolerate illegal departure in some places or even control it to a certain extent at checkpoints.¹⁵⁴ According to the US Department of State's 2023 Human Rights Report, Taliban interim authorities have stopped some Afghans from departing without giving reasons.¹⁵⁵ There is indeed a significant restriction for women, who must always be accompanied by a male relative (*mahram*) when departing the country (legally) as of February 2022.¹⁵⁶ This rule was not consistently implemented initially after its introduction, but has been since 2023.¹⁵⁷ The entry regulations of other countries generally pose greater hurdles (see below), which in turn encourages illegal departure.¹⁵⁸

(14.02.2025) / Representative of an international organization (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024.

¹⁵¹ UNHCR, Geneva. Iran: New Arrivals from Afghanistan - since 2021 (End of July 2023). 13.08.2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/iran-islamic-republic/iran-new-arrivals-afghanistan-2021-end-july-2023> (10.02.2024).

¹⁵² UNHCR, Geneva. Iran: New Arrivals from Afghanistan - since 2021 (End of July 2023). 13.08.2023. <https://reliefweb.int/report/iran-islamic-republic/iran-new-arrivals-afghanistan-2021-end-july-2023> (10.02.2024).

¹⁵³ IOM, Geneva. Afghanistan - Flow Monitoring Quarterly Report 4 (October- December 2024), 21.01.2025. p. 3. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/afghanistan-flow-monitoring-quarterly-report-4-october-december-2024-eng?close=true> (11.02.2025). / Weekly reports (Weekly Flow Monitoring Snapshot) from DTM Afghanistan from 2024, accessible via the website *Reliefweb*. / Vgl. UNHCR, Geneva. Afghanistan: Border Monitoring Report - January-December 2024, 27.01.2025. p. 5. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-monitoring-report-january-december-2024> (13.02.2025).

¹⁵⁴ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 7. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025) / Reuter, Christoph, Munich. «Wir waren glücklich hier», Afghanistan nach dem Sieg der Taliban, Ein Roadtrip, 2023, p. 245-268.

¹⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, Washington. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2023, 22.04.2024, p. 25. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/afghanistan/> (14.02.2025).

¹⁵⁶ ACCORD, Vienna. Anfragebeantwortung zu Afghanistan: Reisemöglichkeiten von Frauen im Land; Möglichkeiten, allein das Land zu verlassen [a-12073-2], 15.02.2023. <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/2091190.html> (14.02.2025).

¹⁵⁷ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 7. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹⁵⁸ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 7. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

The Taliban control access to airports with checkpoints. People departing must indicate where they are going and how much cash they are carrying.¹⁵⁹ At the airport, departing passengers are thoroughly checked according to a source from the Belgian country analysis CEDOCA: security check, passport check, check for carried cash. People who the Taliban had “problems” with would be confronted with this upon departing the country. Taliban interim authorities at the airport had lists of wanted people.¹⁶⁰ But as long as someone did not commit a crime, the Taliban would not intervene.¹⁶¹

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs writes in reference to a source interviewed in March 2023:

"According to a source, lists of names of former ANDSF personnel who are wanted are kept at the airport and in the provinces. Persons from the former security service in particular are said to be in great danger. The Taliban made active use of biometric data to identify and track these people."¹⁶²

A source also mentions in summer 2023 that border checks would continue to be carried out by personnel from the time of the Islamic Republic. However, they would be accompanied by Taliban officials who would learn the procedures from them.¹⁶³

A Pakistani visa is required to depart from Afghanistan to Pakistan in almost all cases. Visa requirements were introduced at the main Torkham border crossing as early as May 2016.¹⁶⁴ In October 2023, the Pakistani government announced that it would extend the visa requirement to the Spin Boldak/Chaman and Angoor Ada border crossings.¹⁶⁵ It had been possible up until then to enter Pakistan in Spin Boldak/Chaman with a Tazkira but without a passport or visa. The conditions for this have changed constantly; most recently, this was only possible with Tazkiras from the southern provinces or from Kandahar Province.¹⁶⁶ On the Afghan side of the border crossing, it was possible to buy fake Tazkiras for this purpose with the desired province information. These were generally accepted on the Pakistani side.¹⁶⁷ Since the introduction of the general visa requirement, this is no longer possible.¹⁶⁸ There still seem to be exceptions, although sources do not agree on this. One says that truck drivers are

¹⁵⁹ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 12-13. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹⁶⁰ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 12. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹⁶¹ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 9. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹⁶² Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 140-141. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

¹⁶³ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 12-13. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹⁶⁴ Al Jazeera, Doha. Torkham restrictions stir Pakistan-Afghanistan tension, 01.06.2016. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/6/1/torkham-restrictions-stir-pakistan-afghanistan-tension> (14.02.2025).

¹⁶⁵ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Durand line and the fence: How are communities managing with cross-border lives? 21.04.2024, p. 20. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/themed-reports/regional-relations-themed-reports/the-durand-line-and-the-fence-how-are-communities-managing-with-cross-border-lives/> (14.02.2025) / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025).

¹⁶⁶ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: Crossing the Durand Line to visit family in Pakistan, 11.09.2023. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/the-daily-hustle/regional-relations-the-daily-hustle/the-daily-hustle-crossing-the-durand-line-to-visit-family-in-pakistan/> (14.02.2025). / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Gates of Friendship: How Afghans cross the Afghan-Pakistani border. 28.01.2020. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/regional-relations/the-gates-of-friendship-how-afghans-cross-the-afghan-pakistani-border/> (10.02.2024).

¹⁶⁷ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: Crossing the Durand Line to visit family in Pakistan, 11.09.2023. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/the-daily-hustle/regional-relations-the-daily-hustle/the-daily-hustle-crossing-the-durand-line-to-visit-family-in-pakistan/> (14.02.2025).

¹⁶⁸ Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

exempt from the visa requirement.¹⁶⁹ According to another source, the residents of Chaman are exempt from the visa requirement but require a passport.¹⁷⁰

The Afghanistan Analysts Network reports that at some border crossings (e.g. Ghulam Khan), the population in the border districts may travel to Pakistan with a Tazkira. Instead of a visa, people would receive a paper with the entry permit ("Entry Card" or "Border Pass") for this purpose.¹⁷¹ This confirms IOM's statistics that nearly 100% of travellers to Pakistan travel through the two major border crossings of Torkham and Spin Boldak with a valid passport and visa, while less than 1% do so at small border crossings.¹⁷² Conversely, at the informal Bahramcha border crossing, there are still departures from Afghanistan to Pakistan without a passport and visa, including for visits, trade or medical treatment.¹⁷³

Since many people are overwhelmed by the bureaucracy when crossing the border into Pakistan, it is possible to hire a *laghari* (guide). These guides are now registered and licensed by Taliban authorities. A September 2023 travelogue describes departure from Afghanistan as uncomplicated, but entry into Pakistan as lengthy and difficult.¹⁷⁴

Departure to Pakistan involves many hurdles. Anyone applying for a passport must expect long waiting times and possibly pay bribes. The Pakistani visa must be applied for online. There are also long waiting times for visa applications, as the responsible Pakistani authorities are overburdened. Many visa applications are rejected. In addition, many Afghans are unfamiliar with bureaucratic processes, so they rely on agents to mediate.¹⁷⁵ Visas are much more expensive through them. Sources report amounts between \$300 and \$1,500.¹⁷⁶ They are usually approved in this case, as the agents pay the responsible authorities.¹⁷⁷ However, there are also fraudulent agents who do not render service after payment.¹⁷⁸

¹⁶⁹ Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

¹⁷⁰ Representative of an international organization (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024.

¹⁷¹ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Durand line and the fence: How are communities managing with cross-border lives? 21.04.2024, p. 21. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/themed-reports/regional-relations-themed-reports/the-durand-line-and-the-fence-how-are-communities-managing-with-cross-border-lives/> (14.02.2025). / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Gates of Friendship: How Afghans cross the Afghan-Pakistani border. 28.01.2020. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/regional-relations/the-gates-of-friendship-how-afghans-cross-the-afghan-pakistani-border/> (10.02.2024).

¹⁷² IOM, Geneva. DTM Afghanistan: Weekly Flow Monitoring Snapshot (22 - 28 September 2024, Data updated as of 21:00 on 28 September), 14.02.2025, p. 6. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/dtm-afghanistan-weekly-flow-monitoring-snapshot-22-28-september-2024-data-updated-2100-28-september-enpashto> (14.02.2025) / Further weekly reports from DTM Afghanistan from 2024, accessible via the website *Reliefweb*.

¹⁷³ UNHCR, Geneva. Afghanistan: Border Monitoring Report - January-December 2024, 27.01.2025. p. 7. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-monitoring-report-january-december-2024> (13.02.2025).

¹⁷⁴ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: Crossing the Durand Line to visit family in Pakistan, 11.09.2023. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/the-daily-hustle/regional-relations-the-daily-hustle/the-daily-hustle-crossing-the-durand-line-to-visit-family-in-pakistan/> (14.02.2025).

¹⁷⁵ Diplomatic source (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024. / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: Mission impossible – the quest for passports and visas in Afghanistan. 04.02.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/the-daily-hustle/rights-and-freedoms-the-daily-hustle/the-daily-hustle-mission-impossible-the-quest-for-passports-and-visas-in-afghanistan/> (14.02.2025).

¹⁷⁶ Diplomatic source (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024. / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: Mission impossible – the quest for passports and visas in Afghanistan. 04.02.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/the-daily-hustle/rights-and-freedoms-the-daily-hustle/the-daily-hustle-mission-impossible-the-quest-for-passports-and-visas-in-afghanistan/> (14.02.2025).

¹⁷⁷ Diplomatic source (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

¹⁷⁸ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: Mission impossible – the quest for passports and visas in Afghanistan. 04.02.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/the-daily-hustle/rights-and-freedoms-the-daily-hustle/the-daily-hustle-mission-impossible-the-quest-for-passports-and-visas-in-afghanistan/> (14.02.2025).

According to UNHCR statistics, 100% of departures to Iran through official border crossings in 2024 were made with passports and visas; to Pakistan, it was 99.6%.¹⁷⁹

4.5. Irregular departure

Many Afghan nationals continue to travel irregularly to the neighbouring countries Pakistan and Iran, i.e. without formal border checks and without the necessary travel documents. UNHCR estimates that between 200,000 and 300,000 people exited Afghanistan for Iran irregularly in 2024.¹⁸⁰ The following routes are frequently used:

- West of Herat, near the Islam Qala border crossing, migrants crawl under a border fence into Iran.¹⁸¹
- In Zaranj (Nimroz Province), migrants climb over a two-metre-high wall into Iran.¹⁸²
- The main route currently runs through a place referred to in sources as Rubat or Dak. It is located south of Zaranj near the Afghanistan-Pakistan-Iran border triangle. From there, migrants travel either to the Pakistani province of Balochistan and from there on to other parts of Pakistan or through a Pakistani desert area to Iran.¹⁸³
- Many Afghans continue to travel to Pakistan without a passport and visa through the informal Bahramcha border crossing.¹⁸⁴

However, for people who want to travel onward legally to Europe or North America (for example, as part of a family reunion), illegal entry into Pakistan is problematic, as it makes legally travelling onward impossible: when departing from the airport, it is checked whether a visa for Pakistan exists.¹⁸⁵

5. Situation after entry into Afghanistan

5.1. Reception structures

5.1.1. Land borders

For returnees from Pakistan and Iran, a reception infrastructure exists at major border crossings (Torkham, Spin Boldak, Rah-i Abrisham and Islam Qala; see map in [Chapter 4](#)). UNHCR and IOM are present, as well as local and foreign NGOs.¹⁸⁶ UNHCR is also present

¹⁷⁹ UNHCR, Geneva. Afghanistan: Border Monitoring Report - January-December 2024, 27.01.2025. p. 3. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-monitoring-report-january-december-2024> (13.02.2025).

¹⁸⁰ UNHCR, Geneva. Afghanistan: Border Monitoring Report - January-December 2024, 27.01.2025. p. 2. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-monitoring-report-january-december-2024> (13.02.2025).

¹⁸¹ Amnesty International, London. Afghanistan: "They don't treat us like humans": Unlawful returns of Afghans from Turkey and Iran, 31.08.2024, p. 13. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5897/2022/en/> (14.02.2025) / UNHCR, Geneva. Afghanistan: Border Monitoring Report - January-December 2024, 27.01.2025. p. 7. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-monitoring-report-january-december-2024> (13.02.2025).

¹⁸² Amnesty International, London. Afghanistan: "They don't treat us like humans": Unlawful returns of Afghans from Turkey and Iran, 31.08.2024, p. 13. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5897/2022/en/> (14.02.2025).

¹⁸³ Amnesty International, London. Afghanistan: "They don't treat us like humans": Unlawful returns of Afghans from Turkey and Iran, 31.08.2024, p. 13. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5897/2022/en/> (14.02.2025) / Reuter, Christoph, Munich. "Wir waren glücklich hier», Afghanistan nach dem Sieg der Taliban, Ein Roadtrip, 2023, p. 245-268 / UNHCR, Geneva. Afghanistan: Border Monitoring Report - January-December 2024, 27.01.2025. p. 7. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-monitoring-report-january-december-2024> (13.02.2025).

¹⁸⁴ UNHCR, Geneva. Afghanistan: Border Monitoring Report - January-December 2024, 27.01.2025. p. 7. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-monitoring-report-january-december-2024> (13.02.2025).

¹⁸⁵ Diplomatic source (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

¹⁸⁶ IOM, Geneva. Informal Border Crossing Points Rapid Assessment, 01.02.2024. https://afghanistan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1071/files/documents/2024-01/informal-bcp_2812.pdf (14.02.2025) / Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 139-140. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general->

at informal border crossings for monitoring purposes.¹⁸⁷ Since the start of the Pakistani Illegal Foreigners' Repatriation Plan, Taliban interim authorities have been trying to establish their own reception structures. They strive to treat returnees well, and there seems to be functional cooperation with international organisations and NGOs.¹⁸⁸ Most returnees stay at border reception points only for as long as is strictly necessary and then travel on to their destination.¹⁸⁹

The following services are offered at these reception points:

- **Registration:** The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) registers new arrivals.¹⁹⁰ UNHCR and IOM also register arrivals to coordinate the support services they are entitled to.¹⁹¹
- **Financial support:** Returnees from Pakistan receive support funds from international organisations upon their arrival. The amount depends on their previous status in Pakistan. Refugees who have had a Proof of Residence card¹⁹² in Pakistan fall under the UNHCR's jurisdiction and receive \$375 per person and another amount of money a few months later (depending on the source, \$75 per person or \$700 per family) as integration aid.¹⁹³ In a returnee survey, UNHCR found that this support was sufficient for one month for 35% of respondents, two to three months for 40%, and longer for 25%.¹⁹⁴ Since November 2023, returnees outside of voluntary return programmes for refugees organised by UNHCR have received a contribution of 20 USD per person and 140 USD per household.¹⁹⁵ As of 1 December 2024, returnees from Iran who previously had refugee status there (*Amayesh* card) also receive support from UNHCR in the same amount as those from Pakistan.¹⁹⁶ All returnees from Pakistan also receive support money from Afghan authorities. This amounts to 4000 AFN for families with two people and up to 10,000 AFN (approx. 145 CHF) for larger families.¹⁹⁷ Returnees

[country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023](#) (14.02.2025) / Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 6. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

¹⁸⁷ UNHCR, Geneva. Operational Update, Afghanistan / December 2024, 31.12.2024, p. 4.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/unhcr-afghanistan-operational-update-december-2024> (12.02.2025).

¹⁸⁸ Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 3, 8.

<https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025) / Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024. / Diplomatic source (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

¹⁸⁹ Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024.

¹⁹⁰ Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024. / Representative of an international organization (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024. / Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 3. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 26. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

¹⁹¹ Representative of an international organization (8). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 27.11.2024.

¹⁹² Detailed information on the different residence statuses of Afghan nationals in Pakistan: State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Bern-Wabern. Focus Pakistan: Rückkehr und Rückführung afghanischer Staatsangehöriger 2023-2024, 05.04.2024, Kapitel 2.2. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/internationales/herkunftslander/asien-nahost/pak/PAK-rueckfuehrungen-afg-2023-2024.pdf.download.pdf/PAK-rueckfuehrungen-afg-2023-2024.pdf> (14.02.2025).

¹⁹³ UNHCR Pakistan, Islamabad. CARE Package Information, ohne Datum. <https://help.unhcr.org/pakistan/information-regarding-voluntary-repatriation/care-package-information/> (14.02.2025) / U.S. Department of State, Washington. Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2023, 22.04.2024, p. 26. <https://www.state.gov/reports/2023-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/afghanistan/> (14.02.2025) / Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 140. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

¹⁹⁴ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 23.

<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

¹⁹⁵ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 22.

<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

¹⁹⁶ UNHCR, Geneva. Operational Update, Afghanistan / December 2024, 31.12.2024, p. 2.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/unhcr-afghanistan-operational-update-december-2024> (12.02.2025).

¹⁹⁷ Border Consortium. Emergency Border Operations, 15 September 2023 to 30 June 2024, 23.09.2024, p. 10. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-border-consortium-emergency-border-operations-15->

from Iran do not receive this financial support.¹⁹⁸ According to a media report from October 2024, families returning from Iran receive 2,000 AFN (approx. 25 CHF), while people travelling alone receive nothing.¹⁹⁹

- **Medicine:** The World Health Organization (WHO) provides basic medical services to returnees at the Torkham, Angoor Ada, Spin Boldak and Islam Qala border crossings, including medical consultations, treatment of infectious diseases and care for mothers and newborns.²⁰⁰ There are no hospitals or clinics at the border crossings, and usually no doctors are present.²⁰¹
- **Accommodation:** There are camps at the larger border crossings where returnees can stay temporarily and are provided with food.²⁰² Arrivals usually get something to eat as well.²⁰³ Some accommodations are right at the border crossing (Torkham), others a few kilometres away (Spin Boldak).²⁰⁴
- **SIM cards:** Returnees receive free SIM cards, three per family according to one source.²⁰⁵
- **Transport:** The authorities organise onward travel to the destination, usually by van or pick-up truck. They place a lot of importance on ensuring that returnees do not stay long at the border and quickly reach their destination.²⁰⁶ According to one source, people may also be sent to places they have no connection to.²⁰⁷ Despite these measures, reports describe long stays at the border.²⁰⁸

In Torkham, the main Afghanistan-Pakistan border crossing, there is a detention centre for repatriates with international aid organisations present (including the IOM and UNHCR). In cooperation with Afghan authorities, they offer accommodation, supplies and other services to new arrivals.²⁰⁹ Returnees stay there for a few days before transport to their destination within

[september-2023-30-june-2024](#) (14.02.2025). / Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024.

¹⁹⁸ Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 5.

<https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

¹⁹⁹ Dawn, Karachi. Driven out of Iran, Afghan refugees tell of ordeal, 02.10.2024.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1862580> (13.05.2024).

²⁰⁰ World Health Organization, New York. Saving lives, protecting the vulnerable and responding to life-threatening emergencies in Afghanistan - WHO Health Emergencies Programme report 2023, 15.09.2023, p. vii, 7, 18. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/saving-lives-protecting-vulnerable-and-responding-life-threatening-emergencies-afghanistan-who-health-emergencies-programme-report-2023> (14.02.2025).

²⁰¹ Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024.

²⁰² Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 3.

<https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 25. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

²⁰³ Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 139-140. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

²⁰⁴ Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024.

²⁰⁵ Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 3.

<https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

²⁰⁶ Consul of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Peshawar. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Diplomatic source (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024 / Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 3-5.

<https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 26. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

²⁰⁷ Diplomatic source (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024.

²⁰⁸ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: 'Packing up a life' in Pakistan and being forcibly returned to Afghanistan, 07.01.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/the-daily-hustle-packing-up-a-life-in-pakistan-and-being-forcibly-returned-to-afghanistan/> (14.02.2025).

²⁰⁹ Academic source from Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024 / Representative of the NGO SHARP Pakistan, Islamabad. Telephone Interview with Country Analysis SEM, 11.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad,

Afghanistan is organised.²¹⁰ In July 2024, an infrastructure flood caused major damage and destroyed 550 tents.²¹¹ Country Analysis SEM interlocutors in Islamabad who had returned to Afghanistan and later travelled to Pakistan again reported that reception structures in Torkham were not functioning in all respects, and there was not enough to eat as a result. The SIM card obtained was deactivated later as well. A man reported that he had to find and pay for accommodation himself, as well as for his onward travel to Kabul.²¹² According to other returnees, authorities at the border issued food cards that could not be redeemed later.²¹³

Afghan authorities and individual NGOs are usually present at informal border crossings with Pakistan (see [Chapter 4.2.](#)). At some of these border crossings, they offer services such as registration, medicine or accommodation. The infrastructure is significantly less elaborate than at official border crossings and not evenly developed in all places.²¹⁴

5.1.2. Airports

Returnees usually arrive at Kabul Airport. The reception desk was reopened here in October 2023 and is jointly operated by the Afghan Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation and IOM.²¹⁵ IOM provides support services to returnees in the areas of health, security, temporary housing (if needed) and food through this office as part of the Cross Border Post-Arrival Humanitarian Assistance (CB-PAHA) programme²¹⁶. IOM also helps them connect with their family and pays for transportation there. Until this is possible, returnees remain in IOM housing in Kabul for a few days.²¹⁷ Returnees from Turkey also receive financial support from IOM.²¹⁸

28.06.2024 / Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 3. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

²¹⁰ Academic source from Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024 / Representative of the NGO SHARP Pakistan, Islamabad. Telephone Interview with Country Analysis SEM, 11.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

²¹¹ UN OCHA, New York. Afghanistan: Humanitarian Update, July 2024, 10.09.2024, p. 1. <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-humanitarian-update-july-2024> (28.09.2024).

²¹² Representative of an international organization (4). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024.

²¹³ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025).

²¹⁴ IOM, Geneva. Informal Border Crossing Points Rapid Assessment, 01.02.2024. https://afghanistan.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1071/files/documents/2024-01/informal-bcp_2812.pdf (14.02.2025).

²¹⁵ Pajhwok, Kabul. Reception office at Kabul airport reopens to welcome returnees. 12.10.2023. <https://pajhwok.com/2023/10/12/reception-office-at-kabul-airport-reopens-to-welcome-returnees/> (14.02.2025) Khaama Press, Kabul. More than 3,000 migrants return to Afghanistan from Turkey in 20 days, 12.11.2023. https://www.khaama.com/more-than-3000-migrants-return-to-afghanistan-from-turkey-in-20-days/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter (14.02.2025).

²¹⁶ Cf. IOM, Geneva. Afghanistan - Flow Monitoring Snapshot (29 December 2024 - 04 January 2025), 09.01.2025, p. 9. <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/afghanistan-flow-monitoring-quarterly-report-4-october-december-2024-eng> (07.02.2025).

²¹⁷ IOM Afghanistan, Kabul. Message to Country Analysis SEM via Swiss Embassy in Pakistan, 14.02.2025.

²¹⁸ Khaama Press, Kabul. More than 3,000 migrants return to Afghanistan from Turkey in 20 days, 12.11.2023. https://www.khaama.com/more-than-3000-migrants-return-to-afghanistan-from-turkey-in-20-days/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter (14.02.2025).

IOM ended its Assisted Voluntary Return programmes for voluntary returnees from European countries in 2021 and has not resumed them since.²¹⁹ According to one source, many young men are left to fend for themselves once they leave the airport.²²⁰

5.2. Challenges after returning

5.2.1. Overview

In the discussions of Country Analysis SEM with returnees to Afghanistan, international organisations and diplomatic sources, as well as the publicly accessible sources consulted for this report, it is clear that returnees' greatest concern is making a living.²²¹ This applies not only to returnees, but also to the local population in Afghanistan.²²² Due to Afghanistan's declining economic performance and the influx of many returnees, jobs have disappeared, and competition in the labour market has increased.²²³ Returnees tend to be disadvantaged because they are less aware of local conditions due to their long absence from the country and do not have the same networks as people who have not left the country. There are other socio-economic concerns associated with this (see [Chapter 5.2.3.](#)). The socio-economic situation of returnees is usually worse than before they left.²²⁴

Only a small portion of interlocutors and public sources address concerns of attacks or persecution by Taliban interim authorities. These are mostly people with risk profiles (see [Chapter 5.2.4.](#)). It should be noted in this regard, however, that the vast majority of returnees had been staying in neighbouring countries or Turkey for economic reasons²²⁵, sometimes for a very long time, and therefore had little contact with the Taliban or did not have risk profiles. The findings presented below thus allow only very limited conclusions to be drawn about people with a risk profile.

5.2.2. Permanent residence

Permanent returnees from abroad usually choose one of the following options as their residence in Afghanistan:²²⁶

²¹⁹ IOM Afghanistan, Kabul. Message to Country Analysis SEM via Swiss Embassy in Pakistan, 14.02.2025 / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 34. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025). / EUAA, Malta. Afghanistan – Country Focus. November 2024, p. 44. https://coi.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2024_11_EUAA_COI_Report_Afghanistan_Country_Focus.pdf (13.02.2024).

²²⁰ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 30. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

²²¹ Cf. UN OCHA, New York. Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan, 23.01.2023, p. 46. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-january-2023> (04-10.2024) / ACAPS. Understanding the key human safety and security issues that returnees to Afghanistan are facing, 16.08.2024, p. 3-4. https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240815_ACAPS_AFGHANISTAN_-_Key_human_safety_and_security_issues_01.pdf (14.02.2025). / Deutsche Welle, Bonn. Iran: Kooperation mit Taliban bei Abschiebung von Afghanen. 28.01.2025. <https://www.dw.com/de/iran-kooperation-mit-taliban-bei-abschiebung-von-afghanen/a-71433027> (11.02.2025).

²²² UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 41. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²²³ State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Bern-Wabern. Focus Afghanistan: Sozioökonomische Lage, Kapitel 2 und 3, 11.12.2024. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/internationales/herkunftslander/asien-nahost/afg/AFG-sozio-oekonomische-lage-d.pdf.download.pdf/AFG-sozio-oekonomische-lage-d.pdf> (05.02.2025). / UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 37. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²²⁴ Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 142. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

²²⁵ Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 5. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

²²⁶ Diplomatic source (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Embassy of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 /

- the family's original place of origin
- a nearby city where the same ethnic group lives
- a larger city which they have no connection to

Which of these options they choose depends on their assessment of where their prospects of being able to earn a living are best.²²⁷ This has to be decided individually. Returnees from Pakistan, for example, have often spent several decades outside Afghanistan or were even born there. Many of them therefore no longer have any connection to their region of origin and do not have a network there that would make reintegration easier for them, nor do they have houses or land. They are on their own when looking for a place to live in Afghanistan and are often overwhelmed.²²⁸ Only 18% of returnees from Pakistan surveyed by UNHCR were able to return to their own homes; 62% lived in rented flats, with more than half unable to pay their rent.²²⁹ Other studies also showed that only 17 to 33% of returnees from Pakistan had accommodations in Afghanistan to return to.²³⁰ In the province of Nangarhar, the increased demand for housing from returnees from Pakistan led to a sharp increase in rental prices.²³¹

89% of returnees from Pakistan interviewed by UNHCR have settled in one of the following seven provinces: Nangarhar, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Helmand, Balkh and Laghman. 12% stated that they had not returned to their originally intended province. 96% of respondents intended to stay in their current place of residence.²³² 68% of them travelled to their home province, but only 44% to their home district. Most of those who did not return to their place of origin explained this by stating that they had no access to housing, land or work there.²³³

Returnees from Turkey and Iran, on the other hand, are often young people who have previously spent a few months or years on their own abroad and therefore usually return to their families. Nevertheless, there is often pressure to migrate again.²³⁴ When young returnees intend to stay in Afghanistan, they often prefer larger cities rather than their region of origin.²³⁵ There are also returnees from Iran who have spent many years there and therefore face similar challenges as those from Pakistan.²³⁶

Some returnees actually have family members in their place of origin, but these relatives do not have land to give them or have no means to support additional people. They often have no work themselves. As a result, establishing permanent residence with them is often not an

Representative of an international organization (5). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024.

²²⁷ Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025).

²²⁸ Diplomatic source (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (8). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 27.11.2024 / Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 5. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025). / UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 35. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²²⁹ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 36. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²³⁰ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025).

²³¹ Khaama Press, Kabul. Surge in returning Afghan refugees leads to rent increases in Nangarhar, 06.11.2023. <https://www.khaama.com/surge-in-returning-afghan-refugees-leads-to-rent-increases-in-nangarhar/> (06.02.2024).

²³² UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 19. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²³³ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 19-20. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²³⁴ Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024.

²³⁵ Representative of an international organization (8). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 27.11.2024

²³⁶ Representative of an international organization (9). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 27.11.2024

option.²³⁷ In some places, Taliban authorities are seeking to provide returnees with a piece of land to cultivate.²³⁸

When returnees have no options in their place of origin, they often go to larger cities.²³⁹ Some of them stay there with acquaintances or relatives²⁴⁰, but many are left on their own. Others had already left their places of origin for a city before leaving for Afghanistan and are therefore more likely to return to this city.²⁴¹ According to one source, not all Afghan nationals are able to settle in Kabul, as the Taliban interim authorities are restricting residence in the capital.²⁴²

In a survey by Save the Children, 38% of returnees surveyed reported living in their own home, 36% among relatives, 16% in tents, and 9% in rental homes.²⁴³ Returnees' ancestral homes are often in need of repair due to their long absence and do not provide enough heating in winter.²⁴⁴

5.2.3. Socio-economic situation

This chapter refers exclusively to specific socio-economic challenges for returnees to Afghanistan. The general socio-economic situation is described in the topical report "Afghanistan: Socio-economic situation".²⁴⁵ In many of the following challenges mentioned by returnees, it is crucial whether or not they can count on a social network.²⁴⁶

- Nearly all sources and interlocutors of Country Analysis SEM cite the difficulty of **being able to earn a living** as the greatest challenge.²⁴⁷ The dried up labour market for both skilled and unskilled urban workers makes it difficult for newcomers to find work. Some

²³⁷ Diplomatic source (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (5). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / UN OCHA, New York. Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan, 23.01.2023, p. 46. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-january-2023> (04-10.2024) / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025).

²³⁸ Academic source from Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024 / Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 5. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

²³⁹ Representative of an international organization (5). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024.

²⁴⁰ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: My life as a refugee – and choosing to return home, 20.01.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/the-daily-hustle-my-life-as-a-refugee-and-choosing-to-return-home/> (14.02.2025).

²⁴¹ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024.

²⁴² Diplomatic source (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024.

²⁴³ Save the Children, London. From Pakistan to Afghanistan: Assessing the needs of returnees and their host communities, December 2023, p. 10. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Afghanistan-Tracer-Assessment-final2-1.pdf> (14.02.2025).

²⁴⁴ UN OCHA, New York. Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan, 23.01.2023, p. 46. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-january-2023> (04-10.2024).

²⁴⁵ State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Bern-Wabern. Focus Afghanistan: Sozioökonomische Lage, 11.12.2024. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/internationales/herkunftslaender/asien-nahost/afg/AFG-sozio-oekonomische-lage-d.pdf.download.pdf/AFG-sozio-oekonomische-lage-d.pdf> (05.02.2025).

²⁴⁶ Danish Refugee Council, Copenhagen. Afghanistan conference. The Human Rights Situation after August 2021, 28.11.2022, p. 47. <https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/13vhsflb/drc-afghanistan-conference-report-28nov2022.pdf> (14.02.2025).

²⁴⁷ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of the NGO SHARP Pakistan, Islamabad. Telephone Interview with Country Analysis SEM, 11.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (5). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / ACAPS. Understanding the key human safety and security issues that returnees to Afghanistan are facing, 16.08.2024, p. 3. https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data/Product/Main_media/20240815_ACAPS_AFGHANISTAN_-_Key_human_safety_and_security_issues_01.pdf (14.02.2025) / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025).

professions such as musicians or artists are also prohibited.²⁴⁸ Networking is often necessary to access jobs. Many returnees do not have this, especially if they no longer have family members in Afghanistan.²⁴⁹ Some returnees cannot afford the tools necessary for jobs with daily wages.²⁵⁰ In a survey by Save the Children, 22% of returnees surveyed said they worked as day labourers, 16% had a job, 6% in each case worked in agriculture or opened their own business, while 47% said they had no job opportunities.²⁵¹ Among the returnees from Pakistan surveyed by UNHCR, 58% had a job (64% of men, 35% of women), two-thirds of them as day labourers. Most earned between 1,500 and 10,000 AFN (approx. 20 to 120 CHF) per month.²⁵² Even if family networks exist, some of them have no capacity to support other people.²⁵³ In rural areas, it is often not possible to reallocate land for farming to families that have not been there for decades.²⁵⁴ People who return to Afghanistan after a relatively short time abroad often still have debt due to the cost of their migration.²⁵⁵ Some returnees are unable to make a living, so they use up their savings first and then leave the country again (see [Chapter 5.4](#)).²⁵⁶ Others take out loans or borrow money from relatives abroad.²⁵⁷ 75% of returnees surveyed by UNHCR said they were in debt.²⁵⁸ Only 17% had access to support services provided primarily by UNHCR, the World Food Programme and Afghan authorities.²⁵⁹

- Given the difficulty of being able to earn a living, some returnees also report problems with the **food supply**. However, 80% of returnees from Pakistan interviewed by UNHCR said they had access to sufficient food and three meals a day.²⁶⁰

²⁴⁸ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: 'Packing up a life' in Pakistan and being forcibly returned to Afghanistan, 07.01.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/the-daily-hustle-packing-up-a-life-in-pakistan-and-being-forcibly-returned-to-afghanistan/> (14.02.2025) / ACAPS. Understanding the key human safety and security issues that returnees to Afghanistan are facing, 16.08.2024. p. 3. https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240815_ACAPS_AFGHANISTAN_-_Key_human_safety_and_security_issues_01.pdf (14.02.2025) / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025).

²⁴⁹ ACAPS. Understanding the key human safety and security issues that returnees to Afghanistan are facing, 16.08.2024, p. 3. https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240815_ACAPS_AFGHANISTAN_-_Key_human_safety_and_security_issues_01.pdf (14.02.2025). / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024

²⁵⁰ ACAPS. Understanding the key human safety and security issues that returnees to Afghanistan are facing, 16.08.2024, p. 3. https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240815_ACAPS_AFGHANISTAN_-_Key_human_safety_and_security_issues_01.pdf (14.02.2025).

²⁵¹ Save the Children, London. From Pakistan to Afghanistan: Assessing the needs of returnees and their host communities, December 2023, p. 11. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Afghanistan-Tracer-Assessment-final2-1.pdf/> (14.02.2025).

²⁵² UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 38-39. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²⁵³ Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

²⁵⁴ Representative of an international organization (5). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024.

²⁵⁵ UN OCHA, New York. Humanitarian Needs Overview Afghanistan, 23.01.2023, p. 46. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-humanitarian-needs-overview-2023-january-2023> (04-10.2024) / Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 142. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

²⁵⁶ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024.

²⁵⁷ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025).

²⁵⁸ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 42. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²⁵⁹ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 50. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²⁶⁰ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 33. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

- A specific problem for people returning from Pakistan is the fact that Pakistani authorities **confiscate** part of their property when they cross the border that is important for their livelihood (e.g. vehicles, livestock, household goods). For this reason, many of these people have already sold these goods before leaving, but hastily and therefore sometimes well below their actual value. Subsequently acquiring them new in Afghanistan is more expensive.²⁶¹ In a survey by NGO *Save the Children*, 31% of returnees in Spin Boldak and 12% of returnees in Torkham said their goods had been confiscated at the border.²⁶² In the case of repatriations from Iran, it is reported that these people had to pay for their trip themselves or that excessive prices were charged for it, on average 70 USD²⁶³, and that they had to pay fines for the time they had illegally spent in Iran.²⁶⁴
- Access to **housing** is particularly difficult for returnees who do not settle in their place of origin (see [Chapter 5.2.2.](#)). The primary problem is that they cannot afford it. Returnees who return to their places of origin find their land partially occupied. Due to these difficulties, some returnees are currently living in tents or in IDP settlements.²⁶⁵
- Access to **education** is often difficult. Girls and women generally do not have access to secondary and higher education.²⁶⁶ Primary school attendance for girls and all school classes for boys require registration with the local authorities, which is often not possible immediately after return due to a lack of documents.²⁶⁷ 62% of returnees surveyed by *Save the Children* stated that their children do not attend school – in most cases due to lack of registration.²⁶⁸ Among returnees from Pakistan surveyed by UNHCR, 35% mentioned that they do not have the same access to school education as the local population.²⁶⁹ In some places, however, it is the lack of schools that

²⁶¹ Academic source from Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / ACAPS. Understanding the key human safety and security issues that returnees to Afghanistan are facing, 16.08.2024. p. 3. https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240815_ACAPS_AFGHANISTAN_-_Key_human_safety_and_security_issues_01.pdf (14.02.2025) / Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 6. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

²⁶² Save the Children, London. From Pakistan to Afghanistan: Assessing the needs of returnees and their host communities, December 2023, p. 10. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Afghanistan-Tracer-Assessment-final2-1.pdf/> (14.02.2025).

²⁶³ Amnesty International, London. Afghanistan: "They don't treat us like humans": Unlawful returns of Afghans from Turkey and Iran, 31.08.2024, p. 35. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa11/5897/2022/en/> (14.02.2025).

²⁶⁴ Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 139. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

²⁶⁵ Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 7. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025) / ACAPS. Understanding the key human safety and security issues that returnees to Afghanistan are facing, 16.08.2024. p. 5, 8. https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240815_ACAPS_AFGHANISTAN_-_Key_human_safety_and_security_issues_01.pdf (14.02.2025) / Save the Children, London. From Pakistan to Afghanistan: Assessing the needs of returnees and their host communities, December 2023, p. 10. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Afghanistan-Tracer-Assessment-final2-1.pdf/> (14.02.2025).

²⁶⁶ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

²⁶⁷ Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / ACAPS. Understanding the key human safety and security issues that returnees to Afghanistan are facing, 16.08.2024. p. 6. https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240815_ACAPS_AFGHANISTAN_-_Key_human_safety_and_security_issues_01.pdf (14.02.2025).

²⁶⁸ Save the Children, London. From Pakistan to Afghanistan: Assessing the needs of returnees and their host communities, December 2023, p. 17. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/Afghanistan-Tracer-Assessment-final2-1.pdf/> (14.02.2025).

²⁶⁹ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, October 2024, p. 25. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

matters.²⁷⁰ Difficult access to education means that girls are often married underage and sometimes under duress, and that boys work as child labour.²⁷¹

- Interlocutors and sources describe the difficult access to **health care**. Returnees often have special medical needs (e.g. in the field of mental health) that are difficult to access treatment for in Afghanistan.²⁷² One-third of returnees from Pakistan interviewed by UNHCR said that their household members did not have access to medical care during the past year if needed.²⁷³
- Returnees without **identity documents** may have difficulty obtaining them or re-registering, especially if they are not settling in their original place of origin.²⁷⁴ According to one source, registration is only possible at the place of origin, where a village elder must confirm the identity.²⁷⁵ Returnees often lack knowledge of the bureaucratic processes to obtain documents. Costs also play a role. In 91% of returnee households surveyed by UNHCR, the head had a Tazkira, but in 75% of households, at least one family member did not have a Tazkira.²⁷⁶
- Many Afghan nationals who have spent a long time abroad or were born there are **unfamiliar** with the circumstances in Afghanistan and are struggling to integrate. In the years of their absence from the country, a lot has changed there.²⁷⁷
- Returnees from Europe are often **stigmatised** in Afghan society because people who have remained in Afghanistan consider them to have "failed " or "given up".²⁷⁸ They are sometimes considered to be "corrupted" by Western influences as well, which leads to distrust.²⁷⁹

People repatriated from Turkey and Germany by air are also primarily concerned about their ability to earn a living. A returnee from Turkey interviewed by Afghan online channel *Watandar Plus* reported: "I had to go somewhere to work. I had no other choice. (...) I was out of the country for a total of 3-4 months. I came back yesterday. I've been running around looking for

²⁷⁰ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025).

²⁷¹ ACAPS. Understanding the key human safety and security issues that returnees to Afghanistan are facing, 16.08.2024, p. 4. https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240815_ACAPS_AFGHANISTAN_-_Key_human_safety_and_security_issues_01.pdf (14.02.2025).

²⁷² Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / ACAPS. Understanding the key human safety and security issues that returnees to Afghanistan are facing, 16.08.2024, p. 5. https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240815_ACAPS_AFGHANISTAN_-_Key_human_safety_and_security_issues_01.pdf (14.02.2025).

²⁷³ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, October 2024, p. 28-29. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²⁷⁴ Representative of an international organization (4). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024. / ACAPS. Understanding the key human safety and security issues that returnees to Afghanistan are facing, 16.08.2024, p. 6. https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240815_ACAPS_AFGHANISTAN_-_Key_human_safety_and_security_issues_01.pdf (14.02.2025).

²⁷⁵ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 30. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

²⁷⁶ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, October 2024, p. 45. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²⁷⁷ Diplomatic source (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024 / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of the NGO SHARP Pakistan, Islamabad. Telephone Interview with Country Analysis SEM, 11.07.2024.

²⁷⁸ Diplomatic source (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / EUAA, Malta. Afghanistan – Country Focus, December 2023, p. 100. https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_12_EUAA_COI_Report_Afghanistan_Country_Focus.pdf (14.02.2025) / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. The Daily Hustle: My life as a refugee – and choosing to return home, 20.01.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/the-daily-hustle-my-life-as-a-refugee-and-choosing-to-return-home/> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 37. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

²⁷⁹ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 37. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

work ever since. I found that there is no work. What should I do?"²⁸⁰ A man repatriated from Germany said that he no longer had any close relatives in Afghanistan, so he saw no future for himself in Afghanistan and was now trying to reach his family members outside Afghanistan.²⁸¹ The Swiss newspaper "Blick" contacted a person in Kabul repatriated from Switzerland who stated that he had not found work and was borrowing money from acquaintances instead.²⁸²

5.2.4. Problems with the Taliban

As documented in [Chapter 4](#), there is no evidence of arrests or abuse by the Taliban during returnees' entry into Afghanistan either by air or by land.²⁸³ Longer-term trends at the actual destination, on the other hand, are more difficult to assess, although monitoring of 4,220 returnees by UNHCR is now providing some information. In this case, 98% of respondents said they had not experienced any physical security issues upon their return.²⁸⁴ The Country Analysis SEM has not found any evidence of systematic persecution or harassment of returnees in the course of this research. It assumes that the sources consulted for this report would have otherwise reported this. Instead, most sources agree that the Taliban generally treat returnees well, and that there is no specific persecution against them solely because they are returnees.²⁸⁵

Nevertheless, there are indications that such attacks occur occasionally or that returnees are afraid of them:

- 4% of returnees surveyed in the course of monitoring claimed to UNHCR that they needed protection from political persecution.²⁸⁶
- Two sources for the Country Analysis SEM in Kabul mentioned that they were aware of arrests of returnees belonging to a risk group (see below) or being a family member to such a person. Taliban officials also made visits to their homes.²⁸⁷ The UNHCR monitoring report also indicates attacks against such people, who are thus still at risk of torture, abuse and other injuries.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁰ Watandar Plus, Kabul. «اخراج بی رحمانه دختر خانم های افغان از کشور ترکیه / اما چرا [Afghan girls brutally deported from Turkey / but why?], 03.09.2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gSZG6Bq08Xk> (14.02.2025).

²⁸¹ ARD-Tagesschau, Berlin. Was mit den Abgeschobenen passiert ist, 14.02.2025.

<https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/asien/abgeschobene-afghanen-100.html> (14.02.2025).

²⁸² Blick, Zurich. «Ich habe Angst, ich will zurück in die Schweiz.» 01.12.2024. <https://www.blick.ch/schweiz/ausgeschaffter-afghane-meldet-sich-aus-kabul-ich-habe-angst-ich-will-zurueck-in-die-schweiz-id20369083.html> (11.02.2025).

²⁸³ Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of the NGO SHARP Pakistan, Islamabad. Telephone Interview with Country Analysis SEM, 11.07.2024 / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 34-35. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

²⁸⁴ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, October 2024, p. 43. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

²⁸⁵ Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Diplomatic source (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of the NGO SHARP Pakistan, Islamabad. Telephone Interview with Country Analysis SEM, 11.07.2024 / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 32-37. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025) / Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 140. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025) / Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024. <https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025).

²⁸⁶ UNHCR, Geneva. Pakistan-Afghanistan - Returns Emergency Response (as of 6 February 2025), 07.02.2025. p. 4. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/pakistan-afghanistan-returns-emergency-response-6-february-2025> (12.02.2025).

²⁸⁷ Representative of an international organization (6). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 24.11.2024 / Representative of an international organization (8). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 27.11.2024.

²⁸⁸ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, October 2024, p. 43. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

- Individual assaults are documented for people who have returned in consultation with the "Commission for the Return of and Communications with Former Afghan Officials and Political Figures".²⁸⁹ Unknown gunmen killed one of these returnees, a former anti-Taliban leader, in northern Afghanistan in June 2023.²⁹⁰ In March 2023, Taliban justice authorities arrested returning former parliament member Allah Gul Mujahid and accused him of murder. His whereabouts have been unknown ever since.²⁹¹ Some of these returnees have left the country for fear of their safety.²⁹²
- *Human Rights Watch* reported on a person repatriated from Turkey whose family the Taliban had visited two days after his return and questioned about the reason for his return. He was not there at the time and left Afghanistan again immediately afterwards.²⁹³
- One returnee told the Country Analysis SEM that after arriving in Afghanistan, his brothers who served in the army before the Taliban takeover never left the house. Because one of their comrades had been killed by the Taliban, they too were afraid.²⁹⁴ Another returnee stated that he had lived undisturbed in Kabul for several months. But one day, he was beaten up by four strangers at a market, after which he left the country again.²⁹⁵
- An Afghan in Pakistan said he would be killed by the Taliban if he returned, but could not explain the reasons. Many Afghans are in the same situation, he said.²⁹⁶
- One Hazara returnee reported to the Country Analysis SEM that she had been arrested by the Taliban at an informal border crossing after being repatriated from Pakistan and later raped. She attributed this to her ethnicity; Pashtun women arrested together with her had not been raped.²⁹⁷
- According to one source, people may have problems if the Taliban considers them "instruments of Western influence." They would not be killed, but rather intimidated.²⁹⁸

These cases tend to be individual acts of revenge and individual attacks by Taliban interim authorities that mainly, if not exclusively, concern risk profiles^{299, 300}. A connection to a state function before the Taliban took power is not always clear. According to Country Analysis SEM interlocutors, former security staff, high-ranking officials or politicians, journalists and human

²⁸⁹ EUAA, Malta. Afghanistan – Country Focus. November 2024. p. 44. https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2024_11_EUAA_COI_Report_Afghanistan_Country_Focus.pdf (13.02.2024).

²⁹⁰ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Kabul. The Azadi Briefing: Fear, Disillusionment Undermine Taliban's Efforts To Woo Exiled Former Afghan Officials, 28.07.2024. <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-woos-former-officials/32524328.html> (14.02.2025).

²⁹¹ Amu TV, Virginia. Ex-MP Shahpoor Hassanzoi in Taliban custody for past four days: Source, 29.09.2024. <https://amu.tv/126768/> (14.02.2025).

²⁹² Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Kabul. The Azadi Briefing: Fear, Disillusionment Undermine Taliban's Efforts To Woo Exiled Former Afghan Officials, 28.07.2024. <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-woos-former-officials/32524328.html> (14.02.2025).

²⁹³ Human Rights Watch, New York. "No One Asked Me Why I Left Afghanistan", Pushbacks and Deportations of Afghans from Turkey, November 2022, p. 50. https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2022/11/turkey1122_web.pdf (14.02.2025).

²⁹⁴ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024.

²⁹⁵ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024.

²⁹⁶ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024.

²⁹⁷ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024.

²⁹⁸ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 35. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

²⁹⁹ Cf. State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Bern-Wabern. Focus Afghanistan: Verfolgung durch Taliban: Potentielle Risikogruppen, 15.02.2022, Kapitel 3. <https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/de/data/internationales/herkunftslaender/asien-nahost/afg/AFG-risikoprofile-taliban-d.pdf.download.pdf/AFG-risikoprofile-taliban-d.pdf> (14.02.2025).

³⁰⁰ Representative of an international organization (6). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 24.11.2024 / Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 140. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

rights activists are particularly afraid.³⁰¹ It is important for people with these profiles to act unobtrusively. Some hide and/or try to leave the country quickly.³⁰² However, there is no evidence of systematic prosecution of such profiles by Taliban interim authorities.³⁰³

Taliban interim authorities generally have little background information about people returning.³⁰⁴ They are unable to track and monitor all returnees. Village elders in villages, on the other hand, always know who has returned. However, according to one source, such information is unlikely to reach Taliban interim government authorities in Kabul.³⁰⁵

The situation has generally deteriorated for women since the Taliban took power, not specifically for returnees. If women and girls return to Afghanistan, it means that they lose rights they had outside the country. This applies, for example, to women who worked abroad or girls who attended schools. Many Afghan families do not want to return to Afghanistan because they do not want to deprive female family members of these opportunities.³⁰⁶ Two-thirds of female returnees interviewed by UNHCR said they were concerned about the restrictions placed on women there.³⁰⁷

5.2.5. Double jeopardy

Since taking power, the Taliban have claimed to follow Islamic law (Sharia) in all legal matters.³⁰⁸ The Hanafi legal school used by the Taliban prohibits double jeopardy.³⁰⁹ Taliban representatives explicitly commented on this issue for the first time after the return of 28 criminals from Germany. According to Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen, Afghanistan checks whether there is an entry in the Afghan criminal register when criminals are transferred from abroad. The person is brought before a judge only if this is the case; otherwise, they are

³⁰¹ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (6). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 24.11.2024 / Representative of an international organization (8). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 27.11.2024 / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 33, 35. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

³⁰² Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024. / Representative of an international organization (8). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 27.11.2024.

³⁰³ Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 140. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 32-37. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025) / Academic source from Kabul. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 27.06.2024.

³⁰⁴ EUAA, Malta. Afghanistan – Country Focus, December 2023, p. 99. https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2023_12_EUAA_COI_Report_Afghanistan_Country_Focus.pdf (14.02.2025). / EUAA, Malta. Afghanistan – Country Focus. November 2024. p. 45. https://coi.euaa.europa.eu/administration/easo/PLib/2024_11_EUAA_COI_Report_Afghanistan_Country_Focus.pdf (13.02.2024).

³⁰⁵ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 34-35. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

³⁰⁶ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

³⁰⁷ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 43. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

³⁰⁸ Z.B. CNN, New York. Taliban to impose their interpretation of Sharia law in Afghanistan, 15.11.2022. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/11/15/asia/taliban-afghanistan-sharia-law-intl-hnk/index.html> (14.02.2025).

³⁰⁹ Khalegi, Ali und Ahmadi, Mohammad Arif, Teheran. قاعده منع محاکمه مجدد در نظام حقوقی افغانستان، اسناد بینالمللی حقوق بشر و [The Principle of ne bis in idem in Afghan Legal System, International Instruments and Hanafi Jurisprudence], in: Criminal law and Criminology Studies, 3(1), 2016, p. 63-91. https://jqqlcs.ut.ac.ir/article_62410.html?lang=en (14.02.2025).

released.³¹⁰ However, studies show that the jurisprudence of Afghan courts under the Taliban is inconsistent and sometimes arbitrary.³¹¹

A lawyer in Kabul contacted by the Austrian state documentation service also noted that the Taliban did not have a uniform approach in such matters. It depends rather on the specific person or their office and the offence. He considers it conceivable that Taliban courts will, under certain circumstances, impose a new conviction under Sharia law after a conviction has already been made abroad. However, there is no exchange of information with foreign countries, which is why the Taliban usually do not learn about crimes committed abroad. He was not aware of any cases in which the Taliban had re-convicted criminals in Afghanistan who were convicted and committed their crimes abroad.³¹² One diplomatic source interviewed by the Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad said that they had interviewed Taliban representatives in Kabul about the issue of double punishment, and that they had declared that they would not punish people again who had already been punished. International contacts in Kabul have confirmed that they are not aware of any such cases. However, they related that there are only a few possible cases anyway, and that it could also depend on the type of offence.³¹³ As assessed by UNAMA, it cannot be ruled out that returnees who have committed crimes related to Afghanistan abroad may become victims of acts of revenge. A new conviction by Taliban courts is not ruled out if they learn of the case.³¹⁴

One of the few known examples of the Taliban interim government's dealings with criminals who have already been punished is the 28 men repatriated from Germany. They had been convicted in Germany of the following offences: murder, manslaughter, assault, hazardous bodily harm, rape, crimes against sexual self-choice such as the sexual abuse of children, robbery, and high-level arson.³¹⁵ Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen told *Focus Online* that after thorough investigations, Afghan authorities had determined that there were no criminal proceedings against them in Afghanistan. Since this was not the case, they were released. However, Germany did not share any information about crimes committed with Afghan authorities.³¹⁶ A report by ZDF (Second German Television) deviates from this slightly by stating that the Taliban consider "many of the acts to be non-punitive,"³¹⁷ while "Spiegel" describes them as "not relevant."³¹⁸ An expert contacted by *Augsburger Allgemeine* assumed that the Taliban had declared vis-à-vis Germany to "waive the death penalty for the 28 offenders".³¹⁹ A criminal contacted by "Blick" who had been repatriated from Switzerland was free two months after entering Afghanistan.³²⁰

³¹⁰ Focus Online, Berlin. Nach Abschiebung von Kriminellen macht Taliban-Sprecher Ansage an Deutschland, 16.09.2024. https://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/soleil-shahin-im-interview-nach-abschiebung-von-kriminellen-macht-taliban-sprecher-ansage-an-deutschland_id_260315659.html (14.02.2025).

³¹¹ Rawadari, Kabul. Justice Denied: An Examination of the Legal and Judicial System in Taliban-Controlled Afghanistan, Juni 2023. https://rawadari.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/RW_Rule-of-Law-Report-English.pdf (14.02.2025).

³¹² Staatendokumentation BFA, Vienna. Anfragebeantwortung zu Afghanistan: Doppelbestrafung, Strafrechtspraxis, 09.09.2024. / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 23. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

³¹³ Diplomatic source (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024.

³¹⁴ Staatendokumentation BFA, Vienna. Country Report Afghanistan, Chapter Return, extract from COI-CMS, Version 12 of 31.01.2025.

³¹⁵ Bundestag Germany, Berlin. Drucksache 20/13352, 15.10.2024. p. 2. <https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/20/133/2013352.pdf> (11.02.2025).

³¹⁶ Focus Online, Berlin. Nach Abschiebung von Kriminellen macht Taliban-Sprecher Ansage an Deutschland, 16.09.2024. https://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/soleil-shahin-im-interview-nach-abschiebung-von-kriminellen-macht-taliban-sprecher-ansage-an-deutschland_id_260315659.html (14.02.2025).

³¹⁷ ZDF, Mainz. Abgeschobene Straftäter teils auf freiem Fuß, 06.09.2024. <https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/politik/ausland/afghanistan-taliban-abschiebung-straftaeter-100.html> (14.02.2025).

³¹⁸ Spiegel, Hamburg. Taliban lassen aus Deutschland abgeschobene Straftäter schon wieder frei. 06.09.2024. <https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/afghanistan-taliban-lassen-aus-deutschland-abgeschobene-straftaeter-wieder-frei-a-1181ca8f-23fc-4af9-bb2d-c49062f09c0c> (13.02.2025).

³¹⁹ Augsburger Allgemeine, Augsburg. Fassungslosigkeit in Afghanistan nach Abschiebeflug aus Deutschland, 16.09.2024. <https://www.augsburger-allgemeine.de/politik/politik-wie-afghanistan-auf-deutschlands-umstrittene-abschiebefluege-und-handgeld-reagiert-103015750> (14.02.2025).

³²⁰ Blick, Zurich. «Ich habe Angst, ich will zurück in die Schweiz.» 01.12.2024. <https://www.blick.ch/schweiz/ausgeschaffter-afghane-meldet-sich-aus-kabul-ich-habe-angst-ich-will-zurueck-in-die-schweiz-id20369083.html> (11.02.2025).

Iran transferred around 2,000 criminals to Afghanistan in 2023. At that time, however, they had not yet served their full sentence. The purpose of the transfer was rather for them to serve their sentence in Afghan prisons.³²¹ Around 800 of them were apparently detained after their arrival in Afghanistan, but later released due to a pardon by the Taliban Emir.³²²

5.3. Situation of temporary returnees

Many Afghan nationals residing abroad occasionally travel to Afghanistan for a few weeks or months and then return to their places of residence. Most of these travels are for family visits, business interests, or to manage property in Afghanistan.³²³ People who often travel abroad from Afghanistan report that many Afghan families have always travelled from abroad on international flights to and from Kabul.³²⁴ Since the Taliban took power, the security situation in Afghanistan has improved significantly. As a result, areas that were previously difficult to reach have become accessible for visits.³²⁵ Temporary stays by such visitors are usually unproblematic.³²⁶ Unlike permanent returnees (see [Chapter 3.2.3.](#)), they are not treated with distrust and stigmatised.³²⁷

Since the Taliban took power, international tourism to Afghanistan has increased. In 2021, 691 foreign tourists travelled to Afghanistan; there were 2,300 in 2022 and as many as 7,000 in 2023.³²⁸ In May 2024, three Spanish tourists and their Afghan escort were killed in an ISKP attack in Bamyán.³²⁹ Apart from this, tourist trips seem to be largely free of complications, although travel warnings from European foreign ministries continue to exist.³³⁰

³²¹ UNAMA, Kabul. UNAMA Human Rights Update: February - April 2023, 09.05.2024. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/unama-human-rights-update-february-april-2023-endarips> (14.02.2025) / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 23. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

³²² CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 23. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

³²³ Danish Refugee Council, Copenhagen. Afghanistan conference. The Human Rights Situation after August 2021, 28.11.2022, p. 42. <https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/13vhsflb/drc-afghanistan-conference-report-28nov2022.pdf> (14.02.2025). / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 29. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025). / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Back to the Village: Afghan city dwellers go home for a long-over-due visit, 25.04.2023. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/context-culture/back-to-the-village-afghan-city-dwellers-go-home-for-a-long-over-due-visit/> (14.02.2025) / Government of the Netherlands, Den Haag. General Country of Origin Report Afghanistan (June 2023), 30.06.2023, p. 140. <https://www.government.nl/documents/reports/2023/06/30/general-country-of-origin-report-afghanistan-june-2023> (14.02.2025).

³²⁴ Landinfo, Oslo. Query response Afghanistan: Departures and returns after Taliban's takeover of power, 29.09.2022, p. 5. <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Query-response-Afghanistan-Departure-and-return-after-the-Talibans-takeover-of-power-29092022.pdf> (14.02.2025). / Danish Refugee Council, Copenhagen. Afghanistan conference. The Human Rights Situation after August 2021, 28.11.2022, p. 42. <https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/13vhsflb/drc-afghanistan-conference-report-28nov2022.pdf> (14.02.2025). / Middle East Eye, London. On an Istanbul-Kabul flight, refugees and emigres prepare to see a new Afghanistan, 01.06.2022. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/afghanistan-istanbul-kabul-flight-refugees-emigres-prepare> (14.02.2025). / CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 29. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

³²⁵ Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Back to the Village: Afghan city dwellers go home for a long-over-due visit, 25.04.2023. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/context-culture/back-to-the-village-afghan-city-dwellers-go-home-for-a-long-over-due-visit/> (14.02.2025).

³²⁶ CEDOCA, Brussels. Migration movements of Afghans since the Taliban takeover of power, 14.12.2023, p. 35, 37. <https://www.cgrs.be/en/country-information/migration-movements-afghans-taliban-takeover-power> (14.02.2025).

³²⁷ Danish Refugee Council, Copenhagen. Afghanistan conference. The Human Rights Situation after August 2021, 28.11.2022, p. 41-42. <https://asyl.drc.ngo/media/13vhsflb/drc-afghanistan-conference-report-28nov2022.pdf> (14.02.2025).

³²⁸ AP, New York. The Taliban are working to woo tourists to Afghanistan, 30.04.2024. <https://apnews.com/article/afghanistan-taliban-tourism-women-7acb04bb78dd779e763a337790113cec> (23.07.2024). / Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Prag. Taliban Tourism 'Distorting The Truth' In Afghanistan. 01.10.2024. <https://www.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-taliban-tourism-youtubers/33134969.html> (14.02.2025).

³²⁹ BBC, London. Three Spanish tourists killed in central Afghanistan gun attack. 18.05.2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c9wzvlz40wpo> (14.02.2025).

³³⁰ BBC, London. Afghanistan - wish you were here? The Taliban do, 20.07.2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cv223yvnp9mo> (23.07.2024). / Institute for Security & Development Policy.

5.4. Re-departure or onward travel

The difficulty in earning a living in Afghanistan and the generally poor socio-economic situation lead some returnees to try to return to neighbouring countries or to Europe – and in order to be able to support their families in Afghanistan.³³¹ Some actually intend to stay in Afghanistan, but then find no work or accumulate debt and therefore leave again.³³²

People returned or repatriated from Pakistan who were unable to establish themselves in Afghanistan sometimes decide to leave again for Pakistan or another country. Of the 4,220 Pakistan returnees surveyed by UNHCR, however, only 0.4% expressed such intent. 4% knew people who had travelled to Pakistan again.³³³ Returnees usually leave again when the savings they have brought with them have been used up.³³⁴ Some of these people also had menial jobs in Pakistan with low wages, but found no work in Afghanistan, which is why Pakistan is still more attractive to them.³³⁵ In some cases, however, returnees from Pakistan also prefer to travel on to Iran or Turkey hoping that there will be better earning opportunities there. However, their choice of destination country also depends on their language skills – many returnees from Pakistan do not speak Dari/Farsi.³³⁶

To enter Pakistan legally, they need a passport and a Pakistani visa. Since most of these people lack the skills and financial resources to obtain one, they often leave again illegally. Because official border crossings are now better guarded and mostly can only be crossed with a passport and visa (see [Chapter 4.4.](#)), a new migration route has been established. It leads through Zaranj (Nimroz Province) to the Pakistani city of Taftan on the border with Iran and from there through Balochistan to the central parts of Pakistan.³³⁷ They use the services of smugglers when illegally leaving and crossing the unstable province of Balochistan, which comes at a high cost.³³⁸ One interlocutor mentioned that criminals also extorted money in the tri-border area.³³⁹

Many people who have been repatriated to Afghanistan from Iran or Turkey are also trying to migrate again. They are often young men whose family expects them to contribute to their livelihood and who are therefore under pressure to leave quickly in order to earn money

Surge in Foreign Tourists to Afghanistan: Recommendations for Tourism and Cultural Growth, 10.04.2024. <https://www.isdp.eu/surge-in-foreign-tourists-to-afghanistan-recommendations-for-tourism-and-cultural-growth/> (23.07.2024).

³³¹ Heinrich Böll Foundation, Cologne. Afghanistan: Response to Forced Returnees, April 2024, p. 7.

<https://www.boell.de/sites/default/files/importedFiles/2024/04/10/response-to-forced-returnees-afpak-hbs.pdf> (14.02.2025) / Afghanistan Analysts Network, Kabul. Returning from Pakistan: How are Afghan returnees coping back in their homeland? 29.09.2024. <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/migration/returning-from-pakistan-how-are-afghan-returnees-coping-back-in-their-homeland/> (14.02.2025) / Video 34.

فامیل 15 اخراج مهاجرین افغان از آلمان به افغانستان رسید دیپورت از آلمان ترکیه ایران به کابل رسید [Deportated Afghan immigrants from Germany arrived in Afghanistan. 15 families were deported from Germany, through Turkey, and Iran to Kabul.], 06.09.2024, ab 02:05. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfpXBaynpil> (14.02.2025).

³³² Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024.

³³³ UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 21.

<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

³³⁴ Representative of an international organization (1). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024 / Representative of the NGO SHARP Pakistan, Islamabad. Telephone Interview with Country Analysis SEM, 11.07.2024.

³³⁵ Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024. / UNHCR, Geneva. Post-return monitoring report, Oktober 2024, p. 21. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/112147> (07.02.2025).

³³⁶ Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024.

³³⁷ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (2). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 28.06.2024 / Representative of an international organization (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (4). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024 / Representative of an international organization (5). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024.

³³⁸ Representative of the NGO SHARP Pakistan, Islamabad. Telephone Interview with Country Analysis SEM, 11.07.2024.

³³⁹ Group of Afghan migrants in Pakistan. Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Islamabad, 02.07.2024.

abroad.³⁴⁰ People repatriated from Iran attempt to return to Iran either immediately after repatriation or after staying a few weeks or months in Afghanistan.³⁴¹ According to Iranian information, half of the 1.1 million people repatriated from Iran to Afghanistan between March 2024 and February 2025 have returned to Iran.³⁴²

The Country Analysis SEM does not have any specific information regarding other groups of returnees or repatriates. Migrants who want to continue to travel to Europe also take advantage of the migration route from Zaranj through the border triangle to Iran.³⁴³

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Asylum Directorate

³⁴⁰ Representative of an international organization (7). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Kabul, 26.11.2024.

³⁴¹ EUAA, Malta. Iran – Situation of Afghan Refugees, December 2022, p. 52. https://euaa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/publications/2023-01/2023_01_COI_Report_Iran_Afghans_Refugees_EN.pdf (14.02.2025).

³⁴² Amu TV, Virginia. Iran says it has deported more than one million Afghan migrants, 08.02.2025. <https://amu.tv/155024/> (08.02.2025).

³⁴³ Representative of an international organization (3). Interview with Country Analysis SEM in Peshawar, 01.07.2024.