

Monthly Migration Movements
Afghan Displacement Summary
April 2017

Introduction

This month, the CASWA 4Mi paper focuses on movement within Afghanistan and is based on interviews with 271 people who have started their journey within the country with the wish to migrate abroad.

The paper zooms in on the motivations for moving abroad. Based on this month data, economic factors is still a major reason to migrate, but the data also indicates a potential increase in people migrating due to political reasons including war, conflict and insecurity. This tendency could be expected as Afghan Opposition Groups during spring resume their activities in different parts of the country.

In line with analysis from previous months, this month’s data continues to show a high number of protection issues among those migrating. These issues are particularly prevalent in border provinces like Nimruz and Nangarhar; physical protection risks and cases of ransom and detention are significant. Another key theme in this paper is related to financing of irregular migration.

Movement from Afghanistan

In the April 4Mi data the majority of those interviewed from Afghanistan are Pashtun and Hazara adult men between 18 – 30 years old; thus a larger proportion of young people were interviewed during April representing a slightly different caseload compared to previous months.

Approximately half of the migrants interviewed are migrating from urban areas and nearly 50% reported that they were married. 40% of the interviewees have primary or no education while another 40% have secondary or high school education level. The rest reported that they hold a higher level education from a university or a religious school. More than 60% reported that their journey interrupted their study; mostly among those with secondary or high school education.

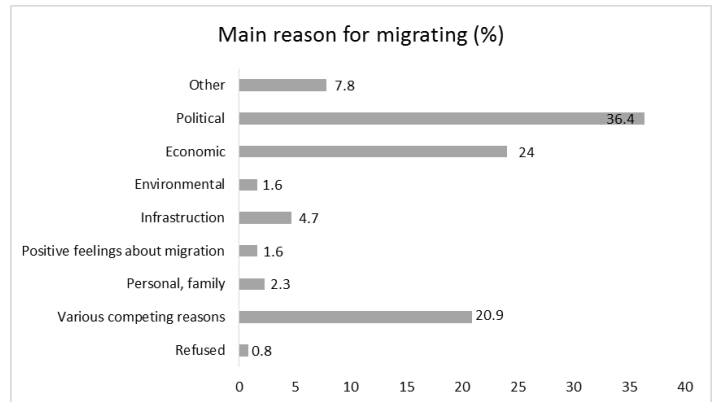
Push factors

In April, according to the 4Mi data, political factors stand out as the main reason to migrate from Afghanistan (36.4%). This seems to indicate a shift compared to previous months where economic factors were reported as the most dominant reason to migrate. However, the findings may not be surprising as activities among Afghan Opposition Groups (AOGs) resume during spring. At least two major attacks stand out. On the 8th of March, an armed group related to ISIS attacked the Sardar Davud military hospital in Kabul, which left more than 30 killed and 50 injured and on the 21st of April, a squad of 10 Taliban militants, disguised in Afghan Army uniforms, entered northern Afghanistan’s largest military installation and attacked hundreds of unarmed soldiers who were praying or

preparing for lunch, killing at least 140 soldiers and many more injured. The latter incident was the deadliest know attack on an Afghan military base in the last 16 years.

The increase in security incidents corresponds well with 4Mi data showing that people are migrating abroad because of conflicts and insecurity (72.3%) or ethnic or religious discrimination (15%). Most of those who mentioned conflicts and insecurity as the main reason to migrate are originally from provinces in north and east Afghanistan such as Kunduz, Nangarhar and Faryab. During the last two years conflicts in Afghanistan seem to have gradually been shifting from the South to North. The security situation in the above mentioned areas seems further to be deteriorating due to a noticeable number of suicide attacks.

A large group of people continue to move abroad to seek both short and long term job opportunities (24%). Their main destination is neighboring countries, especially Iran. Again, this month’s data indicates that migration is a livelihoods strategy for Afghan families. More than 45% of those who migrate for economic reasons, are sent by their families. 21% of interviewees report that there are various competing reasons for migrating.



Graph 1: main reason for migrating (%)

Pull Factors

The primary destination countries for migrants from Afghanistan are neighboring countries, especially Iran. Based on qualitative data from monitors, fewer Afghans are migrating to Pakistan due primarily to the poor economic and employment situation in the country and the deportation policies of the Pakistan government. On the contrary, Iran’s job market is still attracting many unemployed Afghans.

Around 20% of the interviewees mentioned European countries as their final destination, and 14% intended to go to

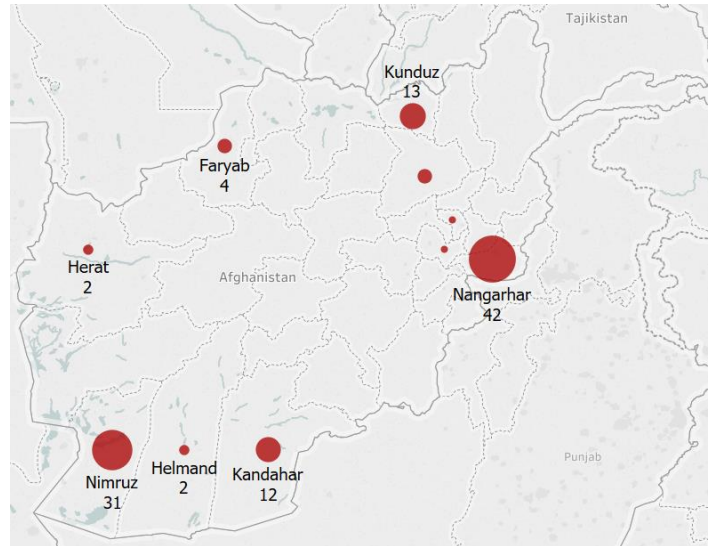
Turkey. As graph 2 below shows, 44% of the interviewees mentioned better economic opportunities in their intended destination country as the main reason to migrate. Generally better living standards (9.6%) and greater general security (6.3%) is other reasons for choosing a specific country for destination. This demonstrates the very mixed nature of Afghan migration patterns: One reason for leaving seems to be a worsening of political/security reasons – that is, a genuine protection concern – but the choice of destination depends heavily on economic factors. More than ¼ of the interviewed reported no single dominant reason for migrating.

Risks on route

Similar to last month, April 4Mi data shows high prevalence of physical protection violations and indicates that migrants face greatest risks in Nimruz and Nangarhar provinces; both are border provinces.

As illustrated in map 1, 112 incidences of death due to migration were reported by 45 interviewees. Most of the deaths were reported in Nangarhar (42) and Nimruz (31). The victims are mostly adults or young men. The main causes of death are shot or stabbed and vehicle accidents.

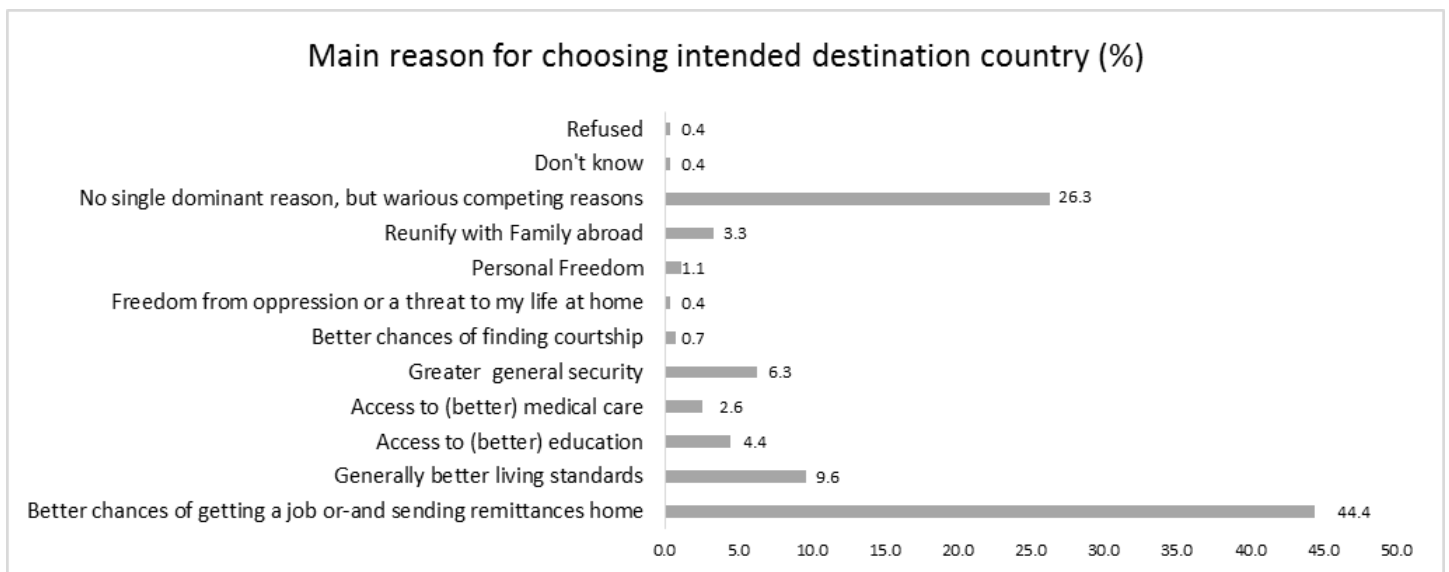
In April, 74 interviewees reported experiencing or witnessing physical assault incidents mainly in the form of mild physical abuse (slapping, beating, punching) and verbal abuse. Data indicates that smugglers, security forces/police and other authorities are the main groups responsible for these incidents. 15 incidents related to sexual assault and harassment was reported by 13 interviewees consisting of 8 indecent of assault or touching, 6 rapes, and 1 unspecified case of other nature. Most of the assaults or touching were reported in Kunduz and Nangarhar; in contrast most cases in the previous month happened in Nimruz, Kabul and Herat.



Map 1: Witnessed death

Due to the small number it's however not possible at the given time to estimate any significant change in location. In general, Nimruz province still continue to stand out when it comes to protection concerns for migrants. In most cases, the host community and single unknown individuals are reported to be responsible for the sexual assaults.

Detention and being held for ransom 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. This month, 15 cases of being held for ransom were reported out of which 10 cases were in Zaranj, Nimruz. The victims are mostly held by smugglers or militia (Talibs and local militia) and the increased trend may be caused by the poor economic situation in Afghanistan driving locals to conduct criminal activities. The mean amount of ransom paid is around 1400 USD by family members and friends and represent a payment in addition to the smuggling



fees already paid to accommodate the journey. Detention incidents (43 cases) occurred primarily in border provinces such as Nimruz and Herat. Some detainees had already tried to cross a border and got caught on their way by patrol guards. Others were detained by groups of gangs/thugs to obtain ransom. Some interviewees mentioned that they had been detained by Taliban; in most cases near Chahar-Borjak village on the Pakistan Border because of their ethnicity or religion. Most detainees were held in the police station or in a room, not handcuffed. In most cases, the incidents are not reported to the police or other authorities; interviewees mention that reporting an incident is useless (43%) or that they were unable to report (28%) the issue for unspecified reasons.

51 interviewees reported that they had been robbed or had witnessed other migrants being robbed, mostly in Nimruz (16 cases) and Nanagarhar (10 cases). Groups of gangs/thugs are mostly reported as responsible for the robberies. There were also 47 cases of bribery reported this month, mostly in Nimruz. The bribes are generally paid in the form of cash.

Networks and Finance

The 4Mi data collected in April shows that migrants get in contact with smugglers/brokers primarily with the help of facilitators (43%) and family or friends (23%). Smugglers are perceived by most migrants (82%) as professionals who are engaging in local and regional smuggling networks. Safe transit across border, accommodation, and collecting people from a meeting point are the main services provided by smugglers/brokers; other services include provision of documents, transportation, and liaising with authorities. As graph 3 shows, the most common method of guaranteeing payment to smuggler/broker are unofficial intermediary releasing the money after safe arrival (55.7%) and guarantee in the country of origin (30.4%). The latter is managed through a trusted third person who will pay out the money to the smuggler once the migrant has reached his/her destination safely.

Based on the data, almost half of the migrants borrow money from their family members or friends (49%) while others use their own savings (33%) in order to finance the journey. 28% reported that they paid for the entire journey prior to departure; the rest said that they will pay the smuggler after safe arrival to their destination country.

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.