

FLASH UPDATE | 2 JUNE 2025

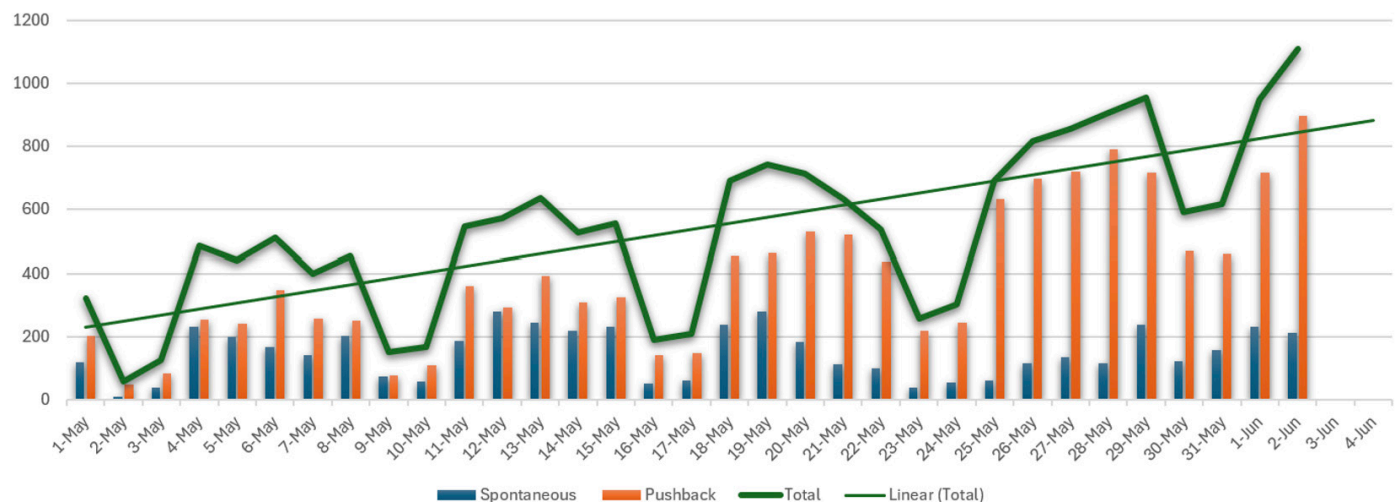
SHARP RISE IN FORCED RETURNS FROM IRAN

SITUATION OVERVIEW

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has recorded a sharp rise in the forced return of Afghan nationals from the Islamic Republic of Iran since the beginning of May 2025. Particularly alarming is a significant surge in the number of families being deported—a new and concerning trend, as returnees deported in previous months were predominantly single young men.

Throughout May 2025, IOM recorded 15,675 families returning from Iran, a 2.3-fold increase compared to the 6,879 families that returned in April. The number of undocumented families returning in May 2025 is more than three times higher compared to that in May 2024.

This spike follows recent announcements by Iranian authorities indicating plans to intensify deportations of Afghan nationals. [A public statement](#) issued in late May set a 6th of July 2025 deadline for all undocumented Afghans to leave Iran, potentially affecting up to 4 million people.



Graph: Number and Categories of Afghan Returnees from Iran in May 2025

This surge in forced returns from Iran is occurring [alongside sustained mass deportations from Pakistan](#), where thousands are returned weekly. Combined, these pressures are overwhelming Afghanistan's fragile reception and reintegration systems, particularly in areas of high return.

KEY FIGURES, IOM RESPONSE & GAPS

- Between January and May 2025, more than 450,000 Afghans returned from Iran, including 30,266 families. Notably, 955 families were recorded on the 29th of May alone. Of the total recorded undocumented Afghan migrants 8% were women, 21% children and 71% men. However, the gender and age breakdown for undocumented returnees who returned with their families were 28% women, 46% children and 26% men.
- The proportion of families among returnees has surged dramatically. In May, families accounted for approximately 44% of all returnees, compared to 26% in April, a month within which the returning population predominantly comprised single men. Furthermore, the proportion of families among returnees in January 2025 was 11%.
- Between the 25th of May and the 1st of June 2025, 6,387 families (with a total of 24,275 individuals) and 25,794

single individuals returned from Iran. IOM was only able to assist 1,106 families (17%) and 585 individuals (2.3%) due to funding constraints.

- 270% increase in the deportation of families in the last two months:
 - 4,142 families (April 2025)
 - 11,201 families (May 2025)
- 82% increase in the spontaneous return of families in the last two months:
 - 2,737 families (April 2025)
 - 4,474 families (May 2025)
- The number of undocumented families deported in May 2025 is more than three times that of May 2024 (4,402 families May 2024 and 15,675 in May 2025).
- IOM has recorded a total of 457,103 returnees from Iran, of which 27% were families and 72% were forcibly returned.

IOM reiterates its urgent appeal for all countries to immediately suspend the forced return of Afghans, regardless of their immigration status, until safe, voluntary, and dignified return conditions are in place.



Returning Afghan migrants at the Islam Qala border crossing with Iran. Photo: IOM/Avand Azeez Agha