

SERVICES FOR AFGHANS IN PAKISTAN



A. Commonly used migration terminologies



a. Difference between a Refugee and an asylum seeker?

A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war, or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Most likely, they cannot return home or is afraid to do so. War and ethnic, tribal, and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their countries.

Asylum seekers are person who seek safety from persecution or serious harm in a country other than their own and awaits the decision on the application for refugee status as laid down by the 1951 Geneva Convention.



b. What is Asylum?

A form of protection given by a State on its territory, based on the principle of nonrefoulement and internationally or nationally recognized refugee rights (refugee status, humanitarian protection, temporary protection, or political asylum) and which is granted to a person who is unable to seek protection in their country of citizenship and/or residence, in particular for fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.



c. Forced Migration

Migratory movement in which an element of coercion exists, including threats to life and livelihood, whether arising from natural or man-made causes (e.g., movements of refugees and internally displaced persons as well as people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine or development projects).



d. Country of origin

A country that is a source of migratory flows



e. Country of transit

A country through which migratory flows move



B. Proof of Registration (PoR) card

The Proof of Registration (PoR) card is an identity document for Afghan refugees that entitles them to legally remain in Pakistan. The card is valid throughout Pakistan. It is important that registered Afghans carry their PoR cards at all times and present it to law enforcement agencies on demand.

Frequently Asked Question (FAQs)



1. Is Pakistan a signatory to Refugee Convention 1951 or Protocol?

Pakistan is not a signatory of the United Nations Convention 1950 or its Protocol 1967 on Refugees. However, Pakistan has never faltered in its commitment to hosting and helping refugees.



2. Whether Afghan student (Afghan national and PoR holders) can apply for higher education in Pakistan?

There are reserved seats, scholarships, and self-finance opportunities for Afghan PoR cardholders and Afghan students to apply every year. National and international scholarships are also announced for Afghan, details of which along with the links are shared below:

Award of Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarships for Afghan National students

Afghan project phase III, coming soon, details are available in the following link.
<https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/scholarshipsgrants/amisp/Pages/default.aspx>

Hannas Seidel Stiftung Scholarship program It is a German-based foundation that regularly announces scholarships for Afghan Refugees living in Pakistan and enrolled in an academic full-time degree (Undergraduate or Postgraduate) program at any HEC-recognized university.
<https://pakistan.hss.de/scholarships-1/hanns-seidel-scholarship-program>

DAFI Scholarships, A program by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and implemented by UNHCR for PoR cardholders living in Pakistan and holding a 12-grade certificate and enrolled in HEC recognized institution.
<https://www.unhcr.org/pk/dafi-scholarships>



3. Are Afghan refugees entitled to stay in Pakistan without a PoR card?

Afghan refugees are not entitled to stay in Pakistan without having a PoR (Proof of Registration) card or Afghan Citizen Card (ACC), otherwise he/she will be considered be an illegal immigrant.

Without a PoR card, or valid via/approval an Afghan national does not have the right to reside in Pakistan and can be arrested under the 1946 Foreigners Act or other preventive laws. However, the PoR card does not give immunity from criminal prosecution if bearers are involved in criminal activities or breach the law of Pakistan.



4. Can an Afghan national travel to another country on the basis of PoR card?

The PoR card is not a travel document and does not allow you to cross international borders, including between Pakistan and Afghanistan.



5. How long is the PoR card valid and what is the process of its verification?

The PoR Cards are valid for two years after renewal in a special DRIVE. PoR cards are issued and verified by National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) enabling an Afghan national to open a bank account, rent a home, obtain a SIM card, etc. Advice and Legal Aid Centres (ALACs) can facilitate the verification of your PoR card in coordination with NADRA. To make this request, one must provide a valid PoR card number to ALAC which will take approximately one week for the request to be processed.



6. What is ACC and how long it is valid?

Undocumented Afghans were issued Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) by NADRA.



7. Can unregistered Afghans apply for a PoR card?

Afghans who never held a PoR card, including family members of PoR cardholders who were never registered with NADRA are not entitled for the issuance of PoR cards. However, they may wish to approach NADRA during the upcoming registration exercise for undocumented Afghans residing in Pakistan. Information on this exercise will be shared by the Government of Pakistan as UNHCR is not involved in this activity.

They may also apply for refugee status with UNHCR if they are able to establish in a comprehensive interview that they cannot return to Afghanistan because they fear for their life or liberty. Information on how to access the refugee status determination procedure and the applicable criteria for being granted refugee status is available from UNHCR and its partners.



8. Whether Afghan having PoR card can modify his/her card?

Yes, Afghan Refugees can modify their PoR card from the Proof of Registration Card Modification (PCM) centers, for details information, please visit the following website <https://help.unhcr.org/pakistan/proof-of-registration-card-por/>:

These centers provide the following services;

- Corrections to existing PoR cards (e.g., name of the applicant/father/mother/spouse dependents age, gender, marital status, photo, and address)
- Additions to existing PoR cards: address, telephone number, photo, and newborn child
- Replacement of lost, stolen, faded, or damaged PoR cards
- Issuance of a PoR card to register children that turned five years of age
- Birth certificate



9. How long will it take to receive the new/modified PoR card?

New, duplicate or modified cards should be available for collection at the PCM centre within two weeks of the application.

Applicants can send their PoR card number per SMS to the number 7000 to check the availability of their card.



C. E-Visa Process for Afghanistan?

Pakistan introduced an e-visa system for all categories of visas and all the processes including application, fee, and getting a visa is online, for details please visit the below website; <https://visa.nadra.gov.pk/>



D. Special Programs for Afghans working with embassies, international organizations and foreign missions

There are some countries that have recently announced opportunities for Afghan nationals who have worked or been affiliated with those countries to apply for permission to travel to those countries, name of the country with websites of the available website for these special programs;



United States of America

- Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) for Afghans employed by or on behalf of the US Government
- Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) for Afghans who worked as translators/interpreters for US military forces
- US Refugee Assistance Program (USRAP) Priority 2 Program



Canada

- Special Program for Afghans who Assisted Canada



United Kingdom

- Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)
- Ex-Gratia Scheme



E. Family Reunification Program

UNHCR is receiving a number of questions from Afghans about the possibility of reuniting with family members living outside Afghanistan. Family re-unification programs, and who might qualify for these programs, are established by individual countries. Applications to access these programs are not submitted through UNHCR, but through the procedure established by that country.

Details of some family reunification programs are available here:

<https://help.unhcr.org/afghanistan/family-reunification/>

In the meantime, if you are seeking information about family reunification programs in a country that is not available on the above website link, please search for “family reunification” on the government website of the country about which you are interested.

For further information and support, you may visit the UNHCR website. The details of field offices along with their contact details are also stated here:

<https://help.unhcr.org/pakistan/contact>

Protection Helpline: +92 300 858 5600

Monday – Thursday 8:00 am - 4:30 pm, Friday – 08:00 am -01:00 pm

Email: pakpeprt@unhcr.org



F. Awaaz Afghanistan

A humanitarian helpline connecting Afghans (IDPs, returnees) and refugees affected by conflict and natural disaster with information and assistance. We are a toll-free, confidential hotline that anybody with access to a mobile phone in Afghanistan can call for free to access information on and register feedback about the humanitarian response.

For more information, please visit: <https://awaazaf.org/>

Open seven days a week | Female and male counsellors are available | Counsellors can speak Dari, Pushto, Urdu, English and more

Helpline # 410

For more information, please contact the Migrant Resource Centre, Pakistan and Migrant Resource Centre Afghanistan.

Migrant Resource Centre Pakistan

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