

Afghans in Türkiye: Migration experiences, access to information, and assistance needs

This infographic presents key findings on the migration experiences of Afghans in Türkiye. It provides insights on their intentions for onward movement, the dangers and abuses they faced, their access to information, and the types of assistance they need in Türkiye.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE SIZE:

525 respondents

DATA COLLECTION SITES:

Türkiye: Istanbul (25%), Ankara (16%), Van (13%), Izmir (11%), Hatay (10%), Konya (10%), Kayseri (5%), Adana (3%), Erzurum (3%), Eskisehir (3%), Afyonkarahisar (0.4%), Trabzon (0.4%), Balıkesir (0.2%), Bursa (0.2%), Agri (0.1%)

DATA COLLECTION PERIOD:

May 2024 – Sep 2024

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION:

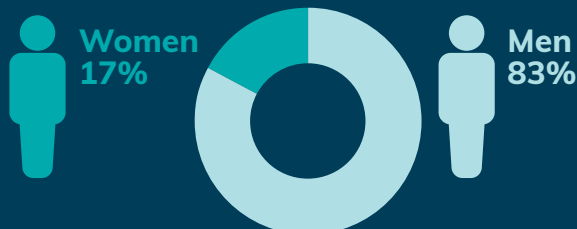
In-person interviews

Background

- Since the Taliban takeover in August 2021, Afghanistan has faced severe economic challenges, with the economy contracting by 27%, leading to stagnation and widespread hardship.¹ Food insecurity remains critical, affecting over a third of the population, with 14.2 million people experiencing severe shortages.²
- Additionally, the increasing restrictions on women's rights in Afghanistan have significantly limited their freedoms and heightened the vulnerabilities of Afghan women.³ These worsening conditions have led to a significant number of individuals seeking refuge and safety abroad.
- Türkiye's proximity to Afghanistan and its strategic location on migration routes - from Central Asia and the Middle East to Europe - makes it a key destination and transit country.
- As of December 2024, Türkiye hosted 103,922 registered refugees and asylum seekers and 65,815 migrants in an irregular status from Afghanistan.⁴ Meanwhile, the Turkish government's increasing use of detention and deportation poses severe risks to these individuals.⁵

Respondents' profiles

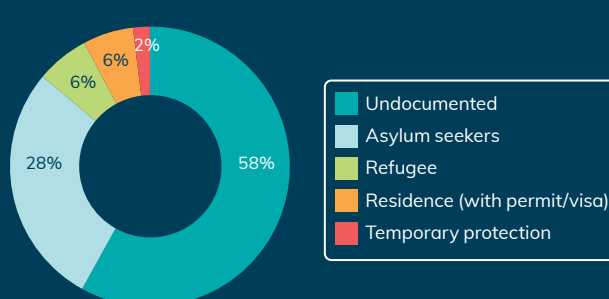
Gender



Note: The 4Mi sample is purposive. Data presented in this infographic cannot be considered as representative of the mixed migration dynamics of Afghans in Türkiye.

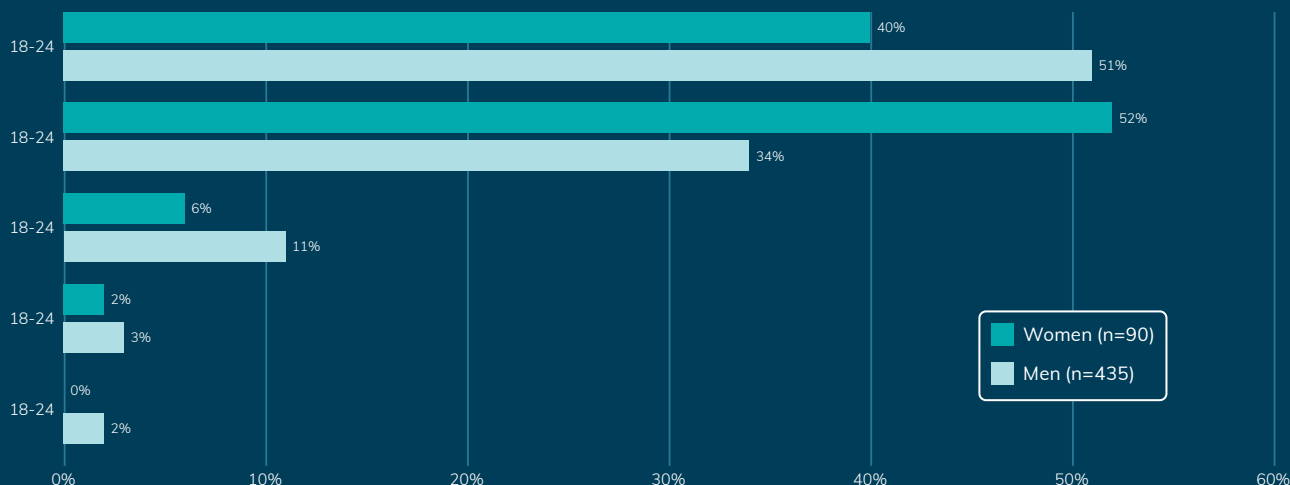
n=525

Migration status**



*Women are underrepresented due to barriers in accessing women respondents in fieldwork, who often avoid visibility due to safety concerns
**Migration status is self-reported. MMC does not ask for proof of status.

Age distribution

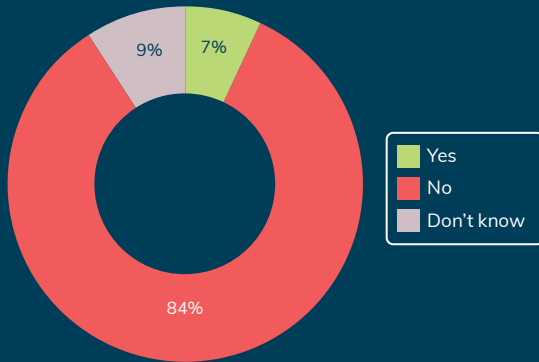


1 UN News (2024) [Afghanistan's Economy has 'Basically Collapsed': UNDP](#)
2 IPC (2024) [Afghanistan IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis: March - October 2024](#)
3 Mohammadi, A. et. al. (2023) [Afghan Women and Migration in the Era of Restrictions](#)

4 IOM DTM (2025) [Overview of migrant situation: Situation report - December 2024](#)
5 Weise, Z. et. al. (2024) [The EU is helping Turkey forcibly deport migrants to Syria and Afghanistan](#)

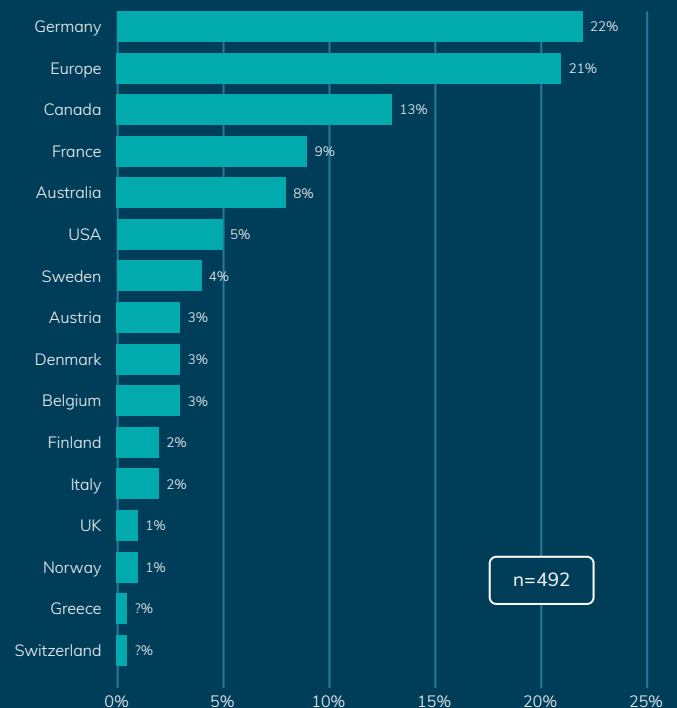
Tracking movements six months after the baseline

Have you reached the end of your journey?



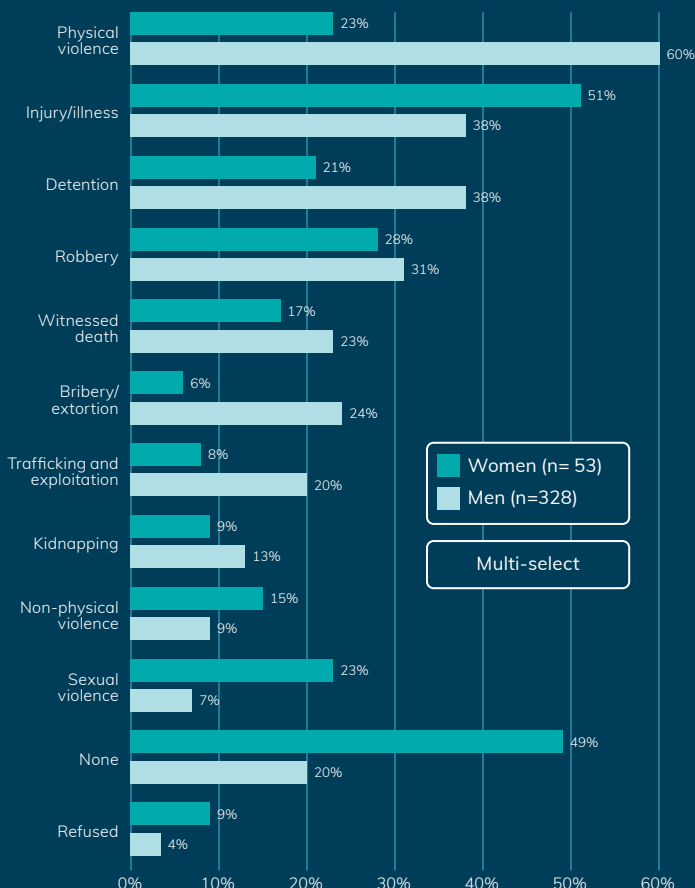
- 84% of respondents stated not having reached the end of their journey at the time of the interview, underscoring Türkiye's role as a critical transit point for Afghans.
- Among those planning to continue their journey, Germany emerged as a preferred destination, with 22% of respondents citing it. Additionally, 21% expressed a preference for moving to Europe, without specifying a particular country.

What is your preferred destination?

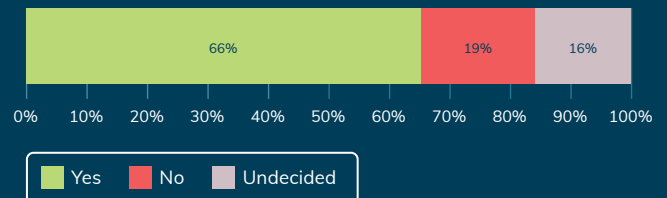


Abuses experienced during the journey

Have you personally experienced any of these types of incidents on your journey?



Would you have started this journey knowing what you know now?



Key findings

- Overall, 71% of respondents reported experiencing at least one incident during the journey. This was particularly prevalent among Afghan men, with 76% reporting such experiences, while Afghan women reported a lower incidence of 42%.
- Despite the high rates of dangers and abuse, 66% of respondents, when reflecting on their migration decision, said they would still have chosen to start the journey, while 19% would have reconsidered. This points to the dire situation in Afghanistan, where the risks of staying may be perceived as greater than the dangers of the journey, as remarked below:

“I used a smuggler because as a young woman I had no other choice. I didn't have a passport, and it would take ages to get one and a lot of money as well. I was aware of the hardship of the journey, but it was better than dying at the hands of the Taliban as they rape and kill women and military personnel.”

Access to information about the journey

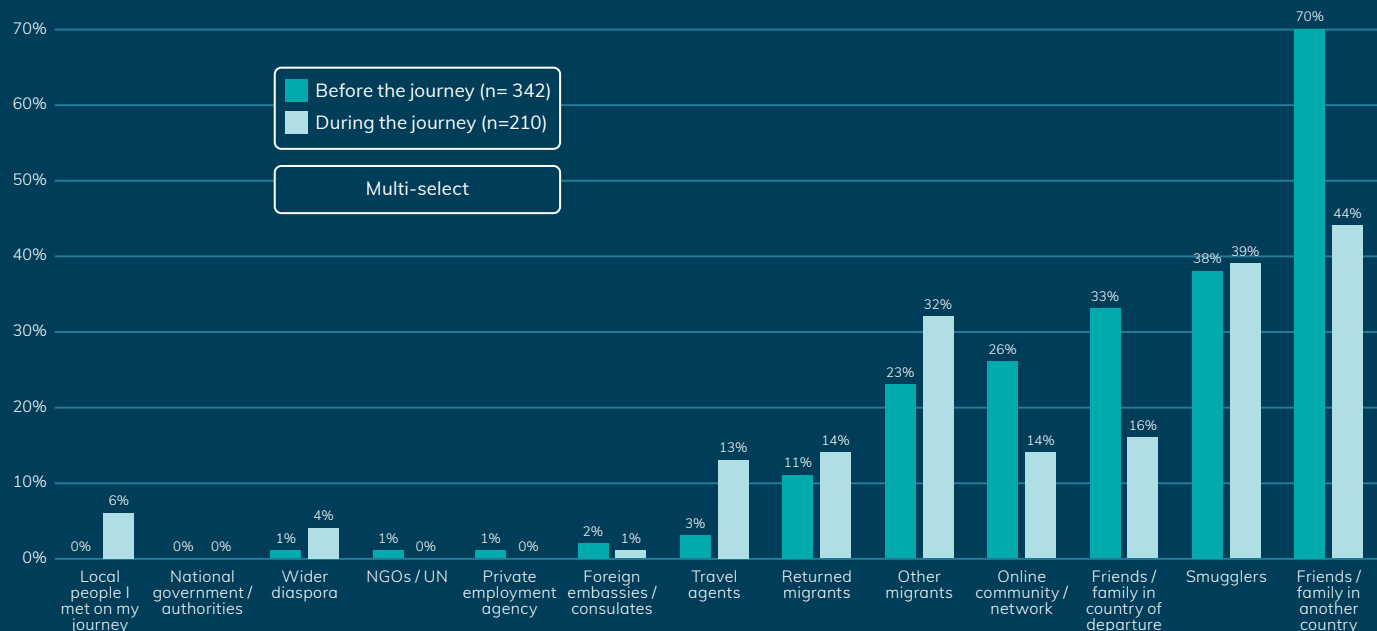


65% obtained information about routes, destination, cost, risks, etc. **before the journey**



40% obtained information about routes, destination, cost, risks, etc. **during the journey**

What were your sources of information about routes, destinations, costs, risks of the journey?



Key findings

- Friends and family abroad were the primary sources of information both before (70%) and during the journey (44%).
- Smugglers were the second most reported source of information, both before (38%) and during (39%) the journey. This contrasts with general trends observed globally, where smugglers typically become more prominent as information sources only during the journey itself.⁶
- Despite their prominence as information sources, smugglers had little influence on the decision to migrate. Only 2% of respondents identified smugglers as an influencer in their decision-making process. As noted by two interviewees below, friends and family abroad were the primary source of information, including for contacts of smugglers. In many cases, the decision to migrate had already been made before seeking out smugglers, with meetings for negotiation and information typically arranged prior to the journey.
- Formal sources, such as governments, NGOs, or the UN, were rarely cited as a source of information throughout the journey
- Given these insights into information-seeking behaviour, awareness-raising policies and programming should prioritise leveraging pre-existing social networks in improving access to timely and accurate information about the routes, destinations, costs, risks of the journey among Afghans.

“ When we arrived in Iran we called my friends in Afghanistan. They gave some telephone numbers of Afghan people in Iran. I called them and they said this guy is doing smuggling. I talked to him. The smuggler said it is not easy, and we have to walk as well. So, we made up our mind and tried our luck. On the roads, we were not making any contact, and we were just following what they were telling us. ”

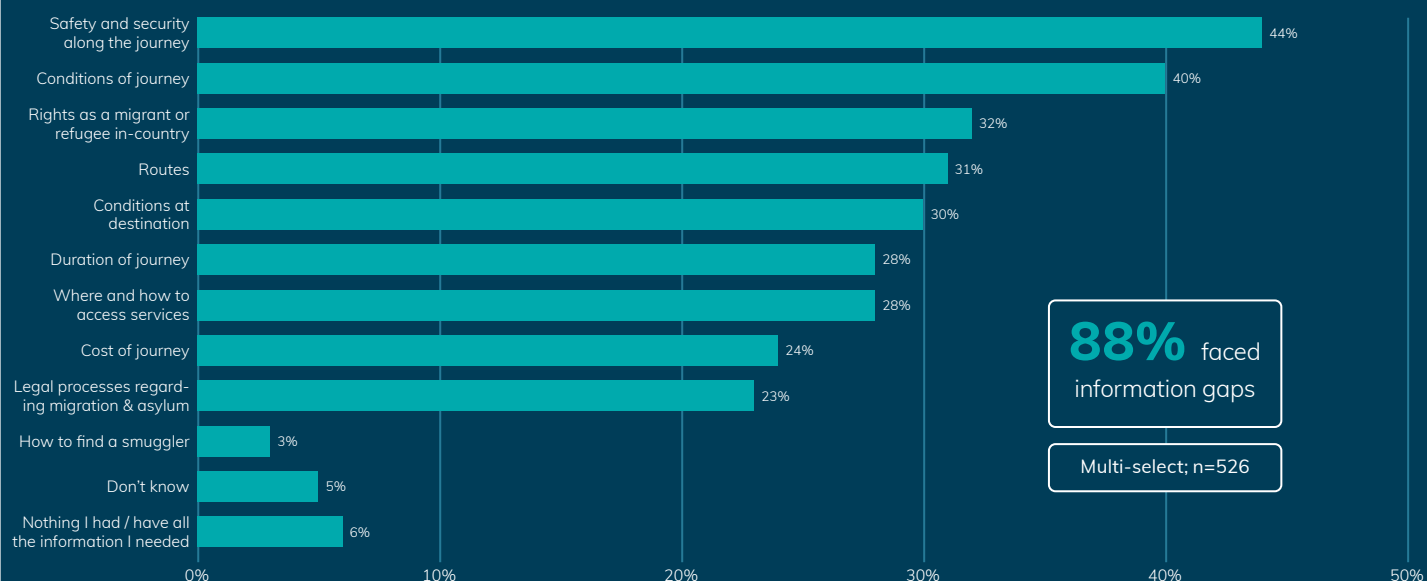
Afghan man, 48 years old, interviewed in Türkiye

“ I called the smuggler. We arranged a place [in Iran] to meet and after the meeting we agreed the terms. My friends helped me to find the smuggler. The smuggler was an Afghan guy and he told me that he had to pay to other smugglers to get me to Türkiye and the money did not go to him alone. ”

Afghan man, 43 years old, interviewed in Türkiye

Access to information about the journey

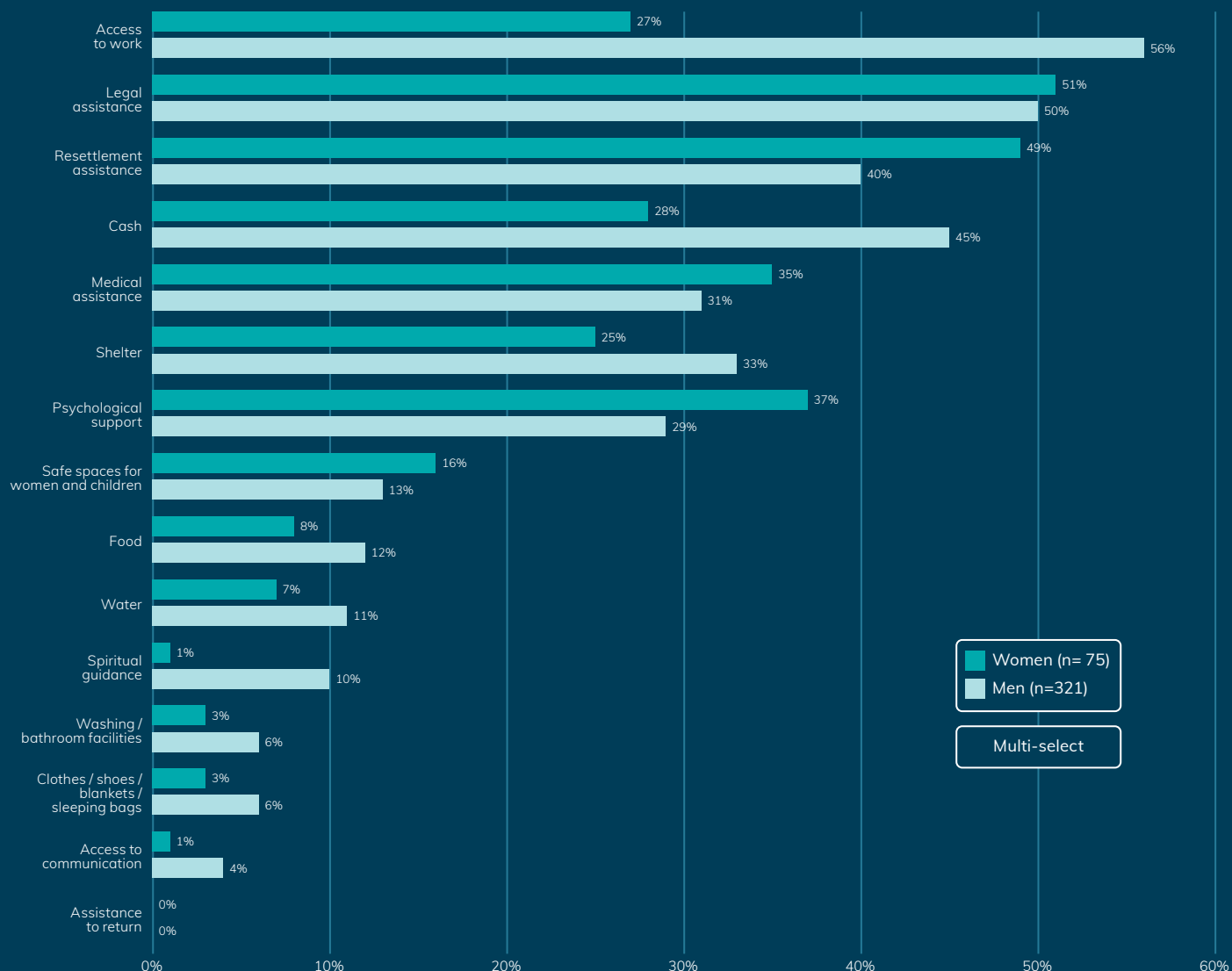
What information would have been most useful that you did not receive?



Assistance needs in Türkiye

75% of respondents were in need of assistance at time of interview, among these:

What kind of assistance do you need?



Key findings

- **Information gaps:** While 65% of respondents accessed information before the journey and 40% during it, 88% reported experiencing information gaps. These gaps were particularly notable regarding safety and security (44%) and journey conditions (40%). Targeted programming to address these information gaps could lead to more informed migration decisions among Afghans.
- **Assistance gaps:** Less than a quarter of the respondents (23%) reported receiving any assistance during their journey. Assistance gaps persisted upon arrival in Türkiye, with 75% of total respondents expressing a need for support at the time of interview. This need was more prevalent among women, with 83% of Afghan women reporting assistance needs compared to 74% of men.
- **Assistance needs:** The top 5 assistance needs varied slightly by gender. Access to work was the top priority for men, as reported by 56% of men compared to 27% of women, likely due to traditional gender norms where men are expected to be the primary income generators. On the other hand, 37% of women reported needing psychological support, making it the third most common need among women, compared to 29% of men.
- **Policy and programming:** These findings emphasize the need for targeted and inclusive policies and programs to address the assistance gaps faced by Afghans. It is crucial to prioritise gender-sensitive approaches and ensure adequate support.



4Mi data collection

4Mi is the Mixed Migration Centre's flagship primary data collection system, an innovative approach that helps fill knowledge gaps and inform policy and response regarding the nature of mixed migration and the protection risks for migrants on the move. 4Mi field enumerators are currently collecting data through direct interviews with migrants in Asia and the Pacific, Eastern and Southern Africa, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, North Africa, and West Africa.

Note that the sampling approach means that the findings derived from the surveyed sample provide rich insights, but the figures cannot be used to make inferences about the total population. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at: www.mixedmigration.org/4mi