



Natural Hazards and Population Movements Inside Afghanistan: What the Data Show

September 2026 | Afghanistan

Context & Rationale

Afghanistan's diverse geography exposes the country to several natural hazards, particularly flooding, drought, and earthquakes. Despite the recurring nature of these hazards, preparedness remains low. As such, humanitarian impacts have been severe. Flooding in eastern Afghanistan in July 2026 caused twenty-six fatalities.¹ An earthquake one year earlier caused over 2,200 fatalities.² In addition to the substantial harm and damage experienced within affected areas, these hazards often force households to displace. For instance, the July 2026 flooding damaged or destroyed around 180 houses³ and the earthquake destroyed 8,500 houses,⁴ with shelter damage potentially contributing to

population displacement. Despite this, displacement figures are often not reported in the aftermath of hazards, making it difficult to understand the magnitude of the issue.

This situation overview discusses how and why populations move due to natural hazards, and the extent to which movements are driven by hazards. Additionally, the issue of forced immobility – the inability to displace – is highlighted. Then, destinations of population movements and the reasons for their selection are analysed. The last section looks at the different needs of populations who have moved internally compared to those who have not.

Key Messages

- With the reduction in conflict activity since 2021, economic pressures, food insecurity, and natural hazards have become the primary drivers of internal movements. In 2025, around 3.1 million Afghans lived in internal displacement.
- While forced displacement may have severe negative consequences, forced immobility may be similarly harmful. Forced immobility occurs when households lack the resources to displace, even when displacement would be preferable. In Afghanistan, this is a particular concern for the most impoverished households, and for women.
- Most internal movements occurred within provinces rather than across province boundaries, with the presence of social connections being the most common factor considered when choosing a destination. Most movements went towards economic centres, which provided better services and livelihood opportunities.
- Households who had moved involuntarily relied on less stable incomes and spent more on rent. Despite this, their needs across most humanitarian sectors were not obviously more severe than for households who had not moved involuntarily.

Methodology Overview

This situation overview primarily relies on three data sources.

- **IOM's Afghanistan Climate Vulnerability Assessment (ACVA)** is a nationwide community-level assessment focusing on the impacts of climate change in Afghanistan. It includes a displacement tracking module, in which *internally displaced persons (IDPs) are defined as Afghan nationals who were forced to leave their place of habitual residence between 2021 and 2025, in addition to those who returned from abroad in 2025 and did not return to their areas of origin.* It relies on community focal points who serve as key informants (KIs), with between one and five KIs interviewed in each of over 62,000 communities across all districts (401).^a The most recent data were collected between mid-April and December 2025.⁵
- **IMPACT's Humanitarian Situation Monitoring (HSM)** is a nationwide community-level assessment, focusing on needs across all sectors. One KI is interviewed in each location.^b KIs are selected based on their knowledge of the community and include administrators, community leaders, and others. The assessment is conducted two to four times a year, with around 12,000 KIs interviewed in each round, covering all districts (401). The most recent data were collected from 10 May to 7 June 2026. *IDPs are defined as persons who were forced to flee or leave their previous homes at any time.*

Afghanistan experiences frequent earthquakes, flooding, and multi-year droughts, with increasing risks of spring floods and droughts due to climate change.

Natural hazards are common across all regions of Afghanistan. A disaster risk profile issued by the World Bank in 2017 found that flooding was the most frequent hazard, at the time causing an average of around USD 54 million (m) in damages each year.⁸ Earthquakes were associated with the greatest fatalities, at an estimated 10,100 deaths between January 2000 and June 2026.^{8,9} Another 3 m persons lived in areas with (very) high risk of landslides in 2017, with 2 m exposed to avalanches.⁸ Other hazards, such as heatwaves and dust storms, are missing from many reports. In addition to these sudden-onset events, Afghans regularly experience slow-onset hazards.

- **IMPACT's Whole of Afghanistan Assessment (WoAA)** is an annual household-level data collection, focusing on needs across all sectors. Around 49,000 interviews were conducted in the summer of 2025, providing representative data for male-headed households across all districts (401), and representative data for female-headed households in nine provinces. The most recent data were collected from 13 July to 24 August 2025,⁶ with data collection for the 2026 round ongoing at the time of writing. *IDPs are defined as households who self-reported involuntary movements inside Afghanistan in the two years prior to data collection.*

In addition to these data, humanitarian reports accessible through ReliefWeb were considered. These were used to triangulate data and fill data gaps, improving the reliability of findings. Other reports enabled inclusion of qualitative data and case studies, while the above datasets primarily include quantitative data.^c

A limitation of this research is the lack of data on IDPs in Afghanistan. Many reports mention displacement as a driver of need, but do not disaggregate findings for IDPs. As such, some sections of this situation overview rely on single data sources, most notably the section comparing needs of households who had moved involuntarily to those who had not, reducing reliability. Other topics, such as nutrition, are not covered due to data gaps.

Drought is the most prominent due to its wide geographic spread, large number of persons affected,⁹ and critical implications for food security and livelihoods.¹⁰

Current Situation

In the three months prior to the May 2026 HSM data collection, key informants (KIs) in 35% of assessed communities reported drought. This was a reduction of 22% compared to the February to March 2026 round of data collection,⁶ reflecting improved water availability following adequate spring rainfall.¹¹ While contributing to improved water availability, strong rainfall alongside spring snowmelt caused severe flooding between March and May 2026. **Some 20% of assessed communities saw KIs reporting floods. This particularly affected the eastern region,^{6,12,13} overlapping with areas affected by cross-border conflict¹⁴ and the August 2025 earthquake.¹⁵** Another 7% of assessed communities saw

^a Recent administrative changes have resulted in a new total of 457 districts. All data used here were collected prior to this amendment; at the time of these data collections, there was a total of 401 districts.

^b Until round 12 (February to March 2026), KIs were asked to report not only on their own settlements, but to consider conditions in any settlement within a 5km radius in their responses. This was changed in round 13 (May to June 2026) when KIs were asked to only answer based on conditions in their own settlements.

^c The included datasets are quantitative in the sense that their findings can be expressed as numbers, such as the total number of displaced persons or the proportion of displaced households that had access to clean water. Quantification is made possible by using multiple choice questions and numeric questions in the interviews. By contrast, qualitative data cannot be expressed as numbers and instead provide descriptive information. For instance, households may be asked to describe why they were displaced, or groups of respondents might be brought together to discuss the types of problems displaced persons face.

KIs reporting that their communities generally experience winter snowfalls so severe that they prevent households from leaving the settlement.⁶

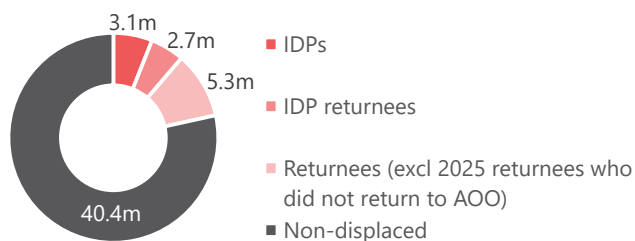
Outlook

Several natural hazards are set to worsen due to climate change. Afghanistan is already experiencing strong changes in climate, with temperatures having increased more strongly than the global average across the past decades.^{16,17} Higher temperatures increase water demand, increasing the risk of drought and contributing to a long-term drying trend. On the other hand, glacier melt paired with earlier, more rapid snowmelt, and a shift from snowfall to rainfall combine to increase the risk of spring flooding.¹⁸ A more in-depth discussion of climate change in Afghanistan is available in a [previous report](#).

Around 3.1 m persons were estimated to have been living in internal displacement in 2025.

IOM's Afghanistan Climate Vulnerability Assessment (ACVA) offers the most comprehensive and recent population data, interviewing 89,000 community focal points across 62,000 communities. **The ACVA estimated that the total number of persons living in displacement in 2025 was around 3.1 m, or around 6% of the Afghan population (see fig. 1).**^a This included some 470,000 who returned from abroad in 2025 but did not return to their areas of origin.⁵ Additionally, between April and December 2025, an estimated 380,000 persons were displaced for less than a month and are not included in the overall displacement figure. Many of these persons were displaced from eastern Afghanistan, likely due to the August 2025 earthquake.⁵

Fig.1 ACVA 2025 Population Estimates^{a,5}



While high, the estimate of 3.1 m IDPs suggests a decrease from late 2021, when IOM estimated that 5.5 m persons were internally displaced.¹⁹

The type of hazard, conditions in potential destinations, and households' resources all impact movement decisions.

Push Factors

The literature suggests that sudden-onset hazards such as flooding tend to cause rapid, large-scale displacements which are often short in duration.²⁰ Here, damage to housing and other infrastructure is a major driver of displacement.²¹ Indeed, research conducted by ACAPS in Balkh province in northern Afghanistan suggests that floods most commonly caused displacement due to damage or destruction of shelters.²²

By contrast, slow-onset events such as drought and long-term trends such as land degradation have diverse impacts on population movements, depending on the persons affected as well as economic, social, political, and other considerations.²⁰ ACAPS' research found that drought in Balkh led to depleted livelihoods, reduced access to basic services, and increased costs, which gradually pushed households to a tipping point.²²

Pull Factors

In addition to negative conditions experienced in the area of origin (push factors), households consider their outlook in their potential destinations (pull factors). In the case of movements due to environmental pressures, these pull factors often include better environmental conditions (such as greater water availability in cases of drought-related movements, or lower flood risks), stronger economies, and higher living standards.²³ In this sense, if the movement is not forced, migration can be a positive adaptation strategy. It may reduce households' exposure to hazards, increase access to livelihoods and services, and provide remittances for populations in the areas of origin. This is referred to as "adaptive migration."²⁴

Forced Immobility

The other side of displacement is forced immobility. This occurs when the household is unable to displace due to a lack of financial resources, access to information, social networks, working-aged adults, and other barriers.²⁴ **In Balkh, ACAPS found that "participants in the [place of origin] did not always frame displacement as the worst-case scenario, with at least three participants saying that they could not afford to move to safer locations despite wishing to displace."**²²

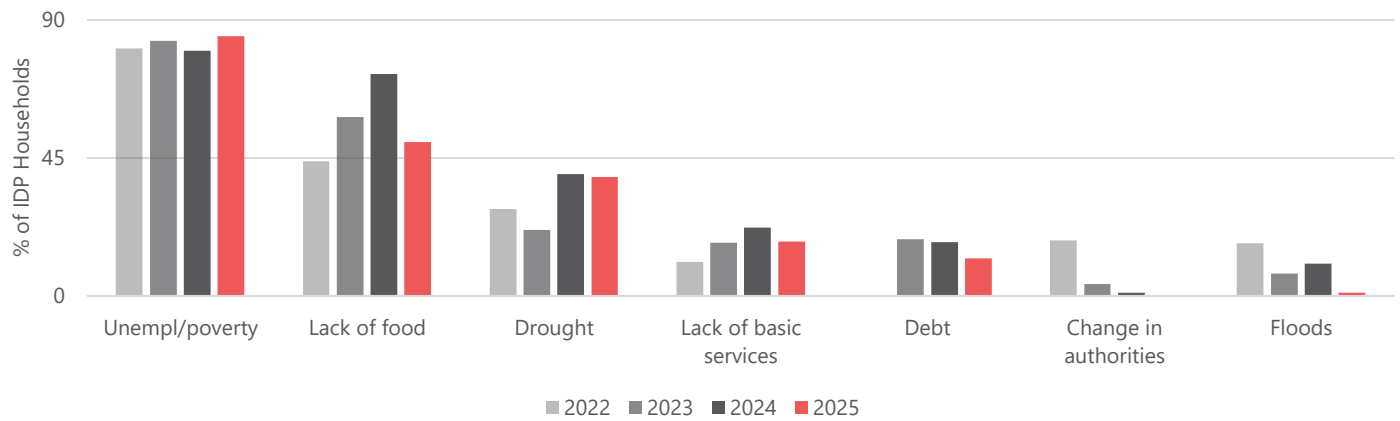
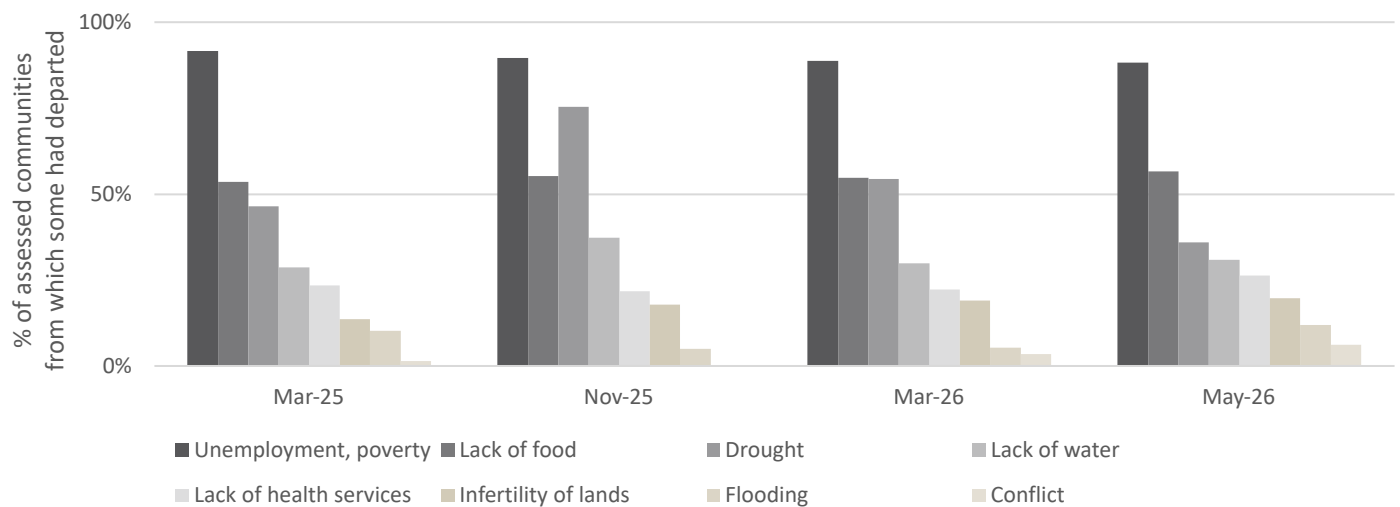
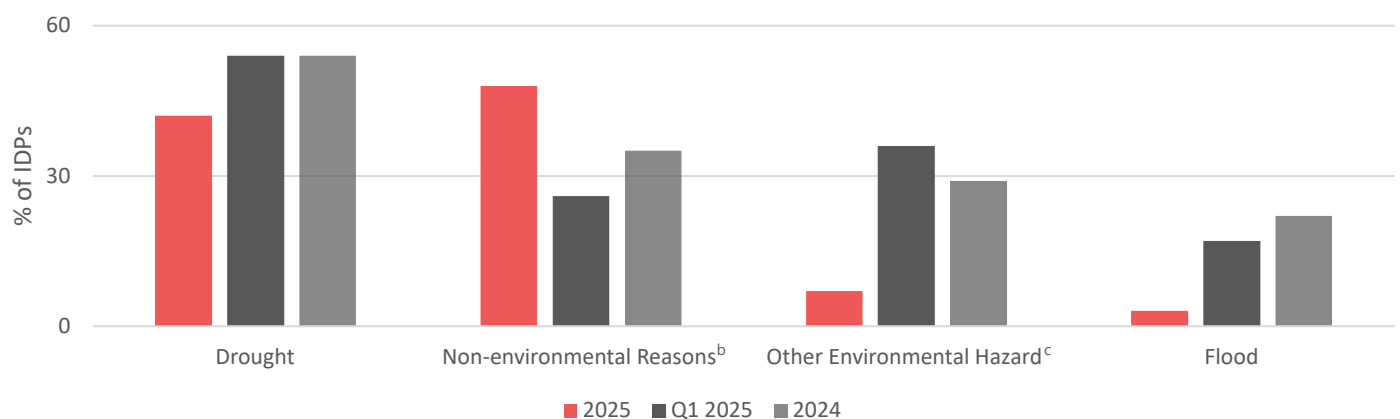
Decisions to return are equally complex, affecting displacement duration. For instance, infrastructure damage, perceived likelihood of hazards recurring, place attachment (how strongly a person feels connected to the area they were displaced from), or the choice of neighbours to return and rebuild, affect households' decisions.²¹ **ACAPS found that displaced persons in Balkh often desired to return but could not due to the associated costs and lack of income opportunities in their areas of origin.**²²

Poverty increases vulnerability to natural hazards while natural hazards increase the risk of poverty; together, they are key drivers of internal movements in Afghanistan.

Poverty or unemployment were the most frequently reported causes of internal movements in IMPACT's datasets (see fig. 2 and fig. 3). In the summer of 2025, 85% of all households who reported recent^b involuntary movement reported having had to move for these reasons. **This was followed by a lack of access to food in the area of origin, reported by 50%.⁷** In the three rounds of HSM data collected since then, poverty and food insecurity remained the most reported causes of forced movements (see fig. 3).^{6,7}

^a ACVA displacement figures include only those displaced since 2021. Causes of displacement include economic pressure, access to basic services, and others not explicitly linked to conflicts or hazards/disasters.

^b IDPs are considered to have been "recently" displaced if they moved in the 6 months prior to data collection.

Fig.2 WoAA Primary Causes of Involuntary Movements in the 6 Months Prior to Data Collection^{a,7}**Fig.3 HSM Primary Causes of Departures in the 3 Months Prior to Data Collection^{a,6}****Fig.4 ACVA Primary Causes of Internal Displacements in the Reference Period^{a,5}**

By contrast, IOM's ACVA data suggest that non-environmental reasons caused only half of new internal movements in 2025 (48%; see fig. 4). These non-environmental reasons were diverse, primarily including economic reasons, but also shelter issues, lack of access to basic services, and safety concerns.⁵

In addition to methodological differences,^d a likely explanation for the variation in findings is the number of causes reported by each KI. In the HSM, the majority of KIs provided two or more causes of departures, with well over half reporting three or more reasons. Households on average gave over two reasons for their last involuntary

^a Respondents could select multiple answer options, and displacement causes may overlap.

^b Examples of non-environmental reasons were economic pressures, shelter issues, lack of access to basic services, and safety concerns.

^c Other environmental hazards included earthquakes, storms, avalanches, and others.

^d IOM's ACVA data includes only IDPs that were displaced in 2025, while the figures from the WoAA include only involuntary movements in the first half of 2025, and HSM data includes departures in the 3 months prior to data collection. Additionally, the units of measurement differ substantially between proportion of communities, proportion of households, and proportion of individual IDPs. Other differences include the questionnaires used, IOM's method of converting community KI data to proportions of individuals, among others.

movements. By contrast, most KIs in the ACVA reported a single cause.

Due to the reliance on agriculture and livestock for livelihoods across Afghanistan, both environmental and economic causes of internal movements are linked. The most common impact of natural hazards reported by KIs in hazard-affected communities was taking on debt, followed by diminished or lost sources of income, and limited access to food.⁶

Additionally, poor households are disproportionately impacted by natural hazards. They are more likely to live in areas with recurring hazards as land tends to be cheaper and they do not have the resources to relocate. They tend to rely more on livelihoods that are vulnerable to hazards, such as agriculture. Their assets are more vulnerable to damage; for instance, mudbrick housing is more vulnerable to floods than concrete shelters. Given that their consumption tends to be on the verge of subsistence, they are less able to cope with increased costs, such as increased food prices after a drought, health expenses due to injuries, and the cost of rebuilding assets.²⁵

These links between poverty and natural hazards are seen in the associations between reported causes of movements. **KIs who reported poverty and unemployment as a cause of departures were more likely to also report a lack of food, drought, and a lack of water; see table 1.** Those who did not report economic causes for departures were far more likely to report conflict as a cause.⁶

Drought and Other Hazards

Drought was the third most reported cause of internal movements in IMPACT's datasets, and the most frequently reported natural hazard. In the summer of 2025, 39% of households who had recently moved involuntarily reported drought as a cause of that movement.⁷ Drought was reported at similar rates by both IMPACT's and IOM's KIs.^{5,6} Indeed, the 2024/25 agricultural season saw severe drought affecting the majority of the country.²⁶ Crop farmers experienced reduced wheat yields while livestock farmers reported deaths of their animals, deteriorating body conditions, and distress sales.²⁷

Other natural hazards caused fewer movements, likely due to their localised nature. For instance, floods were reported by between 1% (in 2025) and 17% (in 2022) of households who reported involuntary movements, while

earthquakes and avalanches or heavy snowfall were reported by less than 2% in all years.⁷

Conflict displacement is no longer common.

Causes of internal movements have changed drastically since the change in authorities in August 2021, shifting from primarily conflict-related causes to economic and natural hazard-related causes. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimated two distinct peaks in new annual displacements due to conflict. In 2016, it was estimated that 653,000 were displaced due to hostilities,²⁸ with a major conflict event in Kunduz by non-state armed groups having led to the displacement of almost 120,000 persons.²⁹ The second peak was in 2021, reaching 723,000 conflict displacements,²⁸ coinciding with widespread hostilities and a change in authorities. In the following year, the estimated number of conflict displacements dropped to 32,000 persons, just 4% of the previous year.²⁸

Conflict has reemerged as a cause of displacement in 2026, reported in 3% of assessed communities in May 2026. This was most common in the provinces of Kunar (22%), Khost (16%), and Nuristan (14%) on the eastern border of Afghanistan.⁶ **This was linked to the ongoing hostilities between Pakistan and Afghanistan, which saw a major escalation starting in February 2026.**³⁰

Poverty may leave households unable to migrate, while restrictions on women's movements, caregiving responsibilities, and poor access to information cause female-specific barriers to movement.

Financial limitations were reported to have prevented households from leaving their current locations in over three quarters of all assessed communities.⁶ Reflecting this, the IDMC noted that the magnitude 6.0 earthquake in August and the magnitude 6.2 earthquake in November 2025 caused fewer than 8,200 displacements as households already resided in precarious conditions and had no safe alternatives.³¹ Even when poor households are able to relocate, their migration outcomes are generally worse than those of better-off households.²⁴

Other barriers included a lack of travel documentation, reported by KIs in 43% of assessed communities.⁶ This more plausibly affects households that planned to move abroad.

Table 1 HSM May 2026 - Primary Causes of Departures in the 3 Months Prior to May 2026⁶

"No economic causes" includes data from communities where KIs did not report unemployment/poverty as causes of departures. (% of assessed communities that saw any departures, as reported by KIs)

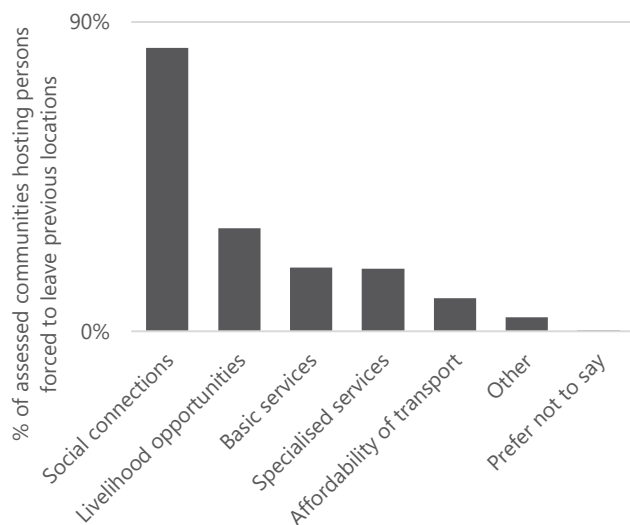
	Number of responses	Lack of food	Drought	Lack of water	Lack of health services	Infertility of land	Conflict	Flooding
No economic causes	612	31%	23%	19%	20%	21%	31%	17%
Economic causes	4,628	60%	38%	33%	27%	20%	3%	11%

In 13% of assessed communities, KIs reported cultural limitations as barriers to movement.⁶ While this could include a variety of constraints, **IOM discusses barriers hindering women from evacuating in case of natural hazards.** For instance, mahram requirements^a mean that women may be unable to evacuate independently. Women who have caregiving obligations for children, the elderly, or persons with disabilities may feel particularly unprepared to displace on short notice. Additionally, many women do not have access to a personal phone, and so may have limited access to information, reducing their ability to receive early warning and disaster information.³³

Households chose their destinations primarily based on their social connections.

Presence of social connections was the most reported reason why persons had moved to assessed communities, reported in May 2026 by KIs in 83% of locations that hosted households forced to leave their previous locations (see fig. 5). All other pull factors were markedly less prevalent. While poverty and unemployment were the most reported push factor, better livelihood opportunities were reported as a pull factor in only 30% of assessed communities. This was followed by better access to basic services (19%) and specialised services (18%).⁶

Fig.5 HSM May 2026 Pull Factors⁶



Movements away from rural areas were more often linked to natural hazards; movements towards urban areas were often motivated by access to livelihoods and services.

For communities of any size, unemployment or poverty were the most reported push factors while presence of social connections was the main pull factor. However, beyond these primary factors, urban and non-urban areas differed substantially.

In a third (34%) of assessed urban settlements that

saw departures, unemployment or poverty was the only reported reason. By contrast, KIs in 12% of smaller assessed settlements exclusively reported economic causes.

34% of urban areas saw KIs exclusively reporting economic causes of departures

12% of non-urban areas saw KIs exclusively reporting economic causes of departures

Urban settlements were less likely to have seen departures due to natural hazards (see fig. 6). In 9% of assessed urban communities, KIs reported that drought had caused departures, and in less than 1% they reported flooding, earthquakes, or avalanches. By contrast, in 37% of non-urban communities from which households had departed, KIs reported drought as a cause, and in 12% they reported flooding. Very small communities saw departures due to avalanches, with KIs in 8% of assessed communities with less than 100 persons having reported departures due to avalanches or heavy snowfall (compared to 0.3% of all other communities).⁶

Pull factors even more clearly distinguished between urban areas and all other communities. In urban areas, pull factors included better livelihood opportunities, better access to basic and/or specialised services, and affordability of transport to the community. Personal connections were less common, reported in 67% of urban areas that had received persons forced to leave their previous homes compared to 84% of non-urban areas.

67% of urban areas saw KIs reporting personal connections as a pull factor

84% of non-urban areas saw KIs reporting personal connections as a pull factor

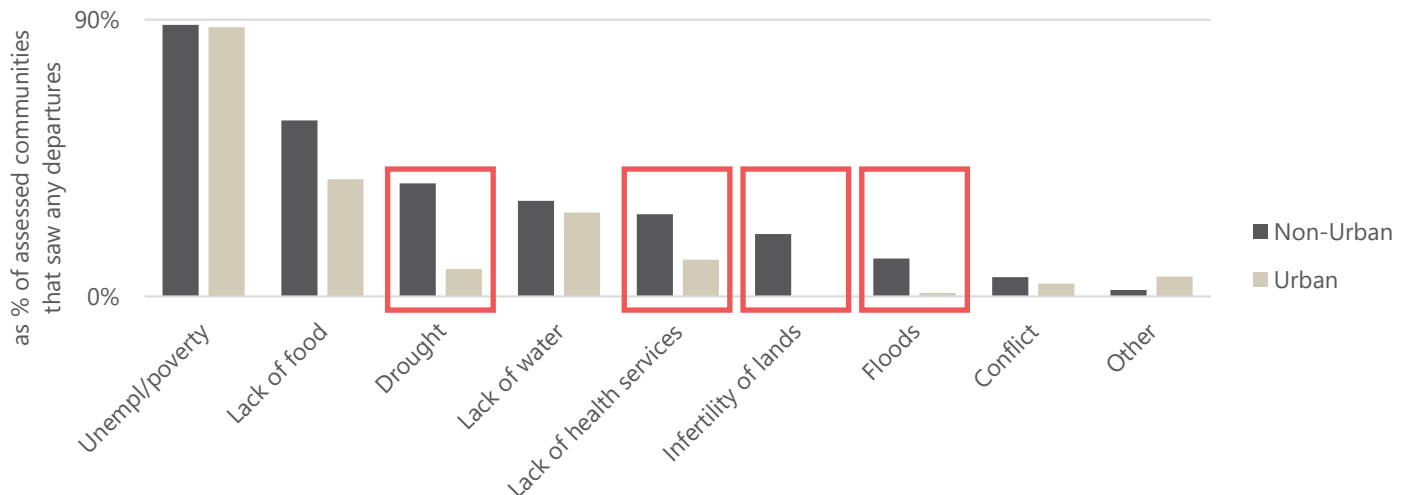
The push and pull factors shown here highlight a broader trend found in the literature, in which climate change and drought exacerbate rural-to-urban movements.^{20,24,34} Afghanistan has been experiencing a steady increase in the proportion of urban population, up from 19% in 2000 to 26% in 2024,³⁵ in addition to rapid population growth, estimated at 11% in 2025 due to high rates of cross-border returns and high fertility rates.³⁶

Most IDPs resided in Afghanistan's economic centres, with most internal movements having happened within provinces.

IOM's ACVA data suggest that the main locations hosting IDPs are the major economic centres of Afghanistan. These include Herat, Kabul, Mazar-e Sharif, and Jalalabad.⁵ This is consistent with the previously discussed impacts of natural hazards, climate change, and environmental degradation on rural livelihoods.

^a The de-facto authorities do not permit women to travel long distances without being accompanied by a male relative, called a mahram. While the official permissible distance of travel for unaccompanied women is 72 km, authorities inconsistently prohibit short-distance travel.³²

^b For ease of classification, communities that had subdivisions into police districts were considered urban.

Fig.6 HSM May 2026 Causes of Departures by Settlement Type⁶

While urban areas host the largest numbers of displaced populations, they are also the most populous, meaning that they do not necessarily carry the largest burden of displacement. Further considerations may include the proportion of population that is displaced - see case study on Nimroz below.

Displacement in Nimroz

Nimroz in Southwestern Afghanistan had the highest proportion of IDPs relative to the total population, at 15%.⁵ KIs in Nimroz pointed to drought as one of the main reasons why persons had arrived in their communities.^{5,6} These IDPs came both from within Nimroz and from other provinces.⁵ Agriculture in Nimroz relies on irrigation due to low levels of precipitation. However, FEWS NET found that in 2025, Nimroz was one of only two areas that saw poor irrigated crop conditions.²⁶ In November 2025, KIs in 40% of assessed communities indicated that harvests were much lower than usual, and in 3% that they had failed entirely, with drought, alongside economic barriers to purchasing inputs (such as seeds and pesticides) and pests having been the main reasons for crop losses.⁶ Thus, Nimroz provides an example of a province with a high burden of movements due to natural and man-made pressures on agricultural livelihoods.

IDPs most often moved within their own provinces. In the exceptional cases where the majority of IDPs came from other provinces, these tended to be neighbouring provinces.⁵ This may be explained by the importance of social connections in selecting destinations (pull factor in 83% of assessed communities that hosted persons forced to leave their previous locations), as well as the less-reported pull factor of affordability of transport to the destination (10%).⁶

Cross-border movements

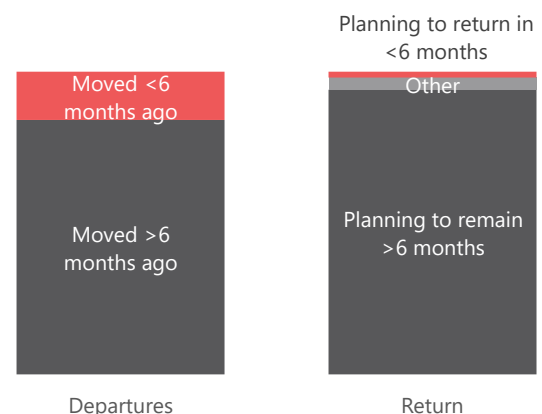
In addition to internal movements, environmental stressors are driving cross-border movements into foreign countries. IOM's ACVA found that between April and December 2025, an estimated 675,000 persons left Afghanistan due to the impact of climate on their livelihoods.⁵ While not the focus of this situation overview, this is an example of climate change driving international population flows.

Most households who had moved involuntarily had no immediate plans to return to their areas of origin, with reasons being varied.

IOM estimated that over 518,000 IDPs returned to their areas of origin in 2025, exceeding new displacements (490,000).⁵ By contrast, household data suggest that the rate of new involuntary movements outstrips intentions to return. **In the summer of 2025, almost all households who self-reported involuntary movements had no immediate plans to return.** Overall, 95% planned to stay in their current location for at least 6 more months, and only 2% planned to return to their areas of origin (see fig. 7).⁷ Data from KIs across 2025 and 2026 similarly suggest

Fig.7 WoAA 2025 Movement Intentions⁷

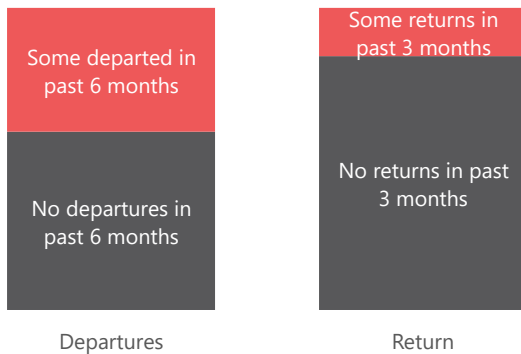
(as % of households that had moved involuntarily)



that more communities were seeing departures than returns. In May 2026, KIs in 41% of assessed communities reported that households had departed from the community in the three months prior to data collection, compared to 16% in which they reported returns (including cross-border) (see fig. 8).⁶

Fig.8 HSM May 2026 Population Movements⁶

(as % of assessed communities)



The lack of intention to return may reflect a genuine preference for remaining in the current place of residence, or may be a result of barriers limiting households' ability to return. Several localised assessments point to the latter.

In Balkh, ACAPS found that climate-displaced households generally wanted to return but were unable to due to a lack of resources, including to rebuild their homes, and a lack of livelihood opportunities, including due to poor agricultural conditions.²²

IDPs in Kabul indicated that they lacked land or housing in their areas of origin or that it had been damaged and they were unable to afford rebuilding. Further, given the economic situation at the time of the assessment (December 2023 to January 2024), households were reluctant to return without assurances of financial support and job opportunities.³⁷

An assessment across various displacement sites in Afghanistan highlighted that conflict-affected IDPs wanted to return to their areas of origin, but needed access to employment, schools, healthcare, housing, and other services in their area of origin to make this feasible.³⁸

For communities that did see internal or cross-border returns, **KIs most often reported that persons returned because they had property and/or family in the community.**

While less common, KIs in over a quarter of communities with returns reported safety as a reason for returning.⁶ This is surprising as, in the summer of 2025, only 4% of households that self-reported involuntary movements reported that active or anticipated conflict or explosive hazards contributed to their most recent movement,⁷ suggesting that security is no longer a major factor for internal movements. Previous research also indicates that while absence of conflict is necessary for returns, it is not sufficient.³⁸

The fourth most common reason for returns was that returnees had a workplace in the community, reported in over 25% of communities with returns.⁶

Households who self-reported involuntary movements relied on unstable incomes and high rental costs, but needs were largely in line with those of households who did not report involuntary movements.

For both households who had and had not moved involuntarily, casual or daily labour was the most common source of income.⁷ In June 2026, casual labour was estimated to provide less than two days of work per week at a daily wage rate of 307 AFN (4.8 USD).³⁹ This type of labour was more common among households who had moved involuntarily (63% compared to 52%), who less often worked on own production (such as farming or handicrafts; 28% compared to 44%), but with similar prevalence of own businesses or regular trade (27% compared to 25%).⁷ **As such, incomes of households who had moved involuntarily were less stable.**

Despite this, total income per household member was estimated at similar levels for both groups, at 1,000 AFN per member. This is mirrored by expenditures, often used as a proxy indicator for long-term income. Regular monthly expenses were estimated around 1,100 AFN per member for both groups.⁷

The most notable difference in expenditures was that households who had moved involuntarily were substantially more likely to have had rent expenses (see table 2). Over a third (38%) had spent money on rent in the month prior to data collection (compared to only 5%). Rent expenditures were substantial relative to incomes, estimated at a median of 333 AFN per member for those that had moved involuntarily and reported any rent expenses.⁷

This reflects major differences in shelter situation between the two groups. **While 89% of non-displaced^a households owned their shelters, only 20% of IDP^a households did. Instead, they most often rented their shelters (44%) or were hosted for free (35%).⁷** In contrast, KIs reported that households who had been forced to leave their previous locations were most commonly hosted by friends, family, or other community members (52% of assessed communities that hosted households who had been forced to leave), with renting somewhat less commonly reported (24%).⁶

Table 2 WoAA 2025 Shelter Indicators⁷

(as % of households)

	IDP ^a	Non-Displaced ^a
Owened their shelters	20%	89%
Any rent expenses	38%	5%
Previous eviction threat	5%	1%
Most common shelter	individual shelters with mud walls, sun-dried bricks, or burnt bricks	
Most common issues	indoor temperatures, lack of ventilation, leaks	

^a For ease, this section refers to households who self-reported involuntary movements as "IDPs", and households who had neither involuntarily moved nor were returnees as "non-displaced households." As such, IDPs include households who moved due to economic pressures and other factors not conventionally included in displacement definitions.

Differences in occupancy arrangements led to higher risk of eviction for households who had moved involuntarily, with 5% already having been threatened with eviction (compared to 1% of households who had not moved involuntarily) and 8% having self-reported risk of eviction within the six months after data collection (compared to 1%).⁷ Authorities have conducted evictions in recent years, particularly from informal settlements, with several reports from 2024 and earlier discussing this issue.^{40,41} Reports of more recent evictions are not available. However, the 2026 Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan (HNRP) indicated that over 9 m persons remained in informal settlements and faced heightened risk of eviction.⁴²

Besides differences in occupancy arrangements and hence eviction risks, the shelter situation appeared consistent across both groups. Most lived in individual shelters made of mud walls (pakhsa), sun-dried bricks, or burnt bricks. They faced issues with indoor temperatures (too hot/cold), lack of ventilation, and leaks.⁷

Considering food security, **households who had moved involuntarily less often reported own food production as a main food source (18% compared to 31%; see table 3), while other sources were similar** – primarily purchasing food with cash or credit. Surprisingly, this difference in food sources was not reflected in different levels of food expenditures.⁷ This might have been expected, given that availability of food from households' farms should reduce demand for food from markets.

Food security indicators provided a mixed picture.

The Food Consumption Scores (FCS), a marker of dietary diversity,⁴³ showed a quarter (24%) of IDP households with "poor" FCS (thresholds 28/42^a) compared to a fifth of non-displaced households (20%), and slightly fewer scored "acceptable" (19% compared to 22%). However, FCS is the only food security indicator on which IDP households performed worse. The Household Hunger Score (HHS), which has a longer recall than the FCS and measures more severe food consumption gaps, was similar for both groups. The Livelihoods Coping Strategy Index (LCSI) was also similar, though households who had not moved involuntarily more often relied on coping strategies relevant to agriculture and livestock. These households also performed worse on the reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI). However, coping strategies may be exhausted over time, such that the rCSI may be less sensitive to food insecurity among households facing protracted stresses.⁷

Table 3 WoAA 2025 Food Indicators⁷

(as % of households)

	IDP	Non-Displaced
Main food sources	cash purchases (94%) credit purchases (75%) borrowed (33%) own production (18%)	cash purchases (90%) credit purchases (76%) borrowed (30%) own production (31%)
Poor FCS	24%	20%
Moderate HHS	21%	21%
Emergency LCSI	24%	24%
High rCSI	5%	9%

Both groups relied on similar water sources, primarily groundwater accessed through wells, boreholes, or karezes, as well as piped water and surface water (see table 4). The primary issues were a lack of containers to collect or store water, non-functional or insufficient water points, and the taste or quality of the water. Generally, water was sufficient for domestic purposes.⁷

Less data are available on sanitation and hygiene, but both groups most often relied on pit latrines and generally did not share these facilities with other households. They also tended to have a handwashing station – usually a portable water container such as a water jug, with water usually available, but soap often unavailable (37% of households).⁷

Table 4 WoAA 2025 WASH Indicators⁷

(as % of households)

	IDP	Non-Displaced
Main drinking water source	groundwater, piped water, surface water	
Water issues	lack of containers, non-functional/insufficient water points, issues with taste/quality	
Most common latrine types	pit latrines, not shared with other households	
Handwashing	most commonly mobile object with water but often without soap	

Health access was somewhat better for households who had moved involuntarily, which may have been linked to the locations of displacement. In the WoAA, 44% of IDP households self-reported residing in urban or peri-urban areas, compared to 29% of non-displaced households (see table 5). As such, they reported shorter travel times to reach health facilities, and more often reported no barriers to health access (21%, compared to 14%).⁷ Key informants in communities hosting households forced to flee their previous locations also reported less serious problems with health access and were more likely to report that all households had access to healthcare.⁶

Table 5 WoAA 2025 Health Indicators⁷

(as % of households)

	IDP	Non-Displaced
Health facility accessible within 30 min	50%	37%
No barriers to access	21%	14%

Data on protection are particularly limited. Eviction risk was higher for IDP households, as discussed. There was some indication of lower access to civil documentation for men (55% reported all male members had valid civil documents, compared to 62% of non-displaced households; see table 6), but this difference was not observed for women. Child protection indicators did not notably differ, with similar rates of child work and child marriage, but with fewer IDP households reporting symptoms of psychological distress in children.⁷

^a Thresholds are adjusted upwards in contexts with high rates of oil and sugar consumption, resulting in a higher proportion of households categorised as having "poor" food consumption. At the standard cut-offs (21/35), 4% of IDP households and 2% of host households were categorised as having had poor food consumption.

Table 6 WoAA 2025 Protection Indicators⁷

(as % of households)

	IDP	Non-Displaced
All male members had civil documents	55%	62%
At least one child working	17%	16%
Early marriage of girls due to food insecurity	1%	1%
No changes in child behaviour in 3 months	46%	34%

Lastly, differences in education access were small but consistent across indicators. Of children aged 5-18 years in households that had moved involuntarily, 53% attended school or early childhood education at the time of data collection (compared to 58%; see table 7). As with health, lack of schools was less often reported as a barrier to enrolment (10% compared to 15%). More notably, only 12% of young adults aged 18-24 were enrolled, compared to 22% in households who had not moved involuntarily. Literacy rates were marginally lower for respondents from IDP households (61% self-reported ability to read and write simple statements about everyday life, compared to 67% of non-displaced households), but the number of literate members per household did not differ.⁷

Table 7 WoAA 2025 Education Indicators⁷

(as % of individuals)

	IDP	Non-Displaced
Child (5-18) attended school	53%	58%
Children (5-18) facing lack of schools	10%	15%
Young adults (18-24) enrolled	12%	22%
Respondent self-reported literacy	61%	67%

Overall, it appears households that had moved involuntarily had some advantages due to their new locations offering better access to basic services, including health and education facilities, but disadvantages because of poor access to stable income and higher expenses on shelters.

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research - Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT).

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