
Dear colleagues and partners,

Please find below the weekly update on the return of undocumented Afghans from Iran and Pakistan for the week of 09-15 December 2018, along with a summary on the celebration of yesterday's International Migrants Day at Sapedar Palace in Kabul.

RETURN STATISTICS

777,670 total returns from Iran and Pakistan since 01 January 2018

746,151 total returns from Iran since 01 January 2018

31,519 total returns from Pakistan since 01 January 2018

10,874 undocumented Afghans returned from Iran between 09-15 December 2018, **20% less** than in the previous week (13,644). 5,458 returned spontaneously, 5,416 were deported.

496 undocumented Afghans returned from Pakistan between 09-15 December 2018, **50% more** than in the previous week (454). 270 returned spontaneously, 42 were deported.

5% of returnees from Iran (710 individuals) assisted

89% of returnees from Pakistan (441 individuals) assisted

[Past weekly updates](#)



IOM and Government Partners Jointly Celebrate International Migrants Day in Kabul

The International Organization for Migration (IOM – the UN migration agency) celebrated International Migrants Day at the office of the Chief Executive of Afghanistan Dr. Abdullah in Kabul on Tuesday, alongside government partners, other UN organizations, NGOs, members of the Afghan Civil Society and representatives of local media.

Approximately one in seven people on the planet have been a migrant at some point in their lives. Millions of Afghans remain abroad, most of them in neighboring countries. Additionally, millions of Afghan migrants and refugees have returned back to Afghanistan in the last 6 years. In 2018 alone, close to 750,000 undocumented Afghans returned from Iran, over 30,000 returned from Pakistan and close to 7,000 returned from European countries and Turkey according to IOM data.

Speaking at the event, His Excellency Dr. Abdullah stressed the importance for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) to pay attention to the needs of migrants and the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan generally, while highlighting the dangers of irregular migration overall: “We shouldn’t think that the situation of Afghans is resolved once they leave the country, they leave one problem behind but face a hundred new ones. Hundreds of thousands of families in Afghanistan are debating whether to leave or to stay. We need to create a situation where all these families consider staying in Afghanistan a viable alternative to irregular migration, by giving them the opportunity to live a life in peace and prosperity.”

Minister Sayed Alemi Balkhi thanked IOM in his speech, highlighting the good cooperation between his Ministry and the organization throughout 2018. “We thank IOM for their wide-ranging post-arrival support to returning migrants, both those who return voluntarily and those who are forced back to the country. It is important to remember that migration is an opportunity, both for migrants and

their host countries.” He furthermore mentioned the establishment of a joint committee between the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Turkey to tackle regional migration management issues in 2019.

The speeches were followed by a short theater performance of young students from Kabul University, highlighting the dangers of irregular migration, including abuse by human traffickers. IOM’s Senior Programme Coordinator Ms. Sarah Craggs reiterated this in her speech: “While migration offers potential benefits to all, for many people, the mere act of migration exposes them to danger. IOM data reveals that close to 3,400 people have died in an attempt to migrate this year – and the numbers are likely higher. Those working to serve migrants and ensure migration is undertaken in a safe, orderly, regular and dignified manner are also at risk. I would like to pay respects to all those from the UN, civil society, and Government who lost their lives in Jalalabad this summer while working to improve reintegration support to returning Afghans, including an IOM colleague.”

IOM Afghanistan has assisted over 53,000 undocumented Afghans returning from Iran and Pakistan and over 121,000 Afghans displaced by natural disasters since 01 January 2018, thanks to the dedication of our staff and the generosity of our donors.

We would like to thank all our donors who support our work, more information on the rest of our portfolio can be found here:

www.afghanistan.iom.int

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