

ASSISTED VOLUNTARY RETURN (AVR)



Overview

Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) is an area of expertise that IOM has developed over more than 25 years. In the last ten years IOM has assisted more than 1.6 million migrants worldwide through the programme. With its global network of 400 offices in migration countries of origin, transit and destination, IOM is well placed to develop and manage comprehensive approaches to voluntary return.

IOM offers a dignified, safe and cost-effective return option through the AVR programme, in which voluntariness is an important prerequisite. Voluntariness means that the return is based on a decision freely taken by the individual migrant concerned.

IOM's AVR services comprise the following:

- Arrangement of travel, including assistance in transit and reception on arrival.
- Pre-departure and post-arrival provision of information, counselling and referral.
- Arrangement of onward transportation to final in-country destination.
- Provision of immediate and longer-term reintegration assistance.
- Medical assistance.

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

IOM disseminates information on AVR services through its offices in countries where there is an Afghan Diaspora.

Questions are answered and stories are shared in order to help applicants reach a decision.

RETURN AND RECEPTION

Once an application for return assistance has been approved, the IOM sending mission makes the travel arrangements and IOM Afghanistan provides return and reception assistance through the IOM Airport Coordination Cell (ACC) at Kabul airport. The ACC's services also include transit assistance in Dubai.

On arrival at Kabul airport, ACC personnel identify and guide beneficiaries

through immigration and customs processes. Medical consultation and treatment, if necessary, are provided by IOM's doctor who is present at each planned arrival. In case further assistance is required, patients can be treated at the IOM Medical Clinic at the IOM Kabul office.

Temporary accommodation is provided upon request and returnees are also offered onward transportation assistance to their final destination. The return is coordinated with implementing partners including the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, Ministry of Rural

Donors	Governments of Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and United Kingdom
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM missions worldwide • Airport Coordination Cell at Kabul Airport • IOM Medical Clinic at IOM Kabul office • IOM main office in Kabul and sub-offices in Herat, Jalalabad, Kunduz, Takhar, Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kandahar, Helmand, Ghazni, Paktya, Paktika and Khost provinces
Areas of Return	Herat, Farah, Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, Kabul, Logar, Wardak, Parwan, Kapisa, Balkh, Sar-i-Pul, Jawzjan, Faryab, Samangan, Kunduz, Takhar, Badakhshan, Baghlan, Kandahar, Helmand, Ghazni, Paktya, Paktika and Khost provinces

Development, their provincial and district counterparts, UN agencies and NGOs.

INFORMATION, COUNSELING AND REFERRALS

IOM provides returnees with information and referrals relevant to their reintegration needs. IOM maintains a specialized database storing information on available services and local support activities offered by IOM's implementing partners in Afghanistan. The information includes a wide range of reintegration options including employment opportunities, self-employment schemes and skills development training.

REINTEGRATION

Due to the fragile situation in Afghanistan, well-structured reintegration assistance is necessary for sustainable return and reintegration. Following a series of consultations, individually tailored reintegration packages are prepared, based on the returnees' needs and preferences. Throughout the reintegration phase, IOM supports and monitors the process through seven sub-offices covering the whole country.

PROJECTS

IOM Afghanistan works closely with its mission in the UK to implement the Voluntary Assisted Return and Reintegration Programme (VARRP) to assist Afghan nationals returning from the UK. IOM manages the UK-supported Reintegration Fund to provide returnees with reintegration assistance.

The Norwegian-funded Information, Return, Reception and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals to Afghanistan project



targets members of the Afghan Diaspora with asylum seeker status or a residence permit in Norway, and offers assistance to Afghans to ensure their sustainable return and reintegration into Afghan society.

Under the Swiss-funded Information, Return, Reception and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals to Afghanistan project, IOM, in close coordination with the Swiss Federal Office for Migration, assists Afghan nationals with their sustainable return and reintegration.

In addition, the Danish-funded Reception and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals

to Afghanistan project offers reception and reintegration assistance to Afghans returning from Denmark.

IOM also implemented the Return, Reception and Reintegration of Afghan Nationals to Afghanistan project with funding from the European Commission, The Netherlands, Denmark and Germany from June 2003 until 30 April 2007. The project provided over 4,000 Afghans residing in 15 EU member countries with their return assistance, counselling and referral services.

The assistance package also included medical assistance, in-country transportation and temporary accommodation as needed. A total of 1,078 of returnees received longer-term reintegration assistance.

In an effort to contribute to community development, the project also provided livelihood assistance to 7,000 vulnerable community members including orphans and widows.

What is IOM?

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is an inter-governmental organization with 125 member states, a further 16 observer states and offices in over 100 countries. IOM works to ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian and other forms of assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced persons.

In Afghanistan, IOM programmes are implemented in close coordination with national government counterparts and are designed to support the goals of the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS).

BY NUMBERS (SINCE 2002)

7,657	Afghans helped to return to Afghanistan by IOM since 2003
2,505	Afghans provided with reintegration assistance by IOM
7,819	Afghans indirectly assisted through 12 related community projects
37	Countries, from which Afghan beneficiaries have returned

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