

Background

The international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan spans 2,430 km (1,510 miles). On the Pakistan side, the border touches the provinces/regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Balochistan. Throughout its history, the border has remained very porous, as populations in both countries share historical and cultural heritage, with cross-border movements taking place on a regular basis.

There are multiple official border crossing points between the two countries; however, the most frequented are Torkham in KP/FATA and Chaman/Spin Boldak in Balochistan.

Starting June 2016, the Pakistani government introduced specific border controls at Torkham border, requiring all incoming Afghans to have valid visas/passports or Rahdari (applicable to local tribes enabling limited movement on respective sides of the border).

According to available estimates, prior to the restriction of free movement, over 20,000 Afghans and Pakistanis would cross back and forth between the two countries on a daily basis through Torkham. However, after implementation of border control, this has reduced to 2000—2500 Afghans per day. In contrast, Chaman border crossing remains flexible, and free movement from both countries is ongoing. According to available figures, approximately 25,000-30,000 people utilize the Chaman border from both sides on a daily basis.

During 2016, an unprecedented number of Afghans returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan, which included over 250,000 undocumented, and over 380,000 registered refugees, through the Torkham and Chaman border crossings. This year, as of June 20th, over 100,000 Afghans have returned to their home country, which includes almost 70,000 undocumented returnees from Pakistan.



Methodology

To get a snapshot of population movements from Afghanistan into Pakistan, OCHA and IOM Pakistan undertook an assessment of Afghan nationals travelling from Afghanistan into Pakistan from **18 - 21 April, 2017** at the Torkham border crossing in FATA/KP.

Key features of this exercise include:

- Seven (7) staff members, including females and males, carried out **352** interviews with Afghan Individuals entering into Pakistan; information for a total of **794** travelling individuals was collected.
- Of the **352** family representatives that were interviewed, almost **70%** were male, and around **30%** were female (*note: the gender breakdown for respondents does not represent head of households*)
- Almost **60%** of the male respondents were the head of the family, and of the female respondents, only **11%** were the head of their households.
- Basic information was also collected regarding **2,028** family members that were not travelling, and were in Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- Statistics regarding vulnerable household members, including those with physical and mental disability, chronically ill, single unsupported parents, pregnant women, unaccompanied minors and the elderly were also collected.

The purpose of the survey was to get information on the drivers that prompted movement from Afghanistan into Pakistan and associated logistics, especially visa requirements, processing times and financial costs.

Respondents Profiles

352

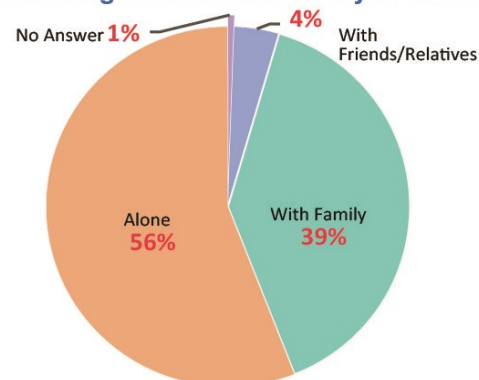
individuals from households representing a total of **794** travellers and **1,191** family members back in Afghanistan and **837** family members in Pakistan

Profile

A large number of respondents were travelling with their families (39%), hence there was a fairly even mix in terms of both age and gender. However, 56% of the respondents were travelling alone, and did not have their family members with them. Of those that were travelling alone, over 76% were between the ages of 18 - 59.

Most incoming Afghans had been permanently residing in Pakistan at some point(s) in their lives (87%); a significant majority had been living in Pakistan for 24–31 years (27%), whilst a slightly smaller proportion lived in Pakistan for 31-39 years (22%). At the time of their stay in Pakistan, approximately 54% were documented, and over 45% were undocumented. Majority of the documented Afghans were **PoR card holders**, while a few also had passports. Every respondent had a valid visa and passport at the time of interview.

Travelling alone or with family or friend



Group	Age-Gender Disaggregation (Individuals)									Vulnerable Cases Reported				
	Total	0-5 M	0-5 F	6-17 M	6-17 F	18-59 M	18-59 F	60+ M	60+ F	Wheelchair	Older Person	Woman	Family	Child
Accompanying Family Members	794		52	67	50	357	162	50	13	8	11	10	0	1
Family in Afghanistan	1191	50	66	210	217	241	191	92	124	23	9	0	0	0
Family in Pakistan	837	76	56	152	203	144	101	45	60	5	9	0	0	0

Afghan Passports:

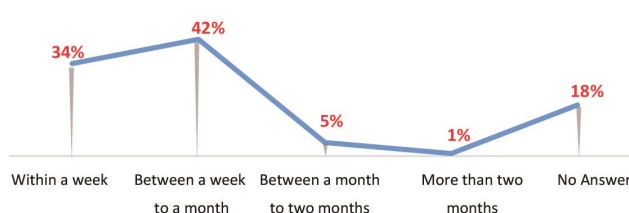
Afghans travelling to Pakistan also gave input regarding the time and costs in obtaining Afghan passports. The data shows that almost 60% of the respondents paid around **AFN 5,000 – 7,000 (USD 73 - 103)** to obtain passports, while 36% paid **AFN 7,000 –10,000 (USD 103 - 147)**.

Majority of the respondents (over 42%) received their passports between **8 - 30 days** of application, while 34% received **within a week** of submitting their application.

Costs incurred to make passports in Afghanistan (in Afghani)



Time Taken to Receive Passports in Afghanistan



Visa

Most respondents (42%), had a family visit visa and 27% were travelling to Pakistan for health treatment. A small but significant minority were also visiting for business reasons (7%).

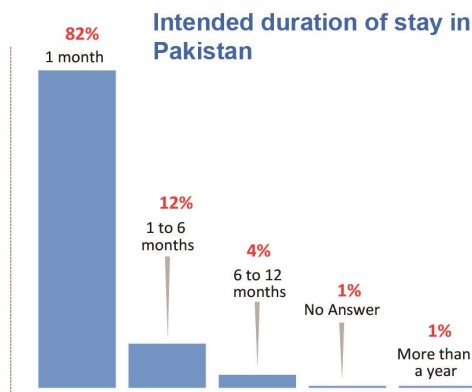
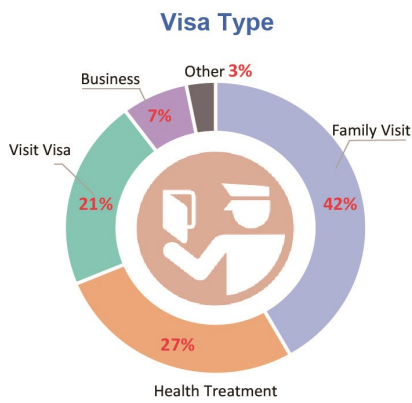
As per the information provided by respondents, duration(s) for visa processing is in line with the type of visa requested (short term or long term), i.e. long term visa applications take more time. Most people received visas for short duration, however it is unclear from current data set whether these Afghans had actually applied for short or long duration visas—this area can be further explored in subsequent phases of data collection.

In terms of time taken for visa processing, majority of the Afghan applicants received their visas within **1-3 days**, in line with the official duration.

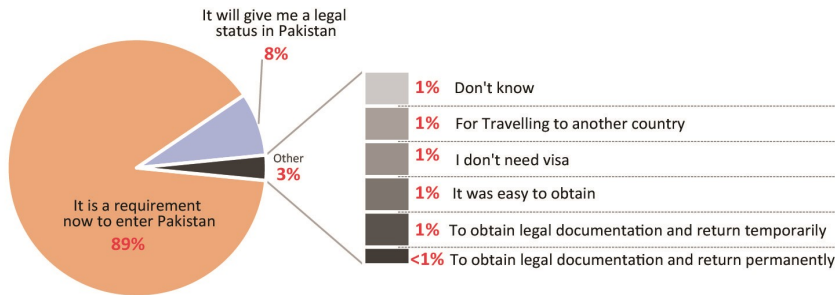
Challenges

To note, some people reportedly paid a visa fee, though Pakistani visas are free for Afghan citizens. However, this could be accounted for by associated operational and logistical costs, though a small percentage may have made informal payments/tips in order obtain their visas.

Most respondents indicated their intent to return back to Afghanistan after the expiration of their visas(32%), however a significant percentage planned to come back to Pakistan after visa renewal(65%).



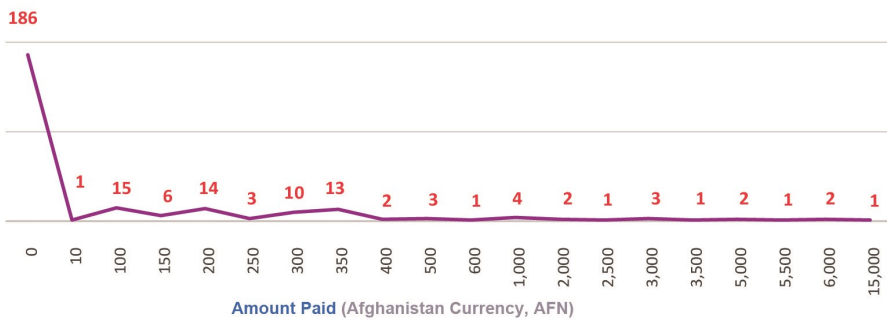
Why did you get a visa to come to Pakistan ?



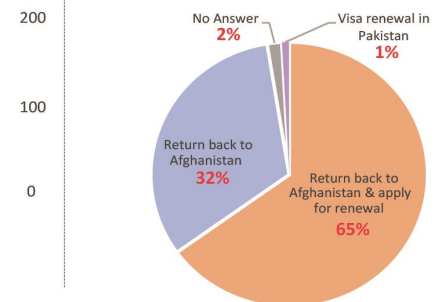
Did you face any difficulty while applying for a visa ?



How much fee was charged for your visa?



What do you intend to do once your visa expires ?



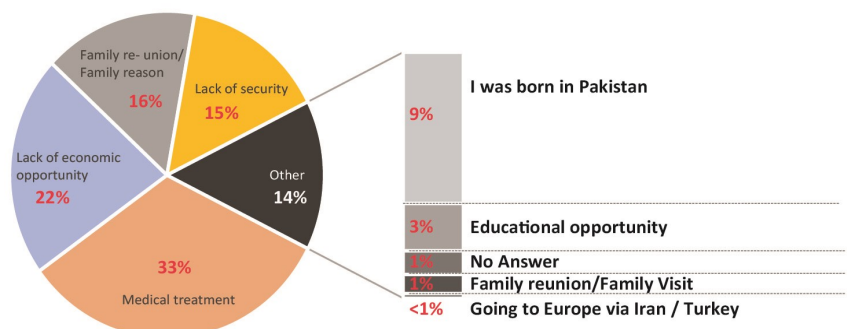
Migration Drivers:

Majority of the returnees intended to visit various locations in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province (as Torkham is the primary border crossing for Afghan nationals intending to travel to KP). With regards to areas of origin, majority of the respondents were from Nangarhar Province (32%), while a slightly smaller proportion were travelling from Kabul (24%).

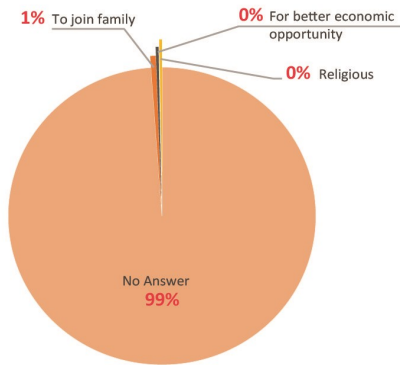
When asked about the reason for travelling from Afghanistan to Pakistan (Push factor), 33% said they were travelling for medical reasons/health treatment; 22% quoted 'lack of economic opportunity', while a slightly smaller proportion cited security (15%) as the primary reason for their journey. Over 9% Afghans said they had been born in Pakistan. These also correlate to type of visas issued, since a majority applied for medical or family visit visas. With regards to reason(s) for making Pakistan the destination country (Pull Factor), respondents cited family reasons (45%) or economic reasons (41%).

It is interesting to note that, when asked about their future plans, over 95% of Afghans said they did not plan to migrate further to other countries from Pakistan. Of the 2% that replied in affirmative, UK and Saudi Arabia were cited as potential destination countries.

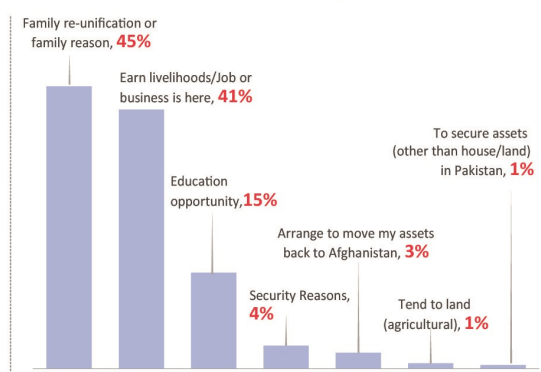
Primary Reason for Departing from Afghanistan



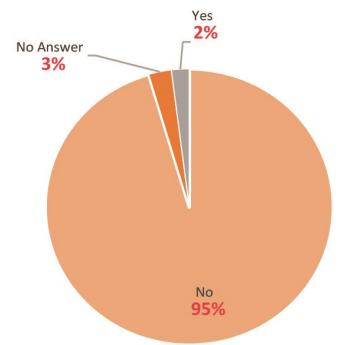
Reasons to travel elsewhere



Reasons for Returning to Pakistan



Intended to travel elsewhere



Travel to Pakistan during Last 5 years

Over **41%** of the respondents reported that they visited Pakistan regularly - once every month. Since the Government of Pakistan issues visas with a stay limit of 30 days at a given point in time, many Afghans cross the border on a regular basis for entry/exit stamps. Majority of these people are those that have their families and/or businesses in Pakistan and intend to continue using available visas system for as long as possible. Before the Torkham border was strictly controlled, this population potentially crossed back and forth on a regular basis without any passports or visas.

Most Afghans used cars for travelling to Torkham from their location of origin—the border is crossed on foot as traffic across the border is permitted for formal trade purposes only. Once in Pakistan, the incoming Afghans travel further to their destinations in rented cars or cabs.

Way Forward

Future rounds of data collection are planned at Torkham border to obtain additional information regarding the profile of Afghan nationals travelling to Pakistan as well as establish details regarding migration patterns, drivers and associated correlations.