

April - June 2026

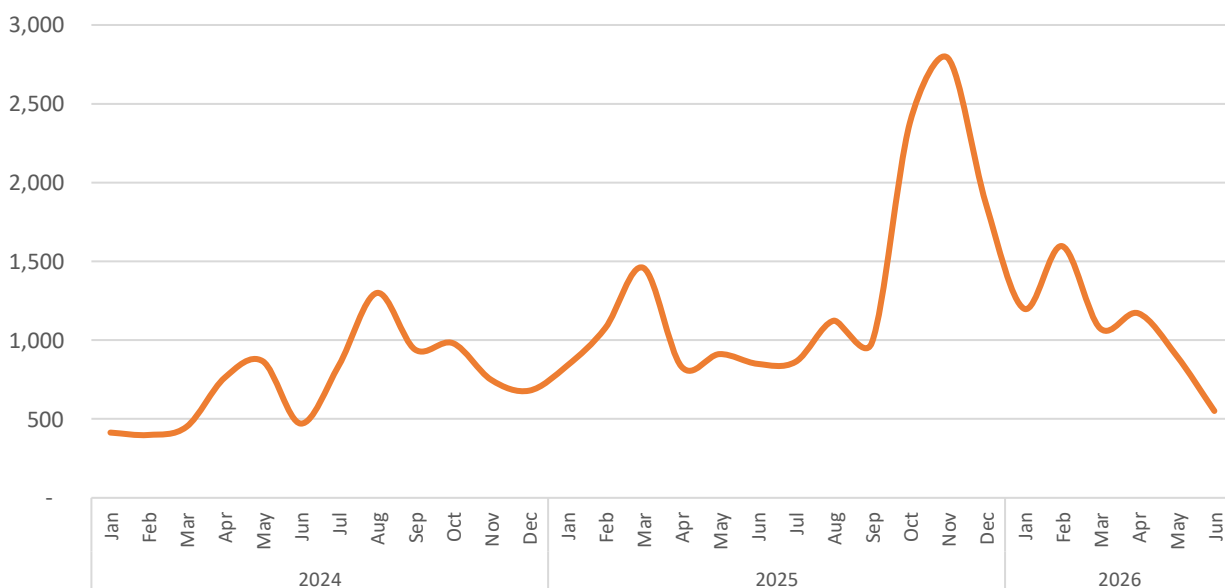
Migration Trends and Analysis: Pakistan

Migrant Resource Centres in Pakistan

This migration trends analysis includes analytical considerations from data generated by the [Migrant Resource Centres in Pakistan](#). With over 240 million people, Pakistan is world's fifth most populous country¹. In terms of migration trends, it is an important country of origin, transit and destination for migrants. This report focuses on highlights and important information on trends/patterns and insights regarding the migration and mobility of potential, current or returning migrants within the covered period, incorporating references from previous quarters ensuring comparability and providing a comprehensive annual perspective.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **MRCs in Pakistan expanded their reach to 2.15 million people** in the second quarter of 2026 through strengthened digital outreach and field engagement.
- **PDOS reached nearly 25,000 outgoing emigrants** this quarter, bringing the first half of 2026 total to **68,700 participants** - already **56% of last year's** reached total.
- **MRCs handled 4,122 enquiries during the quarter**, with **66.2% focused on overseas employment opportunities**, up from **52.5% in the previous quarter**.
- **Interest in non-traditional destinations continued to grow**, with enquiries about countries such as **Belarus, Azerbaijan, Türkiye, and Central Asia** rising to **36%**, up from **31% in the previous quarter**, alongside continued demand for Gulf and EU destinations.
- Q2 2026 reinforced Pakistan's **established labour migration trends**, with sustained emigration to Gulf countries and no major shift in overall migration patterns.



Reached (counselled) prospective emigrants through MRCs over the past three years, excluding social media outreach

¹ United Nations Population Fund: World Population Dashboard -Pakistan | United Nations Population Fund (unfpa.org)

Funded by the European Union

Implemented by

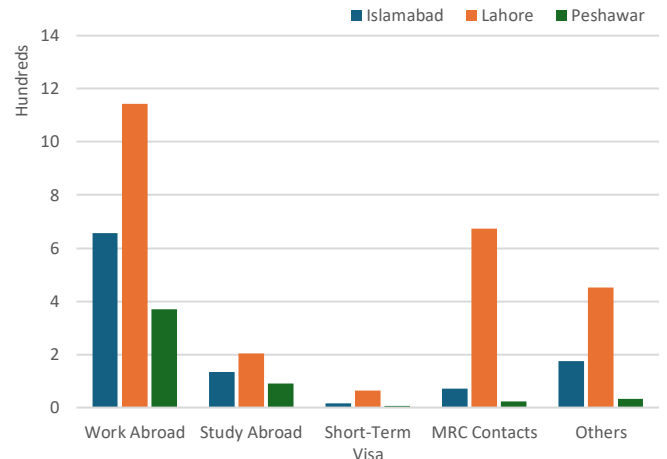


ENQUIRIES AND EMERGING TRENDS

Labour migration remained the primary driver of mobility-related enquiries during the second quarter of 2026. Of the 4,122 enquiries received by the Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), **66.2% were related to overseas employment opportunities**, making it the largest enquiry category, compared to **52.5% in Q1 2026**. Lahore recorded the highest number of employment-related enquiries with **1,144 cases**, followed by Islamabad with **656 cases** and Peshawar with **371 cases**.

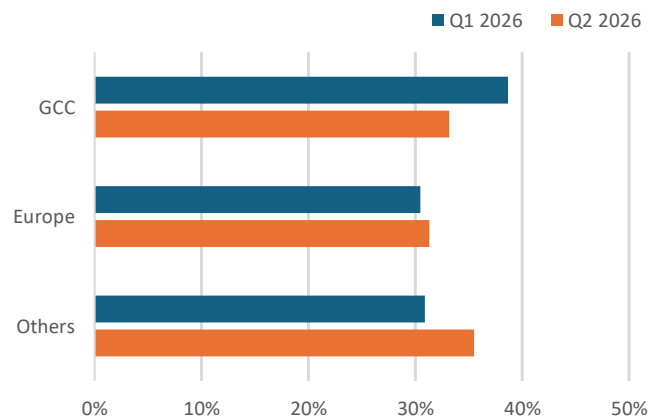
Among the total enquiries recorded, **2,601 cases** (compared to **2,059 cases in Q1 2026**) concerned specific destination countries or regions. The **Gulf region accounted for 33% of destination-related enquiries**, followed closely by **Europe at 31%**. Countries including Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Oman continued to attract significant interest due to established labour markets and recruitment channels, particularly in sectors such as construction, technical trades, hospitality, logistics, and services. European destinations, including Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Romania, and Cyprus, also remained prominent among emigrants seeking employment opportunities across skilled and semi-skilled sectors.

Enquiries related to other regions of the world represented **36% of destination-specific interest**, reflecting a continued increase from **31% in the previous quarter**. Growing attention was observed towards emerging destinations such as Belarus, Azerbaijan, Türkiye, China, and Central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan. This trend continues to indicate a gradual shift in migration preferences as prospective emigrants increasingly explore alternative labour markets in response to evolving employment opportunities and changing



Categories of enquiries by MRC, Q2 2026

global mobility patterns. However, the expansion of less established migration routes also presents increased risks, including misinformation, unregulated recruitment practices, and exposure to fraudulent schemes. The continued role of MRCs in providing verified information, counselling, and guidance on regular migration channels remains critical in mitigating these risks.

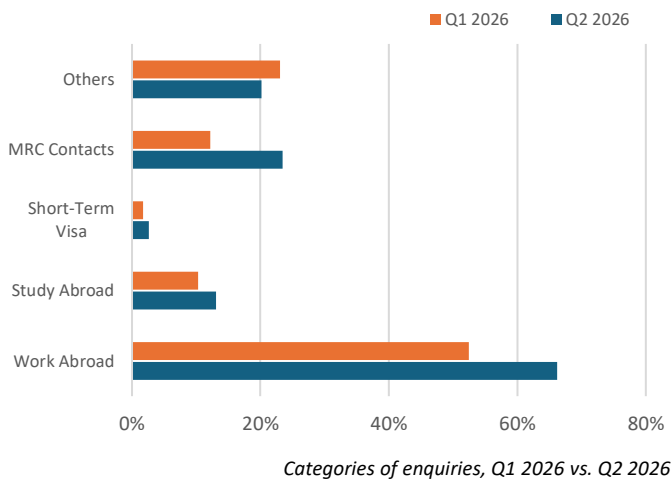


Geo-specific enquiries, Q1 2026 vs Q2 2026

The overall distribution of MRC enquiries during Q2 2026 further demonstrates the continued dominance of employment-driven emigration aspirations. While study-related migration enquiries remained relatively stable, requests



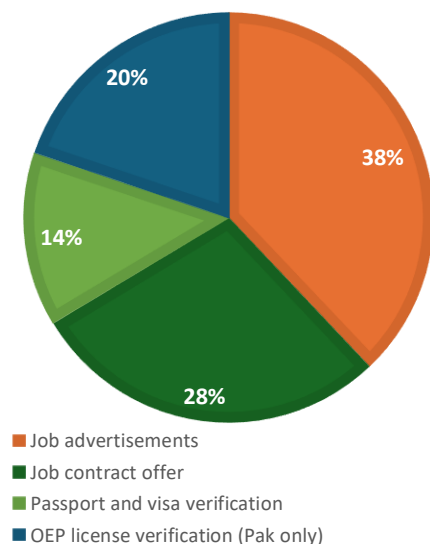
related to employment verification, recruitment procedures, visa processes, contractual obligations, workers' rights, and protection mechanisms increased. This indicates that prospective emigrants are increasingly seeking comprehensive migration guidance rather than basic information alone, reflecting greater awareness of the risks associated with uninformed migration decisions and irregular pathways



Official data from Pakistan's Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment (BEOE) shows that by June 2026, **316,848 Pakistanis** had officially departed for overseas employment during the year to date². During the same period, MRCs provided Pre-Departure Orientation Sessions (PDOS) to **68,700 prospective emigrants**, representing approximately **22%** of total officially recorded overseas employment departures. In the second quarter alone, through **147 PDOS** and counselling services, MRCs contributed to improving nearly **25,000** (2% female) outgoing emigrants' preparedness by providing information on recruitment processes, destination-country regulations, financial planning, employment contracts, workers' rights,

and the risks associated with irregular migration. The increasing engagement with MRC services reflects a growing preference among prospective migrants for reliable and verified information before making migration decisions.

Migration profiles during the quarter continued to reflect demand across both highly skilled and low to semi-skilled categories. Qualified professionals, including engineers, IT specialists, healthcare workers, researchers, and technical experts, continued to explore regulated labour markets in Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Japan, and other European countries like Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Romania, and Cyprus. Meanwhile, low and semi-skilled workers remained concentrated in sectors such as construction, manufacturing, agriculture, domestic work, hospitality, and transport. Increasing interest in skills certification, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), technical training, and soft skills development indicates growing recognition among migrants that verified qualifications and employability skills are



² <https://beoe.gov.pk>



becoming increasingly important for accessing formal overseas employment opportunities.

Despite increased awareness of migration risks, fraudulent recruitment and exploitation remained significant concerns during this quarter. MRCs received numerous requests for verification of employment offers, recruitment agents, visas, and contractual documents, particularly in relation to opportunities advertised through social media platforms, informal intermediaries, and unverified recruitment channels. Common concerns included fake employment documentation, illegal recruitment practices, “Azad visa” arrangements, contract substitution, and financial losses resulting from fraudulent schemes. Verification requests were frequently associated with destinations including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Malaysia, and Central Asian countries. These trends underscore the continued need for preventive awareness measures and stronger coordination between MRCs and relevant institutions, including the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), BEOE, Protectorate of Emigrants (POE) offices, and Community Welfare Attachés. While it is difficult to determine how many labour migrants or students change their status from regular to irregular migration after arrival, some cases may exist. Limited data from destination countries makes it challenging to assess the scale of this trend. For example, UK National Assembly discussions have highlighted cases of Pakistani nationals who travelled on student visas and later applied for political asylum³. This highlights the need for stronger awareness among migrants about the risks and consequences of changing migration pathways after arrival.

Study-related migration remained another important area of engagement, particularly among young people seeking international education opportunities. Germany, Finland, France, Italy, Spain, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, Türkiye, China, and Japan continued to attract prospective students. Counselling trends indicate that students increasingly require support related not only to admissions and scholarships but also to accreditation requirements, financial planning, language preparation, and verification of educational institutions and consultancy services. This reflects growing awareness of the risks associated with misleading education offers and unregulated consultancy practices.

External developments also influenced migration mobility during Q2 2026. Regional geopolitical tensions and temporary airspace disruptions created uncertainty for GCC-bound migration flows by affecting travel arrangements, flight availability, and departure schedules. Lahore MRC observed temporary reductions in emigrant attendance at POE services during periods of disruption, demonstrating the sensitivity of migration processes to broader regional developments. Although mobility patterns gradually stabilised, such disruptions highlighted the vulnerability of migration flows to external shocks.

Return and reintegration needs also remained visible during the quarter, particularly among migrants returning from European countries and individuals facing unsuccessful migration experiences or deportation. Returning migrants sought assistance related to livelihood opportunities, administrative procedures,

³ <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2612238/10000-pakistanis-entered-uk-on-student-visas-later-sought-asylum-fia-dg>



employment options, and available support services. Some cases required psychosocial counselling due to financial hardship, uncertainty regarding future employment, and challenges

REACH

During the second quarter of 2026, MRCs continued to reach prospective migrants through a combination of digital platforms, direct information services, and community-based outreach. This multi-channel approach enabled the MRC network to reach more than 2.9 million people during the first quarter and an additional **2.15 million people during the second quarter**, contributing to a cumulative reach of **over 5 million people during the first half of 2026**.

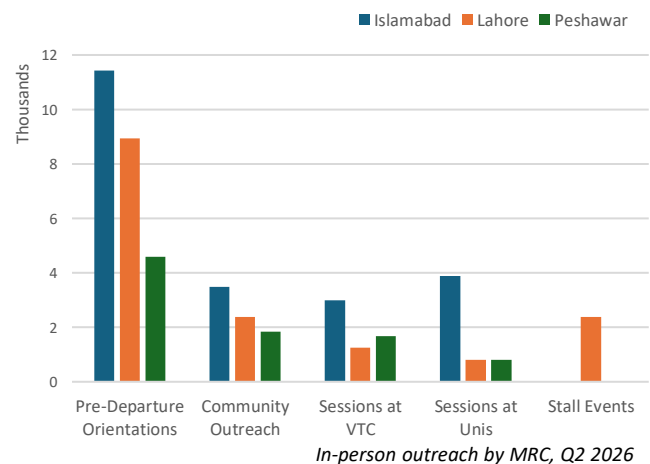
Digital platforms remained the cornerstone of the MRCs' outreach efforts. Facebook continued to be the most effective communication channel, reaching nearly 1.7 million people during the quarter and accounting for the largest share of online engagement. Instagram remained the second most influential platform, reaching approximately 240,000 people, while YouTube complemented awareness efforts by engaging nearly 61,000 viewers through migration-related content. Other digital channels, including X (formerly Twitter), WhatsApp, TikTok, and LinkedIn, contributed more modestly to overall outreach. Notably, LinkedIn showed encouraging growth during the quarter, attracting an increasing number of followers among prospective emigrants and emerging as a promising platform for sharing employment opportunities, labour mobility information, and professional migration guidance.

Beyond social media, MRCs strengthened public awareness through traditional information channels and direct service promotion. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials consistently reached large audiences,

associated with reintegration. These trends reinforce the importance of strengthening reintegration support as an integral component of migration governance.

nearly 60,000 people during this quarter, while news articles further amplified key migration messages to tens of thousands of readers. Public awareness campaigns utilising posters and information boards continued to promote the visibility of safe migration messaging within communities. The MRC hotline continued to provide direct access to information and support.

Community outreach activities continued to play an important role in providing face-to-face engagement with prospective migrants. Across the second quarter of 2026, these outreach activities reached nearly 46,500 individuals. Pre-departure briefings represented the single largest direct outreach activity, benefiting over 25,000 participants across the reporting period and reflecting sustained demand for practical emigration guidance before departure. Orientation sessions conducted at vocational training centres, technical institutes, and universities expanded awareness among young people and future labour migrants, while post-arrival sessions supported returning migrants



during the second quarter. MRC participation in public outreach events, particularly through the stall event organised in Lahore during this quarter, and partner-led outreach further extended the programme's community presence.⁴

MRCs continued to combine high-volume digital engagement with targeted, in-person awareness

activities to maximise their outreach to prospective migrants. While social media outreach continues to provide unparalleled scale, community-based interventions remain essential for delivering personalised information, building trust, and supporting informed migration decisions.

Engagement with Emigrants

During this quarter, MRCs in Islamabad, Lahore, and Peshawar maintained active engagement with prospective migrants by providing accessible counselling, information services, and personalised guidance through multiple communication channels by providing individual counselling and information services to **2,626 individuals** and conducted **116 case verifications**, while **147 PDOS** reached **24,962 participants**, including **484 female** participants. These interventions supported individuals in accessing reliable migration information, understanding regular migration pathways, and reducing risks associated with fraudulent recruitment and irregular migration

The **Islamabad MRC** engaged with **1,171 clients** during the reporting period, with WhatsApp counselling representing the largest share of client interactions. Clients primarily sought information regarding employment opportunities abroad, visa requirements, study options, and safe migration procedures. The centre also observed strong engagement following outreach sessions, indicating that awareness activities effectively encouraged individuals to seek additional counselling and clarification.

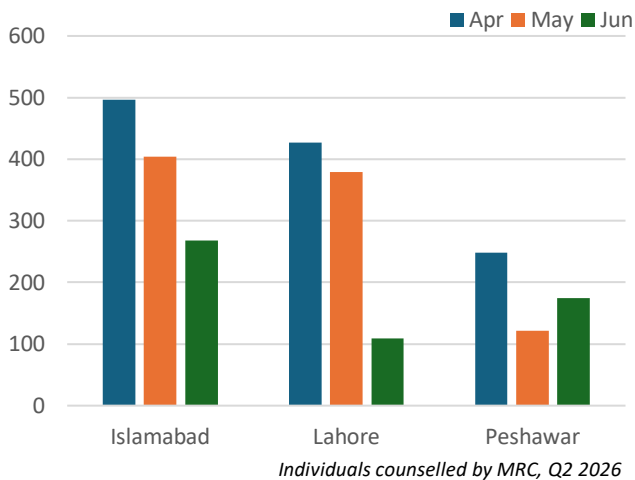
The **Lahore MRC** provided counselling support to **904 clients**, with most individuals approaching the centre for guidance on overseas employment opportunities, particularly in Europe and Gulf countries. Clients also sought assistance regarding emigration processes, scholarships, visa protector procedures, and the verification of recruitment-related information. Digital platforms, especially WhatsApp and social media, remained important channels for maintaining regular communication with beneficiaries.

The **Peshawar MRC** supported **551 clients** during the reporting period, with engagement largely focused on employment verification, recruitment agency checks, visa authenticity, and safe migration options. Many clients approached the centre with concerns about possible fraud, including suspicious job offers, unverified agents, and misleading migration schemes. MRC counselling helped clients assess available options, identify risks, and understand appropriate procedures for pursuing legal migration opportunities.

⁴ https://www.linkedin.com/posts/mrc-pak_pvtc-mega-job-fair-2026-the-event-brought-activity-7478708859537252352-

[ONIm?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAB52YF8BykTtHAtL3WEt9JgXUsYLyny9HI0](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/mrc-pak_pvtc-mega-job-fair-2026-the-event-brought-activity-7478708859537252352-?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAB52YF8BykTtHAtL3WEt9JgXUsYLyny9HI0)





Several verification cases highlighted the continued risks faced by migrants due to fraudulent recruitment practices. In one case handled by MRC Peshawar, a female client requested verification of a job offer for a makeup artist position in Saudi Arabia. The review identified several red flags in the offer letter, including the absence of proper employer details, indicating that the offer was likely fraudulent. The client was advised not to proceed with the opportunity.

In another serious case, an Afghan national working in Iran approached MRC Peshawar for verification of documents provided by an agent claiming to process a Canadian work permit. The individual had already paid USD 1,500 to the agent. Upon verification, the documents were found to be fraudulent, and the client was advised to discontinue contact with the agent and avoid any further payment.

MRC teams also identified risks related to unverified recruitment agents and employment opportunities. In one case, verification of an overseas employment promoter revealed inconsistencies between the provided agent information and available records, raising concerns regarding the legitimacy of the recruitment process. Similar cases involved suspicious job advertisements, unrealistic employment promises, and offers lacking proper employer information. Through counselling and verification support, MRCs helped clients identify warning signs, avoid potential financial losses, and understand appropriate complaint and referral mechanisms.

These concerns reflect broader challenges related to irregular migration and exploitation risks faced by prospective migrants. National authorities have continued to strengthen screening and prevention measures in response to increasing cases involving fraudulent employment schemes, suspicious travel arrangements, and human smuggling networks. In 2025, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) reported that nearly 39,800 passengers were prevented from travelling abroad under risk-based screening measures aimed at curbing irregular migration and protecting individuals from exploitation by trafficking and smuggling networks⁵. These developments highlight the continued importance of pre-departure counselling, verification of migration pathways, and access to reliable information to enable individuals to make informed decisions and reduce vulnerability to fraudulent recruitment practices.

⁵ <https://www.dawn.com/news/2004120/fia-offloaded-nearly-39800-passengers-in-2025-to-curb-human-smuggling-official-says>



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