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Pakistan Urges Afghan Nationals to Leave Balochistan

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Pakistan has renewed its efforts to repatriate undocumented Afghan nationals residing in Balochistan, prompting a wave of movement toward the Afghanistan border, according to officials on Friday.

The Balochistan Home Department issued a new directive instructing local authorities to initiate a fresh campaign aimed at returning Afghan citizens in a manner that ensures respect and order. The move is part of broader national efforts to manage undocumented migration and address border security concerns.

“We have received directives from the home department to launch a fresh drive to repatriate all Afghans... in a respectful and orderly manner,” confirmed Mehar Ullah, a senior government official based in Quetta.

The province of Balochistan, which shares a long and historically porous border with Afghanistan, has long been a key entry and residence point for Afghan migrants. Many of these migrants have strong cross-border ethnic and familial ties, particularly among the Pashtun population, making the issue both sensitive and complex.

In the town of Chaman, a major border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan, officials reported a significant increase in activity following the government’s announcement. “There were around 4,000 to 5,000 people at the Chaman border waiting to return,” said Habib Bingalzai, a senior official posted at the site.

Authorities emphasized that the current drive is not intended to use force or coercion. Instead, the focus is on encouraging voluntary return and ensuring humane treatment during the repatriation process. Officials noted that the campaign will be carried out in phases over the coming weeks, although no official deadline has been set.

This initiative follows earlier government actions to identify and regulate the status of foreign nationals, particularly after heightened concerns over border security, terrorism, and undocumented migration. Pakistani authorities have repeatedly stated that the presence of undocumented individuals, particularly in sensitive border areas, poses a risk to national security and governance.

Pakistan has hosted millions of Afghan refugees over the past four decades, largely due to conflict and instability in Afghanistan. While many have returned in previous repatriation efforts, a significant number of undocumented individuals remain. The government has made clear that those without legal documentation are expected to return voluntarily.

Further updates are expected as provincial and federal authorities coordinate logistics and resources to facilitate a smooth process at key crossing points. The government has urged all undocumented individuals to take advantage of the current opportunity to return with dignity.