

Monthly Migration Movements Afghan Displacement Summary March 2017

Introduction

This month, the CASWA 4Mi paper zooms in on the shockingly high numbers of protection risks among Afghans on the move; it focuses on movement within Afghanistan and is based on interviews with 339 people who have started their journey within the country with the wish to migrate abroad.

The paper focuses especially on border cities like Zaranj; data from these areas raises concern when it comes to both physical protection risks as well as ransom and placed in detention. Urban hubs such as Kabul, Herat and Kandahar also stand out as cities with large risks for migrants. Another key theme in this paper is related to how migrants' access information about migration. Information received from different sources seems often time to be contradictory leaving one to assume that migrants start their journey partially uninformed about what they can expect.

Return from Pakistan and Iran

In 2017, until 1st of April, more than 83,000 returned from the two countries. The Afghanistan – Pakistan border re-opened in March resulting in returns through Torkham and Spin Boldak. In March returns of undocumented migrants from Iran was through Milak border in Nimroz Province as the Islam Qala border is closed for undocumented returns due to recent flooding.

These figures represent a noticeable decrease compared to last year's refugee influx when, according to IOM reports¹ a total of 691,581 undocumented Afghans returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan and Iran. It's expected that the number of returns, especially forced returns, will increase during the next months.

Movement from Afghanistan

According to March 4Mi data, as well as discussions with the monitors, the majority of those migrating from Afghanistan are Hazara and Pashtun adult men between 25 and 50 years old. During March, the proportion of migrants under 25 years old increased and reached more than 36% out of those interviewed.

Approximately 50% are migrating from urban areas and almost half of them have secondary or high school education level, out of which 10% interrupted their study because of the journey.

These findings reinforce those of previous months, indicating that these general trends may not shift in the short term.

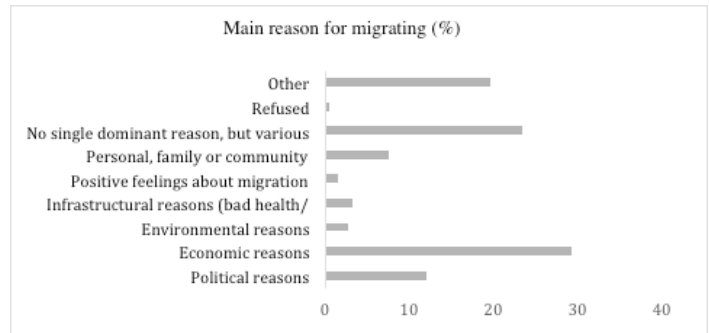
Push factors

Similar to last month, economic factors are the main reason to migrate from Afghanistan (29%). People move abroad in search of job opportunities for a temporary or longer term period in neighboring countries especially Iran; 45% of the interviewees mentioned Iran as their destination. These findings thus continue to indicate that sending one or more family members to neighboring countries for work to send back money is a livelihood strategy for

Afghan families; More than 33% of those who migrate for economic reasons are sent by their families.

Apart from economic reasons, other important contributing factors are political reasons (12%), namely conflict, war, and political violence. However, about ¼ of all interviewees report that there are various competing reasons for migrating.

Graph 1: main reason for migrating (%)



Approximately 23% of the interviewees mentioned European countries as their final destination, especially Germany (9%). Beside this, 14.5% intended to travel to Turkey; it is reasonable to assume that when they arrive in Turkey some wish to proceed to further Europe. Fewer people this month report a wish to travel to the East (India, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia) or the Persian Gulf states (UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia).

Risks on route

March 4Mi data corroborates previous months' data and 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 were high among the March 4Mi sample; as illustrated in map 1, 65 interviewees reported that they had witnessed death of migrants in different provinces. Most of the death incidents are reported in Nimruz province (24) out of which 22 were in Zaranj. According to our monitors and as mentioned in previous reports, the high rate of death in this province is because Zaranj is one of the main hubs for irregular migration. Another province where high rate of death is reported is Nangarhar.

The victims are mostly adult or minor/youth male. The main causes of death are shot or stabbed and vehicle accidents.

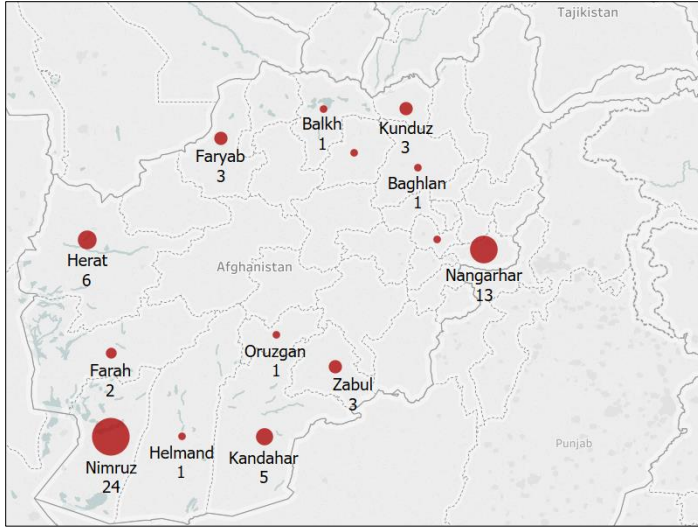
18 incidents related to sexual assault and harassment was reported of varying nature. Most of the assaults or touching were reported in Kabul and Nimruz while the number of rapes was high in Herat and Nimruz. In most cases, single unknown individuals and smugglers are responsible for these sexual assaults.

82 interviewees reported witnessing a total of 158 physical assault

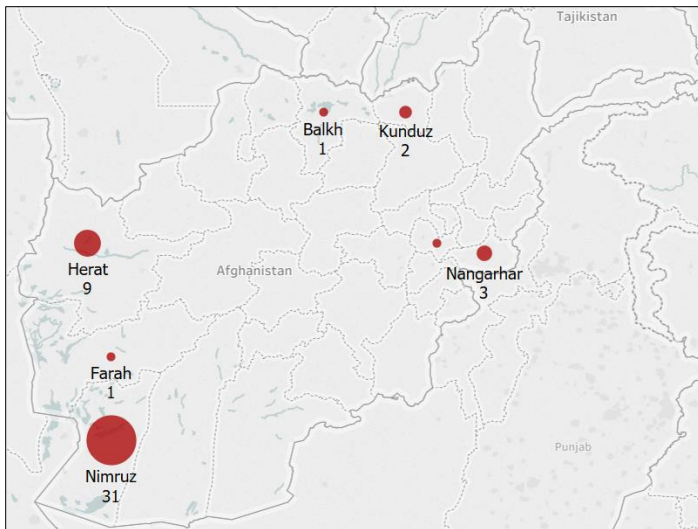
¹ IOM, Return of undocumented Afghans, weekly situation report, 26 March -1 April.

2017; IOM, Return of Undocumented Afghans from Pakistan and Iran, 2016 Overview.

incidents mainly in the form of mild physical abuse (52 cases) and verbal abuse (45 cases). Again, most of these incidents were reported in Nimruz and Herat provinces. Data indicates that smugglers and security forces/police are the main groups responsible for these incidents.



Map 1: Witness of death incidents by province



Map 2: Detention incidents by province

Held for ransom and detention are other serious protection concerns, which according to our monitors in the field, has increased during the last 2 years especially in Nimruz, Herat, and Kabul. Among interviewees, 18 cases of ransom were reported mostly in Zaranj, Nimruz (12 cases). The victims are mostly held by smugglers or militia (Talibs and local militia). The mean amount of ransom paid is around 3000 USD by family members and in some cases by friends. Detention incidents (48 cases) mostly happened in border provinces such as Nimruz and Herat as illustrated in map 2. Detainees were mostly detained by Police or other authorities and were charged by entering or existing the country illegally. They were held in the police stations and border posts, mostly in a room, not handcuffed.

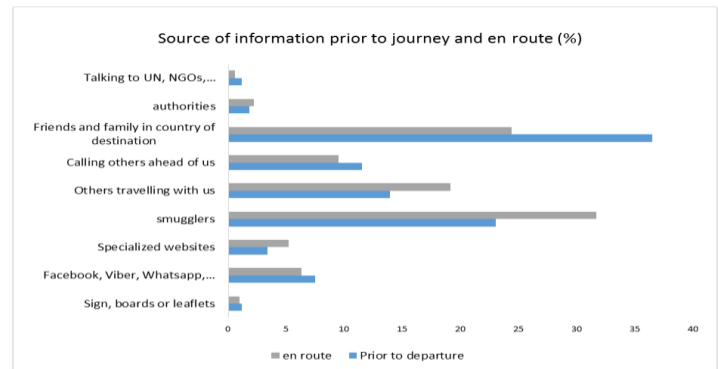
Other incidents reported are robbery (65 cases) and bribery (77 cases). Most cases of robbery were reported in Kabul, Nimruz, Nangarhar and Herat and the victims report that they have lost their money and personal belongings. Bribery for money mostly happened in Nimruz, Herat and Balkh provinces.

Networks, Sources of information, and Finance

The 4Mi data collected in March shows that those who are migrating illegally find smugglers with the help of facilitators (56%) and their ethnic/cultural networks (27%). Safe transit across border (37%), accommodation (21%), and collecting from a meeting point (18%) are the main services provided by smugglers; other services include provision of documents, transportation, and liaising with authorities. The most common method of guarantying the payment to a smuggler are unofficial intermediary releasing the money after safe arrival (61%).

As illustrated in graph 2, friends and family in country of destination and smugglers are the two main sources of information before departure and en route. However, most interviewees mentioned that they felt that they received contradicting information from different sources indicating that migrants may start their journey partially uninformed about what to expect.

Graph 2: Source of information about departure and en route



Based on the 4Mi data, almost half of the migrants borrow money from their family members and friends (47%) in order to finance the journey while others use their own savings (32%). The data in addition indicates that some try to find work during the journey in order to finance the migration.

Do you want more information about 4Mi?

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. The initiative is part of DRC's global 4Mi data collection project. For more information about this initiative please visit: <http://4mi.regionalmms.org/4mi.html>.

As part of 4Mi, DRC CASWA publishes monthly series of trend analyses about movement within Afghanistan and towards the East and the West. Analysis is based on interviews collected by 4Mi monitors with the purpose to increase knowledge about drivers of movement and protection risks faced by Afghans.

The 4Mi data published monthly 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.