



In 2021, over 470,000 Afghans have returned from Iran in only 5 months—170,000 more than at the same time in 2020. Nearly 200,000 have returned through the southwestern province of Nimroz where the presence of humanitarian partners is extremely limited. ©IOM, May 2021.

Return from Iran

According to the Border Monitoring Team of the Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR), a total of **33,812** Afghans returned from Iran through the Nimroz (Milak) and Herat (Islam Qala) borders between 21-27 May 2021. **16,234** persons returned voluntarily and **17,578** were deported. Since 01 January 2021, the total number of undocumented returnees from Iran is **473,480** individuals— a **42% increase over the same period in 2020**. IOM provided post-arrival humanitarian assistance to **947 (3%)** undocumented Afghans at the IOM Transit Centers in Herat and Nimroz during the past week. **Assistance levels continue to be limited by a lack of funding and bear no relation to the vulnerability of the returning population.**

On 29 April, the Government of Iran announced a border closure with Afghanistan to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Afghan nationals including migrants will still be allowed to return home during this period.

Cross Border Response Funding Needs 2021

Against a [funding request](#) of **USD 29.7M** in 2021 to serve an estimated return caseload of **654,000 Afghan migrants**— a figure which is likely to be exceeded during the summer— **IOM has only received 5% of its requirement**. **Without additional support humanitarian operations at border level transit centers face suspension on 31 July with week on week assistance levels already extremely constrained despite humanitarian needs.**

COVID-19 Programming Update

IOM is actively supporting the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and WHO in provision of [COVID-19 response interventions](#). On 25 March, IOM launched its new 2021 global COVID-19 appeal— the Strategic Response and Recovery Plan. IOM Afghanistan is seeking 17m USD in 2021 to continue response efforts. More information is available [here](#).

Activities include training for frontline health workers, deployment of staff to areas of need including health facilities and cross border surveillance, material support of PPE/equipment, ambulance based referral services and community level awareness raising efforts including within Displacement Tracking Matrix focus group discussions in over 12,600 settlements across 34 provinces.

2021 Highlights

478,713 total returns from Iran and Pakistan since 01 January 2021

473,480 total returns from Iran in 2021

5,233 total returns from Pakistan in 2021

Over the past week **33,812** undocumented Afghans returned from Iran with **3%** of returnees from Iran (**947** individuals) assisted (**685** men and **262** women)

Over the past week **381** undocumented Afghans returned from Pakistan with **100%** of returnees from Pakistan (**381** individuals) assisted (**193** men and **188** women)

IOM Thematic Support

Migration Health:

In 2021, 172,926 patients have been served by IOM's Migration Health Unit in Nimroz, Herat, Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces with basic health care- outpatient consultations, maternal, child and neo-natal health care, reproductive health, family planning and COVID-19 response. Programming is supported by DG ECHO, and CERF. During the past week a total of 3,857 patients were served by IOM's 7 mobile health teams, inclusive of 2,806 outpatient consultations, health education sessions for 3,857 persons and psychosocial counselling sessions for 229 patients.

Under the Global Fund multi-country TB grant in partnership with UNDP, a total of 9,742 undocumented Afghans were screened for tuberculosis at the Zero Point Reception Centers in Herat, Nimroz, Kandahar and Nangarhar. Of the total screened, 224 presumptive TB cases were identified and 1 person was tested positive.

Protection:

IOM's Protection programme has supported 1,596 undocumented returnee households (2,703 women, 1,962 men, 3,156 girls and 3,653 boys) comprising at least one Person with Specific Needs (PSN) in 2021 through provision of timely information, facilitating safe and dignified access to services, and provision of one-off assistance including cash to mitigate identified protection risks and avoid resort to negative coping mechanisms when referral pathways are exhausted.

With screening staff operating at the Herat and Nimroz border points and case workers in 11 provinces of return, the Protection team caseload this week included case management assessments for 106 new PSN households (121 women, 116 men, 185 girls, 233 boys) in Ghor, Nangarhar, Takhar, Herat, Kandahar, Sar-e-Pul, Badakhshan, Faryab, Nimroz, Kabul, and Balkh. These cases included 24 children at risk, 34 persons with serious medical conditions, 25 women at risk, 13 older persons at risk, 9 persons with disability, and 13 single parents, 426 PSN individuals (and their households) were identified at Milak and Islam Qala border points by Protection screeners in coordination with DoRR. 41 undocumented returnee households (28 women, 36 men, 27 girls, 27 boys) received Post-arrival support services (e.g. mobile phones, family tracing, and transportation) and Case management assessments were conducted for 106 cases.

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Return from Pakistan

According to the Directorate of Refugees and Repatriation (DoRR), **5,233** undocumented Afghans have returned from Pakistan since 01 January 2021. Over the past week **381** undocumented Afghans returned from Pakistan through the Torkham (**73** returnees & **13** Deportees) and Spin Boldak (**295** returnees) borders. The Afghan-Pakistan border closed on 05 May for a 2-week period to 19 May due to concerns over COVID-19 transmission rates over the Ramadan and Eid period – hence return figures this week are very low. The border reopened as scheduled on 20 May.

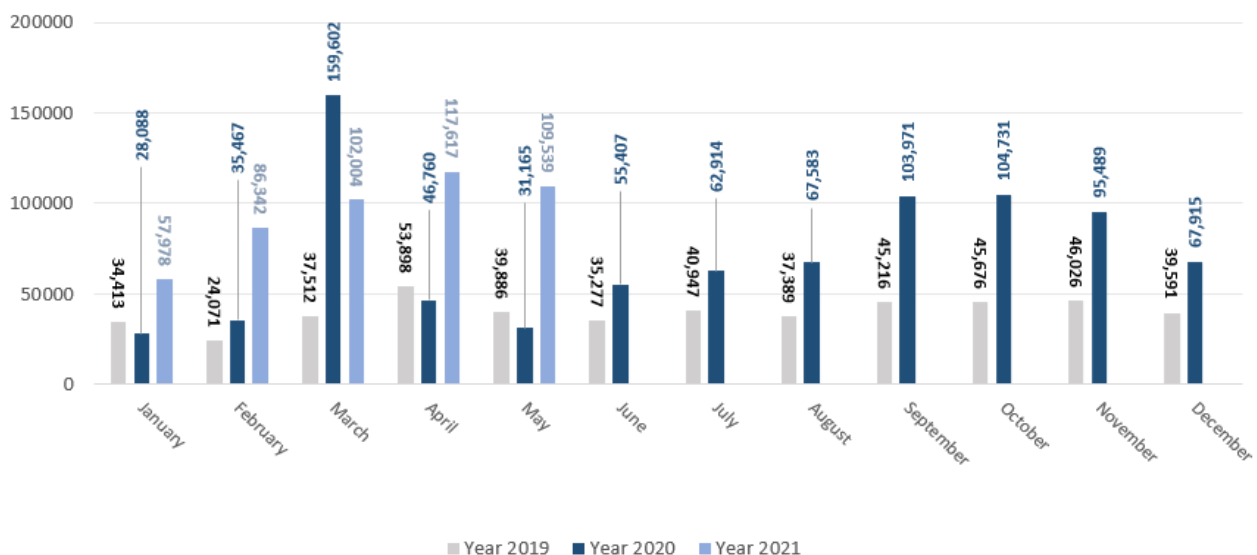
Total Number of Undocumented Returnees in 2021

Date	Iran				Total Iran	Pakistan				Total Pakistan	Overall Return
	Herat		Nimroz			Torkham		Kandahar			
	Spont	Deport	Spont	Deport		Spont	Deport	Spont	Deport		
1 Jan-30 April	116,363	86,643	43,818	117,117	363,941	1875	166	2209	224	4474	368,415
1-13 May	19,688	13,492	5,264	16,577	55,021	98	15	178	57	348	55,369
14-20 May	9,745	6,563	1,317	3,081	20,706	7	0	23	0	30	20,736
21-27 May	13,291	9,220	2,943	8,358	33,812	73	13	295	0	381	34,193
Total	159,087	115,918	53,342	145,133	473,480	2,053	194	2,705	281	5,233	478,713

Total Number of Assisted Returnees in 2021

Date	Iran				Total Iran	Pakistan				Total Pakistan	Overall Assisted
	Herat		Nimroz			Torkham		Kandahar			
	Spont	Deport	Spont	Deport		Spont	Deport	Spont	Deport		
1 Jan-30 April	1,157	6,702	701	9,358	17,918	449	193	3488	157	4287	22,205
1-13 May	94	877	25	451	1,447	98	15	178	43	334	1,781
14-20 May	18	470	4	337	829	7	0	23	0	30	859
21-27 May	20	405	43	479	947	73	13	295	0	381	1,328
Total	1,289	8,454	773	10,625	21,141	627	221	3,984	200	5,032	26,173

Return of Undocumented Afghans from Iran - 2019 - 2021



IOM Afghanistan wishes to express its thanks and appreciation to the below donor partners whose generous support has allowed IOM to assist a total of 26,173 Afghan returnees in 2021.



**Norway, Japan, Switzerland, DG ECHO, CERF
and the Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

in coordination with