



Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Pakistan: Internal relocation

Version 3.0

September 2026

Executive summary

In general, a person fearing non-state or rogue-state actors is likely to be able to internally relocate to another area of Pakistan.

Pakistan has a population of over 241 million and is divided into 4 provinces, 2 self-administered areas and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). Most people live in rural areas, but there are numerous large urban centres, including Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad.

This CPIN does not specifically cover the self-administrative territory of Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

The law provides for freedom of movement, and the authorities generally respect this right, although access to some areas may be restricted for security reasons. Internal migration is widespread. People commonly move for work and education, and major cities are connected by road, rail and air networks.

Pakistan is a lower-middle-income country with rising poverty and pressure on public services. Education, employment, food security, housing and welfare provision vary by province and between urban and rural areas, with larger cities generally offering better services and employment opportunities than rural or remote areas.

Returnees are usually processed like other Pakistani citizens, although failed asylum seekers may be questioned on arrival, particularly about identity, illegal departure, fraudulent documents or criminal matters. Reintegration services are available through UK and EU-funded projects, and returnees can generally access healthcare, education and community reintegration, though debt or family shame may cause hardship.

Each case must be considered on its individual facts. The onus is on the person to demonstrate they face persecution or serious harm.

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Assessment

Section updated: 16 September 2026

About the assessment

This section considers relevant evidence – including [country information](#), refugee and human rights law and policy, and case law – to assess whether, **in general**:

- internal relocation is possible to avoid persecution or serious harm

Each case must be considered on its individual facts.

For details on how CPIT makes its assessments, gathers and presents country information, its research methodology and disclaimers and explainers on coverage, source selection, maps, translations and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in developing CPIT products, see [About country policy and information notes](#).

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1. Material facts, credibility and other checks

1.1.1 Decision makers must:

- assess credibility (see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#)).
- check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the Asylum Instruction on [Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- consider making an international biometric data-sharing check, when one has not already been undertaken (see [Biometric data-sharing process \(Migration 5 biometric data-sharing process\)](#)).
- consider language analysis testing, where available, in cases where there are doubts surrounding a person's claimed place of origin (see the Asylum Instruction on [Language Analysis](#)).

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Official – sensitive: Not for disclosure – End of section

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2. Exclusion

2.1.1 Decision makers must consider whether there are serious reasons to apply one (or more) of the exclusion clauses. Each case must be considered on its individual facts.

2.1.2 If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be

excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection, which has a wider range of exclusions than refugee status.

- 2.1.3 For guidance on exclusion and restricted leave, see the Asylum Instruction on [Exclusion under Articles 1F and 33\(2\) of the Refugee Convention](#), [Humanitarian Protection](#) and the instruction on [Restricted Leave](#).

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3. Internal relocation

- 3.1.1 In general, a person with a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from the state is unlikely to be able to internally relocate to escape that risk.
- 3.1.2 In general, a person with a well-founded fear of persecution or serious harm from a non-state or rogue state actor is likely to be able to internally relocate to escape that risk.
- 3.1.3 This is because in general, there are parts of Pakistan, particularly larger urban areas and cities such as (but not limited to) Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, where it will be reasonable to expect a person to relocate to.
- 3.1.4 Pakistan has an estimated population of over 241 million (2023 census). The country is divided into 4 provinces: Balochistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Punjab and Sindh, 2 self-administered areas – Pakistan Administered Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). There are numerous urban centres and large cities with populations of over 1 million to more than 18 million (see [Geography and demography](#)).
- 3.1.5 The law provides for freedom of movement, subject to certain restrictions. For example, access to some areas may be limited for security reasons. International travel can be limited if a person is on a restricted list, reportedly affecting people considered as raising security, criminal, immigration-control or political concerns. Large, ethnically and religiously diverse cities such as Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore can provide anonymity for people fleeing violence by non-state actors. Internal migration is widespread and all main cities are connected by major road networks. Tenant registration is mandatory and takes place at local police stations (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 3.1.6 Pakistan is a lower-middle-income country where poverty has risen since 2018 to 2019. Between 22% and 29% of people are estimated to live below the national poverty line as of 2024 to 2025. Public services, including education and welfare, are subject to funding constraints resulting from debt repayments, defence spending, floods and International Monetary Fund-related measures (see [Economy](#)).
- 3.1.7 Education is compulsory for children aged 5 to 16, but quality and access vary, with urban areas generally better served than rural or remote areas.

School enrolment is high but learning outcomes and literacy remain limited. (see [Education](#)).

- 3.1.8 In 2024 to 2025, the labour force was 83.1 million and unemployment was 7.1%. Earnings varied by sector, region and whether a person's employment is formal or informal. Punjab had the largest employed population, accounting for 45.9 million of Pakistan's 79.7 million employed people, but lower paid-employee wages compared to other provinces. In contrast, Balochistan recorded the highest average paid-employee wage but had low participation and employment rates. Most employment was informal, accounting for 80.8% of employed people (see [Employment](#)).
- 3.1.9 Household food insecurity rose between 2018 to 2019 and 2024 to 2025, with 24.35% of households experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity and 5.04% severe insecurity nationally. Balochistan had the highest moderate or severe food insecurity, followed by Sindh (see [Food security](#)).
- 3.1.10 There is a shortage of formal housing and over half of urban residents live in informal settlements. Housing conditions vary by province: most homes are owner-occupied and built from permanent materials, but kacha housing, built from temporary materials such as mud and wood, are more common in Balochistan and rural Sindh. Nationally, 66.3% of households had drinking water inside the home, but access was substantially poorer in Balochistan. Around two-thirds had separate bathrooms, 87.1% had separate or shared toilets, and 84% used electricity for lighting (see [Housing](#)).
- 3.1.11 Welfare provision includes subsidised education and healthcare to the entire population, cash transfers, pensions, microfinance and Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) payments, but social services remain insufficient given the scale of poverty and deprivation (see [Social welfare](#)).
- 3.1.12 For information on availability and accessibility of healthcare, see the [Country Information Note on Pakistan: Healthcare and medical treatment](#).
- 3.1.13 Returnees are generally processed like other Pakistani citizens although, according to Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), failed asylum seekers may be interviewed on arrival. Authorities usually focus on identity, whether the person left Pakistan illegally, used fraudulent documents, is wanted for crimes, or committed offences abroad. Those with fraudulent documents or criminal issues may face more intensive questioning, arrest, reporting requirements, or travel restrictions. A 2025 policy reportedly bans some deported Pakistanis linked to criminal or undesirable activity from travelling abroad for 5 years. Reintegration services are available through UK and EU-funded projects with partner organisations, and returnees can generally access healthcare, education and community reintegration, although debt may cause hardship or familial shame (see [Returnees](#)).
- 3.1.14 For information on internal relocation for specific groups, see the relevant [Pakistan Country Policy and Information Note](#)
- 3.1.15 For further guidance on internal relocation and factors to consider, see the Asylum Instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

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Country information

About the country information

The COI provides the basis for the assessment and the executive summary. Decision makers must use relevant COI as the evidential basis for decisions.

The cut-off date for COI included in this note is **31 July 2026**.

For details on how CPIT gathers and presents country information, its research methodology and disclaimers and explainers on coverage, source selection, maps, translations and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in developing CPIT products, see [About country policy and information notes](#).

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4. Geography and demography

4.1 Country overview

Full country name: Islamic Republic of Pakistan¹.

Total area: 796,096 sq km², about 3 times the area of the UK³.

Population: 241.49 million (2023)⁴.

Capital city: Islamabad⁵.

Languages: Urdu (national language spoken by 9.25% of the population^{6 7}), Punjabi (36.98%), Pashto (18.15%), Sindhi (14.31%), Saraiki (12%), Balochi (3.38%), Hindko (2.32%), and Brahvi (1.16%), Others, including Shina, Balti, Mehwti and Kohistani (2.35%)⁸. English is an official language⁹, widely used by the government, judiciary and the elite, and is commonly spoken in cities¹⁰.

4.1.1 **Ethnic groups:** Punjabi (44.7%), Pashtun (15.4%), Sindhi (14.1%), Saraiki (8.4%), Muhajirs (7.6%), Balochi (3.6%), other (6.3%)¹¹. There was no official census data on ethnicity¹².

Religious groups: Muslim 96.35% (Sunni 85 to 90%, Shia 10 to 15%¹³), Christian (1.37%), Hindu (1.61%), Ahmadi (0.07%)¹⁴.

4.1.2 For further information on religious minorities, see the [Pakistan Country Policy and Information Notes](#) on Ahmadis and Christians and Christian converts.

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¹ Pakistan Information Website, [Facts and Information about Pakistan](#), 2026

² Pakistan Information Website, [Facts and Information about Pakistan](#), 2026

³ BBC News, [United Kingdom country profile](#), 9 July 2024

⁴ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (pages 3, 124), 2024

⁵ Pakistan Information Website, [Facts and Information about Pakistan](#), 2026

⁶ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 2.10), 30 April 2025

⁷ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 138), 2024

⁸ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 138), 2024

⁹ Pakistan Information Website, [Languages of Pakistan](#), 2025

¹⁰ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 2.10), 30 April 2025

¹¹ MRG, [Pakistan](#) (Communities), December 2025

¹² PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#), 2024

¹³ USCIRF, [Annual Report 2026 Pakistan](#), March 2026

¹⁴ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 137), 2024



Map Sources: ESRI, OCHA, UNGIS.

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties. Map created in July 2025.

Source: OCHA, Pakistan: Location Map (2025)¹⁵

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4.3 Administrative divisions

- 4.3.1 Pakistan is divided into 4 provinces: Balochistan (14.89 million), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP – 40.86 million), Punjab (127.69 million), and Sindh (55.70 million)¹⁶. There are 2 self-administered regions: Pakistan Administered Kashmir (4.46 million, 2024 estimate)¹⁷ and Gilgit Baltistan (2.3 million)¹⁸. The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT – 2.36 million) is administered by the federal government^{19 20}.

¹⁵ OCHA, [Pakistan: Location Map \(2025\)](#), July 2025

¹⁶ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 7), 2024

¹⁷ Kashmir Welfare Foundation, [Azad Jammu and Kashmir](#), no date

¹⁸ Government of Gilgit Baltistan, [Importance of Gilgit Baltistan](#), 22 April 2024

¹⁹ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (pages 7, 26), 2024

²⁰ ICTA, [About ICTA](#), no date

- 4.3.2 As noted in the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics 2023 Population and Housing Census, 'Each province is divided into divisions which are sub-divided into districts. Each district is further sub-divided into tehsil/ sub-division to facilitate administrative functioning. Generally, a subdivision comprises of one tehsil/taluka, but in some cases more than one tehsil/taluka fall under one sub-division.'²¹
- 4.3.3 The majority of the population (61.12% in 2023) lived in rural areas²².

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4.4 Main population centres

- 4.4.1 According to the 2023 census, the 10 cities with a population exceeding one million were:
- Karachi: 18.87 million
 - Lahore: 13 million
 - Faisalabad: 3.69 million
 - Rawalpindi: 3.36 million
 - Gujranwala: 2.67 million
 - Multan: 2.22 million
 - Hyderabad: 1.92 million
 - Peshawar: 1.91 million
 - Quetta: 1.57 million
 - Islamabad: 1.11 million²³

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5. Freedom of movement

5.1 Legal context

- 5.1.1 Article 15 of the Constitution guarantees citizens the right to free movement and to reside in Pakistan, 'subject to any reasonable restriction imposed by law in the public interest.'²⁴ The April 2025 Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) COI report on Pakistan, based on a range of sources, noted that the authorities generally respected the right to freedom of movement²⁵.
- 5.1.2 For information on tenant registration systems, including implementation, requirements and procedures, enforcement, how the system works in each province and whether the authorities share information, consult the 2018 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) Research Directorate [response](#) on tenant registration (2015 to December 2017)²⁶.
- 5.1.3 In December 2025, Sindh police launched an online registration system for

²¹ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 25), 2024

²² PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 7), 2024

²³ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 109), 2024

²⁴ Pakistan Code, [The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan](#) (Chapter 1, Article 15), 1973

²⁵ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.29), 30 April 2025

²⁶ IRB, [Pakistan: Tenant registration systems, including implementation...](#), 23 January 2018

landlords to record tenant information²⁷. In March 2026, Rawalpindi police urged citizens to register urban tenants and employees at the police station or via the Punjab mobile app or government portal. Non-registration was an offence²⁸. It was reported in April 2026 that the Balochistan government made the registration of tenants in the province mandatory²⁹.

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5.2 Internal migration and travel restrictions

5.2.1 According to the April 2025 DFAT report:

‘Internal migration is common and widespread as people regularly move to seek better employment and education opportunities. Those migrating often rely on family, friends, tribal and/or ethnic networks to establish themselves in a new location. Social and economic barriers to relocation can impact vulnerable groups disproportionately, including women and their children leaving family violence situations ...

‘Large urban centres such as Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore have ethnically and religiously diverse populations and offer anonymity for people fleeing violence by non-state actors.’³⁰

5.2.2 The Freedom House report, *Freedom in the World 2025*, covering 2024 events, noted that ‘Authorities routinely hinder internal movement in some parts of the country for security reasons.’³¹

5.2.3 The Freedom in the World 2025 report also noted that ‘Foreign travel is restricted in part through the Exit Control List [ECL], which blocks named individuals from using official exit points. Though the list is intended to prevent those posing a security threat and those facing court proceedings from fleeing, authorities have frequently used it to control dissent.’³²

5.2.4 Lawyer and political activist, Jibran Nasir³³, described, in a post on X dated 9 August 2025, the different lists in Pakistan which restrict travel abroad:

‘ECL (Exit Control List): Only Federal Cabinet allowed to place name on the list. Duration 120 days extendable by 90 days unless challenged in Court.

‘PNIL (Provisional National Identification List): No official law or legislation for this. It operates under a 2018 SOP [Standard Operating Procedure] issued by FIA [Federal Investigation Agency] which FIA does not make available to the public. DG [Director General] FIA can place your name no cabinet approval needed. List valid for 30 days only but name is never removed even after 30 days and list is used to repeatedly block travel until you seek intervention from Court.

‘PCL (Passport Control List): DG Passport and Immigration can place your name on the list on recommendation of Home Dept of any Provincial or Federal Govt. Duration 5 years unless reviewed or challenged in Court.

‘ECL, PNIL and PCL requires authorities to immediately inform the affectee

²⁷ Express Tribune, [Sindh police introduces digital platform for tenant registration](#), 18 December 2025

²⁸ Dawn, [Over 50 detained for violating Tenancy Act in Rawalpindi](#), 30 March 2026

²⁹ Dawn, [Tenants’ registration with police mandatory, says Balochistan aide](#), 15 April 2026

³⁰ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.29), 30 April 2025

³¹ Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025: Pakistan](#) (G1), 2025

³² Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2025: Pakistan](#) (G1), 2025

³³ Dawn, [Stories by Jibran Nasir](#), no date

of the restriction placed on them but they only learn of the restriction when they are offloaded at the airport as uncertainty, harassment and humiliation is the tool kit of the State ...

‘Stop List (Unofficial List): This is the wish list of ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence] and MI [Ministry of Interior]. This does not exist under any official law. There is no digital centralised record of this. FIA stops you from traveling on a simple direction by Intel Agencies. Duration indefinite till you seek intervention from Court.’³⁴

- 5.2.5 The concluding observations of the UN Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) on the state report on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), dated 2 December 2024, noted that, ‘The Committee remains concerned about reports of the frequent use of the Exit Control List, the Fourth Schedule list under the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997, and other control lists and measures used to arbitrarily restrict the freedom of movement of dissenting persons, journalists, activists, members of ethnic minorities and human rights defenders, leading to the confiscation of their passports, detention, and monitoring of their movements ...’³⁵

- 5.2.6 The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), a non-governmental organisation³⁶, highlighted some of the main issues affecting freedom of movement in their State of Human Rights in 2025 report:

‘The authorities continued to curtail the movement and civil liberties of political activists, particularly in Balochistan. At least 64 activists in Hub were added to the Fourth Schedule of the Anti-Terrorism Act 1997, mandating strict police surveillance and travel limitations, marking a significant expansion of these restrictions.

‘The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) intercepted 8,149 travellers flagged on a consolidated ‘Stop List’ at airports and borders. This measure targeted individuals on criminal and security watchlists to enhance national border control and inter-agency coordination.

‘A total of 66,000 passengers were prevented from travelling abroad, including 51,000 due to insufficient or unverified documentation.’³⁷

- 5.2.7 The Express Tribune³⁸, reporting in December 2025, noted that the FIA’s ‘off-loading’ of 66,154 passengers during the year was to ‘curb organised gangs of beggars and illegal immigrants from travelling abroad.’³⁹

- 5.2.8 In March 2025, national newspaper, The Nation⁴⁰, reported that the Islamabad High Court (IHC) ‘... declared that placement of a citizen’s name on the Passport Control List (PCL) without tangible evidence to be illegal and unconstitutional ...’⁴¹, and ordered relevant authorities to follow the correct procedures when placing someone on the list⁴². The PCL was maintained by the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports (DGI&P) and, up until

³⁴ X, @MJibranNasir, [The difference lists of Pakistan which ban your travel abroad](#), 9 August 2025

³⁵ UNHRC, [Concluding observations on the second periodic ...](#) (paragraph 34), 2 December 2024

³⁶ HRCP, [About us](#), no date

³⁷ HRCP, [State of Human Rights in 2025](#) (page 13), May 2026

³⁸ Express Tribune, [About](#), no date

³⁹ Express Tribune, [66,154 air travellers offloaded this year, FIA tells NA body](#), 18 December 2025

⁴⁰ The Nation, [About us](#), no date

⁴¹ The Nation, [IHC directs authorities to follow procedure for placing any citizen ...](#), 10 March 2025

⁴² The Nation, [IHC directs authorities to follow procedure for placing any citizen ...](#), 10 March 2025

21 April 2022, it was known as the Black List (BL)⁴³.

See also [Treatment on return](#)

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5.3 Transport network

- 5.3.1 The total national road network is 263,775km, 14,480 km of which comprise of 48 highways, motorways, expressways and strategic roads⁴⁴. The National Highways Authority (NHA) [Interactive Map](#) labelled Pakistan's Motorways and National Highways⁴⁵. Pakistan's rail network was shown on the Ministry of Railway's [Route Map](#)⁴⁶. There were at least 12 [international airports](#) across the country⁴⁷.
- 5.3.2 For information on mobility and travel in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore, see Section 7 of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) country report, [Pakistan – Country Focus](#), dated May 2026, compiled using a range of sources⁴⁸. The EUAA supports EU countries' national authorities to implement the Common European Asylum System by providing operational and technical assistance⁴⁹.

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6. Socio-economic situation

6.1 About this section

- 6.1.1 This section covers Pakistan's socio-economic situation at the national level.
- 6.1.2 For information specific to Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore, see Section 7 of the EUAA [Pakistan – Country Focus](#)⁵⁰.

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6.2 Economy

- 6.2.1 The World Bank classified Pakistan as a lower-middle income country as of 2024⁵¹. In their overview of Pakistan, the World Bank noted, in November 2025, that 'Progress with reducing poverty, which was rapid between 2000 and the mid-2010s, has stalled. Around 22 percent of the population live below the national poverty line, amid slow growth, repeated macroeconomic shocks and natural disasters, and continued weaknesses in service-delivery.'⁵²
- 6.2.2 Using the Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) methodology⁵³, the Pakistan Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MoPDSI) estimated that national poverty increased, from 21.9% of the population in 2018 to 2019, to 28.9% in 2024 to 2025⁵⁴. The poverty line was set at Rs8,484 PKR (£22.64

⁴³ DGI&P, [Rename of BL \(Black List\) Cell to PCL \(Passport Control List\) Section](#), 21 April 2022

⁴⁴ NHA, [Welcome](#), no date

⁴⁵ NHA, [Interactive Map](#), no date

⁴⁶ Ministry of Railways, [Route Map of Pakistan Railways](#), no date

⁴⁷ MFA, [Visit Pakistan](#), no date

⁴⁸ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (Section 7), May 2026

⁴⁹ EUAA, [Overview](#), no date

⁵⁰ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (Section 7), May 2026

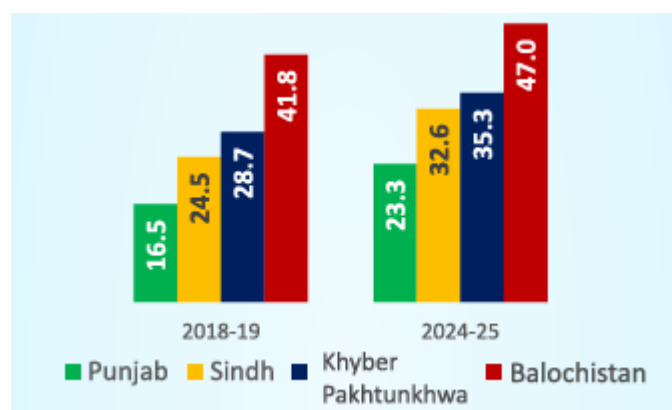
⁵¹ World Bank, [Understanding country income: World Bank Group income ...](#), 1 July 2025

⁵² World Bank, [Overview: Pakistan](#) (Economy), 19 November 2025

⁵³ MoPDSI, [Preliminary Report on Poverty Estimation 2024-25](#) (page 3), February 2026

⁵⁴ MoPDSI, [Preliminary Report on Poverty Estimation 2024-25](#) (page 4), February 2026

GBP⁵⁵) per adult per month⁵⁶. At a provincial level, poverty levels increased in 2024 to 2025 compared to 2018 to 2019 data⁵⁷:



- 6.2.3 The May 2026 EUAA Pakistan Country Focus noted that ‘The combination of debt repayments and defence spending limits the government’s ability to invest in sectors such as education, healthcare, and social welfare. The effects of floods plus the measures mandated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have placed additional pressure on social security services.’⁵⁸

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6.3 Education

- 6.3.1 Article 25-A of the Constitution obligates the state to provide ‘free and compulsory education’ to children aged 5 to 16 years⁵⁹. The April 2025 DFAT report noted that ‘In practice, insufficient budgets, sociocultural barriers, lack of capacity and inadequate facilities affect the quality and availability of education.’⁶⁰
- 6.3.2 The Bertelsmann Stiftung’s Transformation Index (BTI), a project of Bertelsmann Stiftung, a German non-profit think tank, ‘... analyzes and evaluates whether and how developing countries and countries in transition are steering social change toward democracy and a market economy.’⁶¹ The BTI 2026 Pakistan, covering the period February 2023 to January 2025, noted that ‘A poorly funded and equipped public education system coexists with a tiered private education system that offers the wealthy access to world-class educational facilities at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.’⁶²
- 6.3.3 According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2025-26, produced by Pakistan’s Finance Division, in 2023 to 2024 there were around 159,000 primary schools, 44,000 middle schools, 45,000 secondary schools, 11,000 higher secondary schools or colleges, 2,500 ‘degree colleges’⁶³, and between 239 and 278 universities⁶⁴. There were about 4,750 technical and

⁵⁵ Xe.com, [8,484 PKR to GBP - Pakistani Rupees to British Pounds Exchange Rate](#), 7 August 2026

⁵⁶ MoPDSI, [Preliminary Report on Poverty Estimation 2024-25](#) (page 4), February 2026

⁵⁷ MoPDSI, [Preliminary Report on Poverty Estimation 2024-25](#) (page 5), February 2026

⁵⁸ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (page 183), May 2026

⁵⁹ Pakistan Code, [The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan](#) (Chapter 1, Article 25A), 1973

⁶⁰ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 2.20), 30 April 2025

⁶¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, [Methodology](#), 2026

⁶² Bertelsmann Stiftung, [BTI 2026 Country Report - Pakistan](#) (Sustainability), 2026

⁶³ Finance Division, [Pakistan Economic Survey 2025-26](#) (page 171), June 2026

⁶⁴ Finance Division, [Pakistan Economic Survey 2025-26](#) (pages 171 and 182), June 2026

vocational institutions in 2024 to 2025⁶⁵.

- 6.3.4 According to the April 2025 DFAT report, 'There were 180,000 public [government-run] educational institutions throughout the country. School budgets and education quality vary widely, urban areas generally have better services and facilities than those in rural and remote areas. In general, public schools across Pakistan suffer from a lack of funding, shortages of teachers, high rates of teacher absenteeism and inadequate facilities.'⁶⁶
- 6.3.5 The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2025 found that 91.5% of children aged 6 to 16 were enrolled in school. However, only 7% of children at Grade 3 could read 'a simple story' and only 8% could perform basic division⁶⁷. At a national level, 53% of children at Grade 5 in a public school could read a sentence in English compared to 55% of privately educated children⁶⁸. In 2024 to 2025, the literacy rate for people aged 10 and over was 63%, with higher literacy rates in urban areas⁶⁹.

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6.4 Employment

- 6.4.1 The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) Labour Force Survey (LFS) is Pakistan's principal source of official labour market data and provides information on employment, unemployment and labour force participation at the national and provincial level⁷⁰. According to the LFS 2024 to 2025, Pakistan's labour force comprised approximately 83.1 million people. The survey reported a labour force participation rate of 46.3%⁷¹.
- 6.4.2 The LFS reported an overall unemployment rate of 7.1% in 2024 to 2025, as per the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS – the global standard-setting forum for labour statistics⁷²) recommendations⁷³. According to the LFS 2024 to 2025, 33.1% of employed persons worked in agriculture, forestry and fishing, 14.8% in manufacturing, 9.9% in construction, 16.0% in wholesale and retail trade, 6.6% in transport, storage and communication, 17.9% in community, social and personal services, and 1.6% in other sectors⁷⁴.
- 6.4.3 Punjab had both the largest employed population and the strongest overall employment ratios. It accounted for 45.9 million of Pakistan's 79.7 million employed people and recorded the highest employment-to-population ratio (EPR) at 46.7%, and labour-force participation rate (LFPR) of 50.3%⁷⁵. Sindh had the lowest unemployment rate⁷⁶.
- 6.4.4 The following table was compiled by CPIT using LFS data⁷⁷. For direct comparison with the 2020-21 survey, the LFS 2024 to 2025 presented

⁶⁵ Finance Division, [Pakistan Economic Survey 2025-26](#) (page 171), June 2026

⁶⁶ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 2.21), 30 April 2025

⁶⁷ ASER, [ASER Pakistan 2025](#) (page 6), 26 March 2026

⁶⁸ ASER, [ASER Pakistan 2025](#) (page 59), 26 March 2026

⁶⁹ Finance Division, [Pakistan Economic Survey 2025-26](#) (page 173), June 2026

⁷⁰ PBS, [Labour Force Statistics](#) (Methodology), no date

⁷¹ PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (page VII), 2025

⁷² PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (page VI), 2025

⁷³ PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (page VIII), 2025

⁷⁴ PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (page 42), 2025

⁷⁵ PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (page 19, table 3.5), 2025

⁷⁶ PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (page 19, table 3.5), 2025

⁷⁷ PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (page 19, table 3.5), 2025

provincial indicators under the 13th ICLS framework, which applied a broader definition of employment⁷⁸:

Area/Province	Employed population	EPR %	LFPR %	Unemployment rate %
Pakistan	79.7 million	44.4	47.7	6.9
KP	11.8 million	38.9	42.9	9.2
Punjab	45.9 million	46.7	50.3	7.1
Sindh	18.2 million	43.8	46.2	5.1
Balochistan	3.8 million	40.1	42.4	5.4

6.4.5 Average monthly wages increased from around Rs 24,000 (about £63⁷⁹) in 2020 to 2021 to approximately Rs 39,000 (£103⁸⁰) in 2024 to 2025, although earnings varied by sector, region and whether employment was in the formal or informal economy. Formal-sector workers generally earned more than workers in the informal sector, defined as those employed in unregistered enterprises or private households⁸¹.

6.4.6 The following table was compiled by CPIT and shows average monthly wages in Pakistan rupees (PKR), of paid employees in 2024 to 2025 by province and locality, based on LFS data⁸²:

Area/Province	All areas PKR	Rural	Urban
Pakistan	39,042	35,508	44,171
KP	39,974	39,268	43,826
Punjab	38,189	34,712	43,246
Sindh	39,801	32,075	45,654
Balochistan	41,780	40,405	44,179

6.4.7 The LFS data showed that Balochistan had the highest provincial average monthly wage and Punjab the lowest. Urban wages were higher than rural wages nationally and in every province⁸³.

6.4.8 The LFS 2024 to 2025 found that 72.1% of non-agricultural employment was in the informal sector, with a higher share in rural areas (75.5%) than urban areas (68.3%). Taking employment as a whole, 80.8% of employed people were in informal employment⁸⁴.

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⁷⁸ PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (pages VI), 2025

⁷⁹ Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), 31 July 2026

⁸⁰ Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), 31 July 2026

⁸¹ PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (pages 51 and 77), 2025

⁸² PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (page 72, Table 5.2), 2025

⁸³ PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (page 72), 2025

⁸⁴ PBS, [Labour Force Survey 2024-25](#) (page IX), 2025

6.5 Food security

- 6.5.1 The PBS Household Integrated Economic Survey (HIES) 2024 to 2025, dated December 2025, found that household food insecurity increased significantly between 2018 to 2019 and 2024 to 2025. Nationally, moderate or severe food insecurity rose from 15.92% to 24.35%, while severe food insecurity increased from 2.37% to 5.04%⁸⁵, indicating that approximately 75% of households were food secure⁸⁶.
- 6.5.2 In urban areas, moderate or severe food insecurity increased from 9.22% to 20.58% over the same period, and severe food insecurity from 1.24% to 5.12%. Rural areas also recorded an increase, with moderate or severe food insecurity rising from 19.96% to 26.72%, and severe food insecurity from 3.05% to 4.99%. However, severe food insecurity was lower in rural areas than in urban areas⁸⁷.
- 6.5.3 At provincial level, Balochistan had the highest proportion of households experiencing moderate or severe food insecurity, at 30.26%, followed by Sindh at 29.42%, Punjab at 22.58%, and KP at 21.54%. KP also had the lowest reported level of severe food insecurity at 1.38%⁸⁸.
- 6.5.4 The following table was compiled by CPIT and shows food insecurity severity by province as per the HIES 2024 to 2025⁸⁹. Data on the ICT was not included in the HIES:

Moderate or severe food insecurity by province (% of households) 2024 to 2025		
Province	Moderate or severe (%)	Severe (%)
Punjab	22.58	5.20
Sindh	29.42	6.30
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	21.54	1.38
Balochistan	30.26	8.20

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6.6 Healthcare

- 6.6.1 For information on healthcare in Pakistan, see the [Country Information Note on Pakistan: Healthcare and medical treatment](#).

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6.7 Housing

- 6.7.1 The 2023 census described the construction materials of houses, known as pacca houses, semi pacca houses and kacha houses. Pacca was defined as a permanent or concrete house, built from durable materials like bricks and concrete. A semi pacca house was made of durable and temporary or prefabricated materials, and a kacha house was constructed of mud, wood

⁸⁵ PBS, [Household Integrated Economic Survey 2024-25](#) (page 270), 2025

⁸⁶ Gallup Pakistan, [Gallup Pakistan Analysis of Household Integrated Economic Survey \(HIES\) – Food Insecurity & Inequality \(FIES\)](#), 24 April 2026

⁸⁷ PBS, [Household Integrated Economic Survey 2024-25](#) (page 270), 2025

⁸⁸ PBS, [Household Integrated Economic Survey 2024-25](#) (page 270), 2025

⁸⁹ PBS, [Household Integrated Economic Survey 2024-25](#) (page 270), 2025

and other temporary materials⁹⁰. Nationwide, 67.4% of houses were pacca, 12.5% semi pacca, and nearly 20% kacha⁹¹. The average household size was 6.3 people per household⁹². Around 82% of houses were owner-occupied and 11% were rented⁹³.

6.7.2 The 2023 census noted that:

‘Pacca houses ... are most common in Islamabad with 97.35% and Punjab with 80.80%, indicating better infrastructure. Sindh with 57.69% and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 55.57% have moderate percentages, while Balochistan with 19.64% has the lowest, reflecting underdeveloped housing conditions.

‘Semi-Pacca houses ... are more common in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 19.58% and Balochistan with 16.78%, while Punjab with 11.93% and Sindh with 9.19% have lower percentages.

‘Kacha houses ... are highly prevalent in Balochistan with 63.58% and rural Sindh with 61.01%, highlighting severe housing inadequacies. Sindh overall has a significant proportion with 33.11%, while Punjab with 7.26% and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 24.85% have lower percentages.’⁹⁴

6.7.3 The 2023 census showed that, nationally, 66.3% of households had access to drinking water inside the house⁹⁵. The census found that:

‘Punjab has the highest number of households with access to drinking water inside the house, reaching 14.13 million, followed by Sindh with 6.28 million and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with 3.80 million. In contrast, Balochistan shows a concerning trend, where more households rely on outside sources (1.37 million) compared to those with water inside the house (0.95 million). The data indicates that Balochistan faces significant challenges, with a large portion of its population lacking direct household access to water.’⁹⁶

6.7.4 Separate bathroom facilities were found in 66.6% of households and 87.1% were equipped with a ‘separate’ or ‘shared’ toilet⁹⁷. Most houses (84%) used electricity as the main source of lighting⁹⁸.

6.7.5 In June 2025, UN-Habitat Pakistan noted that the country faced a ‘housing backlog’ of over 10 million units and that more than half the urban population lived in informal settlements⁹⁹. Pakistan’s National Housing Policy 2025 stated ‘The housing shortage in the country’s urban areas is estimated to be 9 million. Because of these circumstances, about 50% of the urban population finds no other way but to reside in slums and Katchi Abadis [informal settlements].’¹⁰⁰

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⁹⁰ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 167 to 168), 2024

⁹¹ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 168), 2024

⁹² PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 165), 2024

⁹³ PBS, [Household Integrated Economic Survey 2024-25](#) (page 245), 2025

⁹⁴ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 168), 2024

⁹⁵ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 176, Table 5.13), 2024

⁹⁶ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 177), 2024

⁹⁷ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 192, Table 5.19), 2024

⁹⁸ PBS, [National Census Report 2023](#) (page 183, Table 5.15), 2024

⁹⁹ UNHabitat, [Media Update: United Nations Pakistan](#), 23 June 2025

¹⁰⁰ MoHW, [National Housing Policy 2025](#) (page 3), 2026

6.8 Social welfare

6.8.1 The BTI 2026 Pakistan noted regarding the welfare system that:

‘Pakistan manages a number of welfare programs aimed at establishing a basic, universal social safety net for its citizens. Funded through tax revenues, government operated schools and hospitals offer highly subsidized education and health care to the entire population. Organizations such as Zakat and the Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal also use tax revenues to provide small cash transfers to about 3 million people throughout the country. Pakistan also offers the Employee Old Age Benefits Institution as a contributory pension scheme that currently has more than 9 million enrollees. The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund provides microfinance loans to its citizens. Nonetheless, the provision of social services remains dismally insufficient, particularly given the scale of poverty and deprivation in the country. The welfare programs provided by the government exist in tandem with extensive, tiered systems of private provision.’¹⁰¹

6.8.2 The same report stated that:

‘Although significant challenges persist in providing welfare in Pakistan, progress has been evident in selected areas. The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), initiated in 2008, is an unconditional cash-transfer program for poverty reduction that primarily targets women. At the end of 2024, an estimated 10 million households were receiving BISP payments, and the Asian Development Bank approved a \$330 million [around £220 million¹⁰²] loan to expand the program in the coming years.’¹⁰³

6.8.3 In January 2025, the BISP Program noted on its official website that, ‘Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid has announced that the quarterly stipend under the Benazir Kafaalat program for deserving women has been increased from Rs. 10,500 to Rs. 13,500 [approximately £36¹⁰⁴]. She described this as a New Year’s gift from BISP to registered families, aimed at providing maximum support during challenging times.’¹⁰⁵

6.8.4 Regarding the BISP, the May 2026 EUAA Pakistan Country Focus noted:

‘The nationwide governmental Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), headquartered in Islamabad, offers financial support for poor households, with a special focus on women. Under its Kafaalat programme, female beneficiaries receive a quarterly amount of 14 500 Pakistani rupees [approximately £39¹⁰⁶]. Access to BISP is based on a household poverty score ranging from 0 to 100, with eligibility set at 32 or below, and applies to low-income households, including widows, divorced women, single mothers, and persons with disabilities in eligible families.’¹⁰⁷

6.8.5 Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), a semi-autonomous social welfare organisation, provided financial support for the poor and for vulnerable people across the

¹⁰¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, [BTI 2026 Country Report - Pakistan](#) (Welfare regime), 2026

¹⁰² Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), 31 July 2026

¹⁰³ Bertelsmann Stiftung, [BTI 2026 Country Report - Pakistan](#) (Welfare regime), 2026

¹⁰⁴ Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), 31 July 2026

¹⁰⁵ BISP, [NEW YEAR'S GIFT FOR REGISTERED FAMILIES OF BISP...](#), no date

¹⁰⁶ Xe.com, [Currency converter](#), 31 July 2026

¹⁰⁷ EUAA, [Pakistan Country Focus](#) (page 191 and 192), May 2026

7. Returnees

7.1 Treatment on return

- 7.1.1 A query response by the EUAA, on entry procedures and treatment of returnees (January 2024 to 30 November 2025), based on a range of sources, noted that:

‘Oral sources consulted in 2024 by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported that they were not aware of any specific cases in which returnees faced serious problems with the Pakistani authorities. Forced returnees arriving on charter flights from Europe, often in handcuffs, were questioned by the FIA upon landing; and although they feared questioning, the source noted no particularly harsh treatment. In the case of rejected asylum seekers returning to Pakistan, the authorities were said to focus mainly on detecting fraudulent travel documents, and those carrying such documents were subjected to more intensive interrogation and potential arrest.’¹¹⁰

- 7.1.2 The April 2025 DFAT report observed the conditions for returnees to Pakistan, noting that:

‘Repatriates usually departed Pakistan on valid travel documents and are generally processed like any other citizen when returning to the country. Pakistan’s diplomatic missions issue emergency travel documents and passports to Pakistanis overseas, including those who have previously sought asylum in foreign countries. As a rule, the government issues returnees with temporary documents when they arrive.

‘Immigration officials sometimes interview failed asylum seekers upon return but generally only detain them if they had committed a crime in Pakistan prior to their departure or if their identity documents pre-date enrolment in Pakistan’s national biometric database. Immigration officers have posed questions to returnees to ascertain whether they left the country illegally, were wanted for crimes in Pakistan or have committed offences while abroad. Repatriates wanted for a crime in Pakistan can be arrested and held on remand or required to report regularly to police. Repatriates may be placed on the “Passenger Control List”, an alert database that can trigger an intervention should they attempt to depart again via an airport.’¹¹¹

- 7.1.3 The EUAA query response (January 2024 to 30 November 2025) noted that:

‘On 24 May 2025, Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi, chaired a high-level meeting in Islamabad, where the government adopted a new policy toward Pakistanis who are deported from abroad. The meeting concluded that such individuals would have First Information Reports (FIRs) registered against them, their passports would be cancelled, and their names placed on the Passport Control List for five years, restricting their ability to obtain new

¹⁰⁸ PBM, [Mission](#), no date

¹⁰⁹ MoHR, [Victim Support Services Directory](#) (Bait-ul-Mal), no date

¹¹⁰ EUAA, [COI Query Response – Pakistan](#) (page 5), 1 December 2025

¹¹¹ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.36 to 5.38), 30 April 2025

travel documents.’¹¹²

- 7.1.4 An article by The News International, dated 21 August 2025, reported that the policy on banning deported citizens from travelling abroad for 5 years had been enacted. According to the report, ‘Interior Ministry sources say the individuals deported due to criminal or other “undesirable” activities would be put on the list of deported Pakistanis banned from travelling abroad.’¹¹³

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7.2 Reintegration

- 7.2.1 WELDO, working in partnership with the UK and EU member states, provided reintegration and resettlement services to returnees¹¹⁴, including, but not limited to ‘... temporary accommodation, access to healthcare, vocational training, small business support, and legal documentation. [WELDO] also support family reunification and community reintegration efforts.’¹¹⁵
- 7.2.2 In February 2025, the Government of Pakistan launched the Sustainable Reintegration of Returnees and Improved Migration Management project, known as R&R Pakistan¹¹⁶. The project, funded by the EU in partnership with the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), will continue until November 2027¹¹⁷, and aims to:
- ‘Provide better opportunities for sustainable reintegration of returnees, particularly women and persons with disabilities, within their communities while employing gender, human rights, including labour rights, and age responsible approaches;
 - ‘Enhance post-arrival assistance for Pakistani returnees and mid- to long-term services for sustainable reintegration;
 - ‘Strengthen capacities of stakeholders in developing a gender-sensitive National Reintegration Policy and other policy related documents, as well as in programming and service delivery; and
 - ‘Increase awareness on safe and orderly migration, including the dangers of irregular migration and avenues for sustainable reintegration among returnees, potential migrants, their families and communities.’¹¹⁸
- 7.2.3 As noted on its official website (undated), Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs), located in Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar, support returnees and deportees through its Return and Reintegration services, which aimed to:
- ‘... facilitate the safe and dignified reintegration of migrants back into their communities after returning from abroad. The MRC provides immediate assistance at airports and Arrival Reception Desks (ARDs), where returnees are welcomed, registered, and guided about available support. Basic needs such as food, water, hygiene kits, onward transportation, medical assistance, shelter and communication facilities are also provided to ensure their initial

¹¹² EUAA, [COI Query Response – Pakistan](#) (page 5), 1 December 2025

¹¹³ News International, [Deported Pakistanis face 5-year travel ban](#), 21 August 2025

¹¹⁴ WELDO, [Who We Are](#), no date

¹¹⁵ WELDO, [Returns and Reintegration](#), no date

¹¹⁶ EU, [EU joins forces with Pakistan to foster sustainable reintegration of returnees](#), 3 March 2025

¹¹⁷ ICMPD, [Sustainable Reintegration of Returnees and Improved Migration ...](#), 4 March 2025

¹¹⁸ EU, [EU joins forces with Pakistan to foster sustainable reintegration of returnees](#), 3 March 2025

comfort and connection with families.’¹¹⁹

7.2.4 The April 2025 DFAT report stated that:

‘Repatriates are responsible for arranging their own onward transportation from their point of entry into Pakistan, although some CSOs reported in 2023 they provided assistance. Repatriates are typically able to reintegrate into the Pakistani community without repercussions stemming from their migration attempt, although involuntary returnees who took on debt to fund their migration tend to face a higher risk of financial hardship and sometimes familial shame. A small percentage of repatriates do not reintegrate and attempt to go abroad again to seek asylum.’¹²⁰

7.2.5 The EUAA query response noted that:

‘According to a 2024 Country Fact Sheet on Pakistan published by International Organization for Migration (IOM) Germany, returnees and their families can freely access public and private healthcare in Pakistan without any special registration, by simply walking into hospitals, clinics, health units or diagnostic centres, and may also obtain private health insurance if they choose. The same source further added that returnees can enroll their children by visiting any public or private school, where basic supplies are needed and textbooks are provided in public schools up to grade 10. Admission requires documents such as a Birth Certificate or Form-B (official document that records the details of a child such as name, date of birth, parentage) for school-level entry, and the Secondary School Certificate (SSC), Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC), and Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) for college or university enrollment.’¹²¹

See also [Freedom of movement](#).

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¹¹⁹ Migrant Resource Centre (MRC), [Services - MRC Pakistan](#), no date

¹²⁰ DFAT, [Country Information Report Pakistan](#) (paragraph 5.36 to 5.38), 30 April 2025

¹²¹ EUAA, [COI Query Response – Pakistan](#) (page 5), 1 December 2025

Terms of Reference

The 'Terms of Reference' are the main topics and issues relevant to the scope of this note and provides the framework for the country information. In this note, they were:

- Geography and demographics
- Freedom of movement, including
 - Legal rights
 - Travel restrictions
 - Transport
- Socio-economic situation
 - Economy and employment
 - Education
 - Food security
 - Housing
 - Social welfare
- Return and reintegration

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Version control and feedback

Clearance

Below is information on when this note was cleared:

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