

Monthly Migration Movements Afghan Displacement Summary January 2017

Introduction

The Mixed Migration Monitoring Initiative (4Mi)¹ in Central Asia and South West Asia (CASWA) region aims at gathering data on displaced Afghans on the move.

This paper is the second in a monthly series of trend analyses. This month, the paper analyses both internal movement within Afghanistan and migration towards India and Indonesia. It is based on interviews with 310 people in Afghanistan, 61 in India, and 66 in Indonesia conducted in December 2016. Future papers will analyse 4Mi data collected on Afghans migrating toward the East and the West; data collection is being set up in Germany, Sweden and Denmark. 4Mi data collection and analysis is being conducted with the purpose to increase knowledge about drivers of movement and protection risks faced by Afghans.

4Mi field monitors conducted the data and the sample size only represents a small section of those on the move in Afghanistan. Any generalizations about the total population of Afghan migrants on the move must be made with an understanding of the sampling methodology of 4Mi. For more information about the 4Mi methodology please visit: <http://4mi.regionalmms.org/4mi.html>.

Afghanistan

General security situation: The general security situation in Afghanistan did not change drastically between November and December. In northeast, the incidents initiated by AOG, ANSF and ACG increased compare to November 2016 in Kunduz. In south, there were searching operations especially in Helmand and Kandahar, which led to dozens of Taliban insurgents being killed. Central, western, and eastern areas seemed calm, however the presence of opposition groups in Nangarhar and Laghman provinces increased. Criminal activities also increased in Jalalabad². As this is the winter season, the opposition groups' activities are decreasing, but they are also reinforcing and preparing their activities for spring.

Return from Pakistan and Iran: According to IOM's weekly reports³, 8,630 undocumented Afghans returned or were deported from Pakistan between the 4th and 31st of December, which is a considerably low number compared to 30,745 returning between the 29th of October and 3rd of December. 39,054 returned from Iran between the 29th of October to 3rd of December and 33,054 between 4th of December and 31st of

December. The total number of undocumented Afghans returnees from Pakistan and Iran reached, respectively, 248,189 and 443,968 in 2016.

Movement from Afghanistan: According to December 4Mi data, as well as discussions with the monitors, the majority of those migrating from Afghanistan towards Iran and Pakistan are Hazara and Pashtun adult men between 19 and 50 years old who leave the country with the hope to find seasonal work. Approximately 50% are migrating from urban areas and almost 2/3 of those migrating interrupted secondary or high school. Nearly 30% of migrants en route were jobless before departure, which correspond well to the findings in Survey of Afghan People where unemployment is cited by just over half (51.5%) of Afghans as a reason they would leave the country⁴.

Push factors: As the graph below indicates, around 31% of interviewees reported economic reasons as the main reason to migrate from Afghanistan (which is around a 10% increase compared to the November data). As the winter arrives, job opportunities in the Afghan labor market decrease and many Afghans migrate to Iran and Pakistan seeking temporary or longer term employment; more than 45% of the interviewees mentioned Iran as their destination. Data indicates that sending one or more family members to neighboring countries for remittances is a livelihood strategy for Afghan families as more than 25% of those who migrate for economic reasons, are sent by their families.

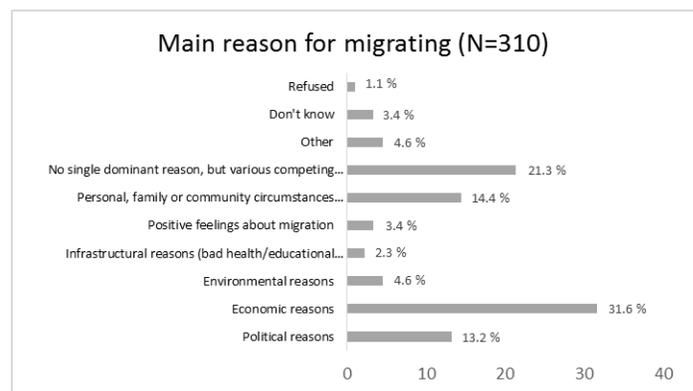


Figure 1: main reason for migrating

Apart from economic reasons, other contributing factors are

¹ The 4Mi seeks to address the need for better data about mixed migration flows to understand motivations for movement, the routes and methods used and the protection risks faced on route. Data is collected based on a low cost innovative approach where local individuals placed in strategic hubs collect real-time data about mixed migration issues at their location. The 4Mi was initially created by the Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat in the Horn of

Africa region in mid-2014.

² INSO Afghanistan, December 2016

³ IOM, Return on undocumented Afghans, weekly situation reports, November and December 2016.

⁴ Survey of Afghan People, Afghanistan in 2016

personal, family or community circumstances, including insecurity and crime, and political reasons. Fewer people reported environmental reasons, positive feelings about migration and infrastructural reasons.

Risks on route: 4Mi data indicates that migrants face greatest risks in Nimruz province, a border province in southwestern Afghanistan, which is often the starting point for irregular migration routes towards Iran and Pakistan.

Physical protection risks continued to be high in December; this is consistent with November data. There are 205 cases of deaths reported by interviewees, out of which 74 cases are witnessed in Nimruz province. According to monitors, the concentration of deaths takes place in Zaranj, which is one of the main hubs for irregular migration, due partially to road accidents. It is also via this border point that bodies of those irregular Afghan migrants who die on Iranian territory are delivered to Afghan authorities. Other provinces where high rates of death are reported are Zabul (20), Nangarhar (19), Helmand (17), and Herat (13). The victims are mostly adult or youth male. The main causes of death are violence (gunshots or knife wounds), vehicle accidents and sickness/lack of access to medicines.

Other incidents reported are sexual assault or harassment (35); of these, 23 related to indecent assault or touching, 8 to rape and 4 to other sexual abuses. Most of these incidents happened in Nimruz. The data shows that perpetrators are

mostly single unknown individuals (14), the host community (7) or the police (5). The number of cases of physical assault is also high with 120 cases, mainly in Zaranj, Kabul and Herat. Most of cases of assaults take the form of physical abuse like beating and slapping.

As indicated below in figure 2, other incidents include ransom (28 cases), detention (47 cases) as well as robbery (113 cases). According to our monitors, bribes are mostly paid in cash and to authorities and brokers in different organizations; from the Directorate of Passport to police stations in border points. Detention by police, security forces, militia, and host community or immigration officials was also reported and the main reason to be detained was entering or exiting the country illegally (87%). Mean days of detention were 4 days and the detainees were mostly kept inside in a room where they could lie down, unrestrained/not handcuffed. In more than 75% of the cases, the incidents were not reported to the police as interviewees expressed that they found it useless or were unable to do so.

Within the context of 4Mi data collection, it was challenging to gain more context on these issues, but DRC will most likely conduct more in depth analysis on the issues in 2017.

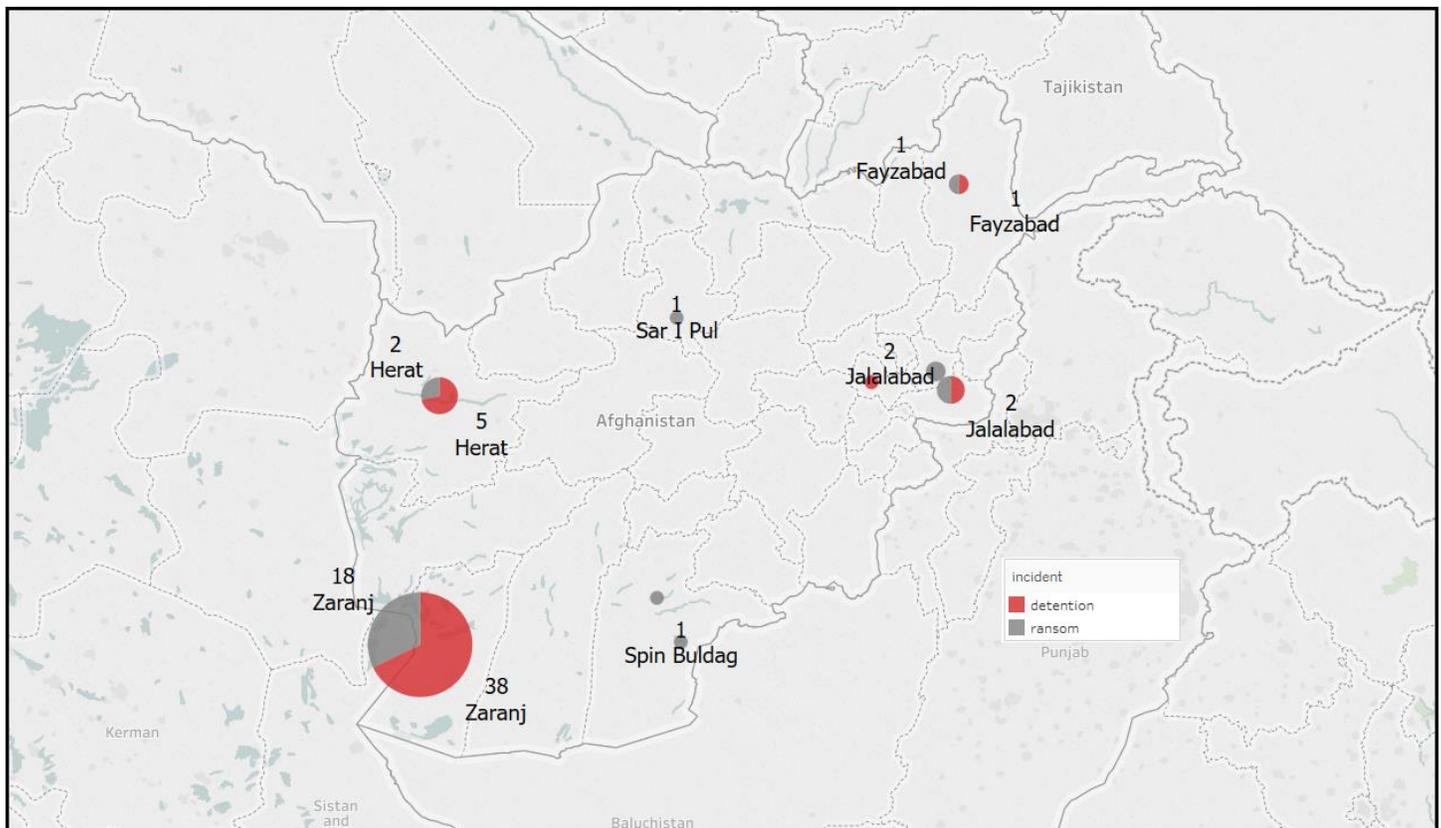


Figure 2: Ransom and detention incidents by province

Movement towards India

Currently, according to UNHCR, there are approximately 10,000 Afghan refugees in India and 1,300 Afghan asylum seekers. Refugees are to a large extent concentrated in and around Delhi. The asylum seekers are waiting for their status to be determined by UNHCR. There is no reliable data on the number and situation of undocumented Afghan migrants in India.

According to the 4Mi data, most Afghans came to India by air transport directly from Afghanistan. Surprisingly, none of the interviewees report that they migrated to India due to economic reasons. Instead, data indicates that push factors are largely related to personal, family or community circumstances and political reasons. This suggests that India is a destination country for those who flee from insecurity & peer pressures; not those Afghans who migrate in the hope to find better job opportunities. DRC recognizes the need to study these findings in greater detail as the data may be biased by the fact that interviewees are waiting for their status to be determined by UNHCR.

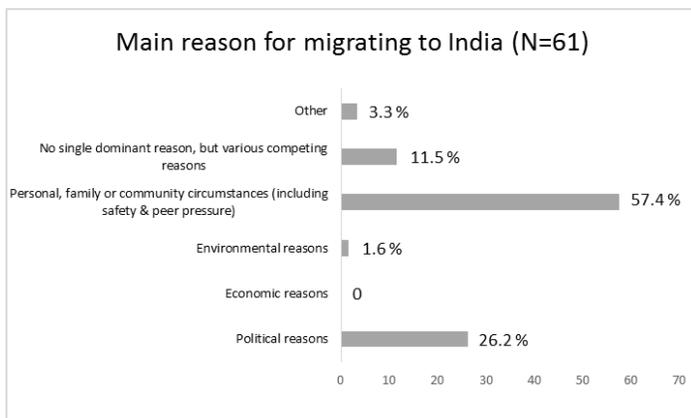


Figure 3: main reasons to migrate to India

Many of the interviewees didn't have an intended destination country in mind prior to departure from Afghanistan whereas others indicated a plan to travel onwards to Indonesia (18%) and had prior hopes to reach Australia (nearly 25%) and Canada (nearly 15%). Approximately 50% voiced that the main reason for choosing these destinations are linked to greater general security.

Risks on route: In contrast to the data collected in Afghanistan, reports from India shows very few incidents on route from Afghanistan to India. No ransom, robbery, or detentions were reported. However, 1 case of sexual assault, 2 cases of bribery and 12 cases of death were reported by interviewees in India. 5 cases of death were witnessed during movement in Afghanistan to other migrants on route, the other 7 were in Hyderabad (the capital of the southern Indian state of

Telangana).

Movement towards Indonesia

As stated in the last report, Indonesia has largely functioned as a transit migration country for Afghans to reach Australia by boat. Today, due to Australia's restrictive refugee and asylum policies, resettlement to USA and Canada rather seems to be the possible option although the 4Mi data indicates that some still hope to reach Australia. Currently, there are 7,063 Afghans registered with UNHCR as of September 2016.⁵

According to the 4Mi data collected in December, most of the interviewees came to Indonesia by air transportation via India, as figure 3 illustrates. Some however reached the country by boat. In few cases, migrants first arrived in Pakistan and then moved onwards to India and Indonesia. Some Afghans flew from UAE or Qatar directly to Indonesia; others had a stop in Thailand. According to the interviewees, the main reason for their choice of route were related to what a broker/smuggler could offer.

Surprisingly, the most prominent reason for moving to Indonesia is related to personal, family or community circumstances and secondly political reasons such as war and insecurity. No one reported that they moved to Indonesia due to economic reasons although, similar to India, there is a possibility that this data may be biased.

Almost half of the interviewees mentioned that they had no destination country in mind prior to departure from Afghanistan and similar to India, a large group had the hope to move onwards to Australia due to greater general security.

Risks on route: According to the 4Mi data from Indonesia, incidents faced by Afghan migrants on the route to Indonesia are robberies (12 cases) and bribe (10 cases) and almost all of the cases were reported to have happened in Bogor. The interviewees reported 1 case of death, 2 cases of ransom and 1 case of detention.

Migration towards Europe

In 2016, the number of sea arrivals to Europe was 351,619 of which 12% were Afghans (42,025) thus being the second largest group. Most Afghans arrived from Turkey to Greece (41,655) however, there were a few who reached through Italy (370). In December 2016 170 Afghans arrived to Greece compared to 254 in November⁶. In comparison to 2015, Afghan arrivals to Greece decreased by 77% from January to November 2016.⁷ The decrease may partially be influenced by the onset of the harsh winter across Europe. At least four death incidents are reported in Greece due to the cold conditions out of which one of them were Afghans⁸.

There is not yet 4Mi data from Europe.

⁵ <http://www.unhcr.org/en/unhcr-inindonesia>.

⁶ UNHCR, Greece Factsheet, 1st – 31st December, 2016

⁷ UNHCR, Bureau of Europe, Monthly data update: November 2016.

⁸ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/europe-refugees-freeze-to-death-hypothermia-bulgaria-athens-cold-weather-serbia-sleeping-rough-a7520106.html>

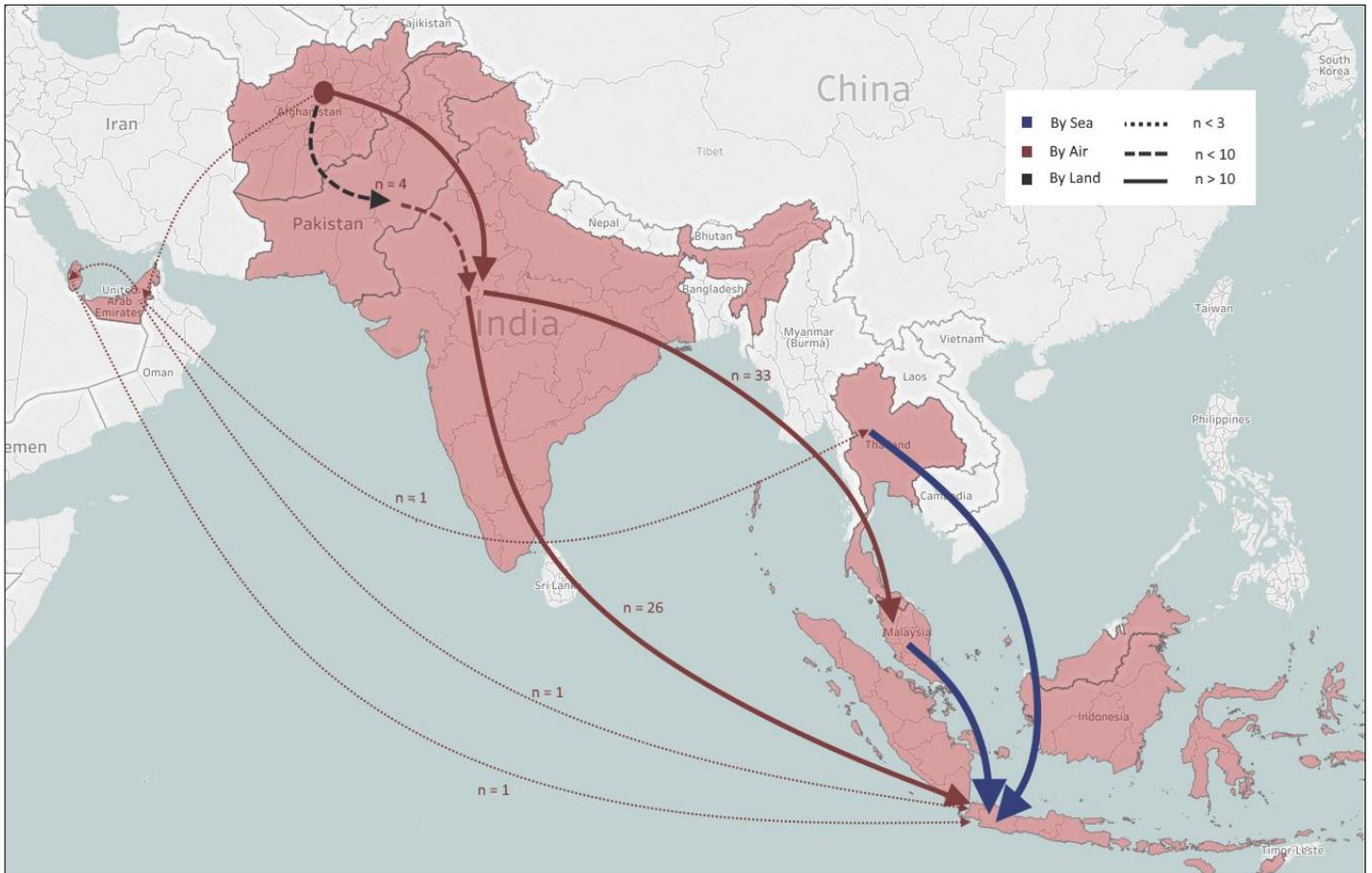


Figure 3: Routes to India and Indonesia

Networks and source of information

The 4Mi data collected in December on networks and source of information prior to and on journey was rather similar for all three countries (Afghanistan, India & Indonesia). According to the data, irregular migration is facilitated either by smugglers/brokers or friends or family members.

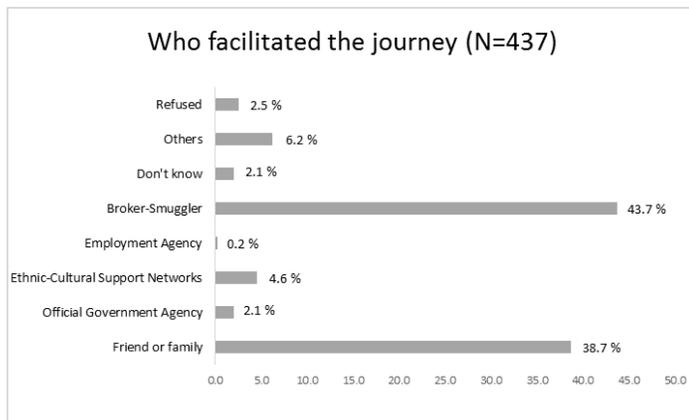


Figure 4: who facilitated the journey?

reported that they themselves got in contact with the smugglers/brokers and 23% used their ethnic/cultural networks. The main value added by smugglers is that they 'guarantee' safe transit across a border (32%). Accommodation (15%) and provision of documents (11%) are other major services provided by smugglers. The main method used by smugglers to guaranty the payment is unofficial intermediary releasing the money after safe arrival (hawaladar) (42%).

Sources of Information: According to the data, the main source of information prior to departure is friends and family in country of destination, but during the journey, the dependence on information from smugglers increases. In addition, social media (such as Facebook, Viber and Whatsapp) have a considerable proportion among the sources of information. Based on our monitors, most information provided by these sources are about the situation and wellbeing of individual on the route as well as information about costs.

The majority of smugglers are perceived as professional, that is, a part of an organized network (69%). Nearly 40%