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Pakistan Afghan Repatriation Set for September

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Pakistan's Ministry of Interior has issued a formal notification launching the return of Afghan nationals holding Proof of Registration (PoR) cards. A voluntary repatriation process begins immediately, while mandatory repatriations will take effect on 1 September 2025.

The decision follows a high—level meeting where officials cited mounting security concerns and the strain on national resources as reasons for the accelerated timeline. The latest step is part of Pakistan's Illegal Foreigners Repatriation Plan (IFRP), which was first introduced in

September 2023 to regulate undocumented foreign nationals residing illegally in the country .

Under the notification, Afghan PoR cardholders whose registration expired on 30 June 2025 will be considered unlawfully present unless they depart voluntarily. Those who remain after the deadline will face deportation procedures beginning September 1.

Multiple government agencies have been mobilized to execute the plan. The Ministry of Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit–Baltistan and Safety has been tasked with providing complete PoR data to provincial and district committees. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) will carry out de–registration at transit centres and border terminals, and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) will support operations at crossing points.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will coordinate with international organisations including UNHCR, the interim Afghan government, and others, to facilitate safe return and assistance for departing refugees.

This phase targets approximately 1.4 million PoR cardholders, alongside nearly 800,000 Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders also deemed without valid legal status and likely to face deportation.

The UNHCR has expressed serious concern, warning that the mass repatriation could breach Pakistan's international obligations and create substantial humanitarian risks. The agency has urged a more phased, dignified, and voluntary return process.

Human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have also raised alarms over reports of prior forced deportations, citing risks of refoulement and exposure to persecution for returnees under Taliban rule.

Since September 2023, Pakistan has deported or facilitated the return of over 1 million Afghan refugees, with UN data showing that returns from Pakistan and Iran combined in 2025 exceed 1.2 million. Afghanistan's ability to absorb the influx amid ongoing economic and political instability remains under strain