KEY FINDINGS

- **Background**: Around 84% of interviewed UASCs were born in Afghanistan. However, 37% stated Iran as their main place of residence prior to the journey. The vast majority (74%) identified themselves as Hazara with most of them coming from Ghazni, Day Kundi, Kabul and Kunduz in Afghanistan, as well as Teheran, Qom and Ishah in Iran.

- **Education and work**: The majority of those surveyed had completed primary school, while two thirds reported they had worked for an average of ten months in the past year (mainly construction, agriculture and food service), which had prevented them from attending school. Now, in Sweden 84% stated to be able to read and write and 20% said they could already speak and write Swedish.

- **Family background**: Most of the Afghan UASC interviewed lived with their nuclear family prior to embarking on their journey. However, those interviewed often reported that their parents, or habitual care-givers were missing. For example, half of the UASC participants reported that their father was deceased, and one quarter of those surveyed noted that their mother was either deceased or her location unknown.

- **Reasons for leaving**: Overall, Afghan UASC provided protection related reasons for their departure from their countries of habitual residence, irrespective of the country (Afghanistan, Iran or Pakistan). While UASC leaving Afghanistan primarily stated security-related reasons for embarking on the journey, including conflict and violence, UASC departing from Iran mainly referenced discrimination, lack of access to rights, and lack of documentation as their primary motivation for leaving. Economic reasons were only mentioned by a small fraction (9%) of UASC interviewed.

- **Journey**: The interviewed UASCs spent an average of 7 months traveling. All of them came through Iran and Turkey and have witnessed or experienced death, violence and abuse along the journey.

- **Choosing their destination**: The interviewed UASCs chose Sweden to apply for asylum as they perceived it offers good education and work to protect and assist in Sweden, irrespective of the country (Afghanistan, Iran or Pakistan). Most of the Afghan UASC interviewed lived with their nuclear family prior to embarking on their journey. However, those interviewed often reported that their parents, or habitual care-givers were missing. For example, half of the UASC participants reported that their father was deceased, and one quarter of those surveyed noted that their mother was either deceased or her location unknown.

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CONTEXT

In 2015, Sweden received a record number of asylum-seekers, with a total of 162.877 applications for asylum registered throughout the year. Out of these, 35.369 applications, close to 22% of all applications, were lodged by unaccompanied or separated children (UASC). Overall Afghans constituted the second largest group of asylum applicants in Sweden, with a total of 41.564 applications. Of these, 23.480 were UASC (66% of all UASC), constituting 56% of all the Afghan asylum seekers in 2015.

The situation of UASC of Afghan origin applying for asylum in Europe has received increasing attention. In the current context, UNHCR, UNICEF and other child protection actors, together with the UN Country Teams in Iran, Pakistan and Turkey, are looking at ways to ensure a child and protection-sensitive response to the movement of Afghan UASC. Given the large number of Afghan UASC applying for asylum in Sweden, UNHCR decided to conduct a profiling survey of the Afghan UASC population in Sweden to obtain a greater understanding of the factors that have led this population to leave Afghanistan or their first countries of asylum - Iran, Pakistan or Turkey - and seek asylum in Sweden, i.e. the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors.

METHODOLOGY

The overall objective of the profiling was to provide a better understanding of the profile and background of the Afghan minors that arrived in Sweden without a parent or an adult caretaker, in order to improve UNHCR’s work to protect and assist in Sweden, in country of origin and during the journey.

More specifically, the survey aims to provide a better understanding of the causes of the Afghan UASCs’ recent departure from Iran, Pakistan and/or Turkey, in order to understand the reasons behind the increase in arrivals in 2015.

The profiling exercise consisted of two data collection methods. Firstly, quantitative individual surveys were conducted by three teams of Farsi/Dari speaking enumerators based in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö with 240 Afghan UASC between March and May 2016. Secondly, four qualitative focus group discussions (FGD) with a total of 34 Afghan UASC, were held in Uppsala and Stockholm.

Using a database of all registered Afghan UASC who arrived in Sweden in 2015 provided by the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA), a random clustered sampling was drawn from zip codes containing more than 10 entries so as to restrict the geographical spread of the sample.

The methodology and survey questionnaire were tested, monitored and adjusted throughout the data collection period.
LIMITATIONS

The results of the study were affected by the time frame of the project, which restricted the time available to spread information about the study as well as for participation. Additionally, the challenges in contacting the legal guardians, group homes and children means that a part of sampled UASC were not reached and could hence not participate.

The study provides overall results with a 6 percent margin of error and a confidence level of XX. The survey results are representative at level of the total Afghan UASC population, but cannot be generalized by main country of residence (Afghanistan and Iran) as the survey sample is too small. Hence, results expressed by main country of residence are only included to indicate trends.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF AFGHAN UASC ASYLUM SEEKERS INTERVIEWED

97% of the interviewed UASCs speak Dari/Farsi. 20% speak English, 20% Swedish, and 15% Pashto.

ETHNICITY

- Hazara: 74%
- Pashtun: 7%
- Mixed Ethnicity: 6%
- Tajik: 6%
- Turkmen: 2%
- Uzbek: 2%
- Baloch: 1%
- Don’t know: 2%
- Don’t want to answer: 1%

RELIGION

- Hazara: 74%
- Pashtun: 7%
- Mixed Ethnicity: 6%
- Tajik: 6%
- Turkmen: 2%
- Uzbek: 2%
- Baloch: 1%
- Don’t know: 2%
- Don’t want to answer: 1%

PLACE OF BIRTH

- Afghanistan: 84%
- Iran: 14%
- Pakistan: 2%
- Tajikistan: 0%

MAIN PLACE OF RESIDENCE

- Afghanistan: 58%
- Iran: 37%
- Pakistan: 5%
- Tajikistan: 0%

84% of the UASCs interviewed were born in Afghanistan, but only 58% identified Afghanistan as their main place of residence.

37% identified Iran as their main place of residence.
**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO DEPARTURE**

### LITERACY RATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can write</th>
<th>82%</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>18%</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can read</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WENT TO SCHOOL IN COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Went to School in Country of Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SCHOOL INTERRUPTED BY THE JOURNEY TO EUROPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Interrupted by the Journey to Europe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Don't know</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EDUCATION LEVELS ACHIEVED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Levels Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Madrasa</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nothing completed yet</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational training</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Don't know</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of UASCs who went to school is higher among those whose place of residence was Iran, than among those who mainly lived in Afghanistan.

Nearly two thirds of the interviewed UASC (62%), were not registered in school when starting the journey. For those in school, the most frequent levels which were interrupted were primary school and high school.

56% said that working prevented them from going to school.

68% Worked for a salary or in a family business for an average of 10 months during the year before starting the journey.

### MAIN SECTORS OF ACTIVITIES

- **CONSTRUCTION** (23%)
- **SMALL SERVICES** (7%)
- **TRANSPORT** (3%)
- **AGRICULTURE** (23%)
- **FOOD SERVICE** (12%)
- **RELIGIOUS** (1%)
- **MANUFACTURING** (6%)
- **PETTY TRADE** (8%)
- **MECHANIST** (4%)
- **IT** (7%)
- **ELECTRICITY** (24%)
- **TAILORING** (8%)
- **CARPENTRY** (8%)

The UASC who resided in Afghanistan mainly worked in the agriculture sector.

The UASC who resided in Iran mainly worked in the construction sector.
SITUATION PRIOR TO FLIGHT

ACCOMMODATION IN PLACE OF RESIDENCE

- Rented accommodation: 50%
- Own property: 33%
- Hosted by friends or family: 8%
- Camp or Site: 2%
- Public building, school: 1%
- In the street, outdoor: 0%
- Other: 3%
- Don’t know: 3%
- Don’t want to answer: 0%

28%

Internally displaced due to conflict or violence prior to the journey.

PROVINCES OF RESIDENCE OF UASCs RESIDING IN AFGHANISTAN

PROVINCES OF RESIDENCE OF UASCs RESIDING IN IRAN

IDENTITY DOCUMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

- No document: 55%
- Identity Card: 28%
- Passport: 5%
- Don’t know: 15%

IDENTITY DOCUMENTS OF UASCs RESIDING OUTSIDE OF AFGHANISTAN

- No document: 81%
- My own refugee card: 7%
- My family refugee card: 5%
- Permanent residence: 1%
- Other: 1%
- Don’t know: 5%
**SITUATION PRIOR TO FLIGHT**

In the main country of residence, 3% of the UASC lived ALONE.

In addition:
- 8% without MOTHER and FATHER (but other relatives)
- 25% without FATHER
- 3% without MOTHER

**LIVED WITH...**

- Mother: 89%
- Siblings: 73%
- Father: 66%
- Myself (alone): 3%
- Aunt/Uncle: 10%
- Grandparents: 7%
- Spouse: 2%
- Other relatives: 1%

**TAKEN CARE BY...**

- Father: 57%
- Myself: 19%
- Mother: 18%
- Aunt/Uncle: 4%
- Older siblings: 1%
- Other relative: 1%

**REASON FOR THE FLIGHT**

**MAIN REASONS FOR LEAVING THE COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE**

- Conflict, War, Violence: 52%
- Discrimination: 27%
- Other types of violence: 22%
- Education: 21%
- Lack of documentation: 17%
- Sent by my family: 10%
- To find work: 9%
- Fear of forced recruitment: 9%
- Expulsion from the country: 7%
- Past persecution or fear of future persecution: 6%
- Survival essentials are not existent: 6%
- Violence at home: 5%
- Expiration of documentation with denial of renewal: 4%
- Flexing child labor: 2%
- Reunify with family abroad: 1%
- Don’t know: 2%
- Don’t want to answer: 5%

**Country of Residence AFGANISTAN:**

74% UASCs leaving due to violences or conflict

**Country of Residence IRAN:**

53% UASCs leaving due to discrimination
41% UASCs leaving due to lack of documentation

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**The journey**

This map is an interpreted summary of focus group discussions organized in Stockholm and Uppsala with Afghan UASCs. The exercise was conducted with UNHCR Protection specialists from Afghanistan. It identifies the main protection issues faced by UASCs during their travel.

Protection issues during the journey are mostly identified on the road in Afghanistan from Ghazni to Nimroz (Ghazni to Kandahar), at the Afghan/Pakistani border (Nimroz) and at the Afghan/Iran border, in Iran, at the border between Iran and Turkey (mountain border, Van), in Turkey (Izmir) and at the border between Turkey and Greece, at the border between Greece and Macedonia, and in Hungary.

Protection issues can broadly be categorized into two: physical and emotional violence committed by third parties (smugglers, local police, other travellers) and arduous routes. TO BE COMPLETED BY SAMARIE/ANDREA

For more information, read the full report (URL LINK HERE)
JOURNEY TO EUROPE AND SWEDEN

On average UASCs SPENT 7 MONTHS ON THE ROAD to accomplish the journey. Those who left from Iran spent less time on the road than those leaving from Afghanistan (4 and 9 months respectively).

60% of the interviewed UASC travelled ALONE. Only 10% travelled with at least one family member. Others travelled with friends.

FINANCING THE JOURNEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FINANCE FOR THE JOURNEY*</th>
<th>Borrowing from friends or family</th>
<th>43%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Own savings</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family paid for it</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sold assets, furniture or house</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowing from other entities</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked during the journey</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t want to answer</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3,576 USD
Average cost of the journey from Afghanistan

2,192 USD
Average cost of the journey from Iran

DO YOU/YOUR FAMILY NEED TO PAY BACK THE MONEY BORROWED?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
<th>Don’t want to answer</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Only 5% of the respondents are sending money to their family back at home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE CHOICE OF SWEDEN AS COUNTRY OF ASYLUM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REASON FOR CHOOSING SWEDEN*</th>
<th>41%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for human right and safety</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier and faster asylum process</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just followed my group</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel welcome here</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and community of my culture are here</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deported from another country</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t want to answer</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO TOOK THE DECISION TO COME TO SWEDEN?</th>
<th>52%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myself</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My family</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The group I was travelling with</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smugglers</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t want to answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only 1 respondent (0.4%) had heard about RELLOCATION PROGRAMS. None had heard about family reunification.
THE CHOICE OF SWEDEN AS COUNTRY OF ASYLUM

Source of information about Sweden before/during the journey:

45% of UASCs got their information from people travelling with them
16% of UASCs got their information from friends and family in Sweden

WHERE DID YOU MAINLY GET INFORMATION DURING THE JOURNEY?*

- Other people travelling with me: 63%
- Aid workers: 12%
- Friends or family in country of origin: 10%
- Sign, board, leaflets: 10%
- Internet: 5%
- Media: 3%
- Social media: 2%
- Don't know: 17%
- Don't want to answer: 1%

CURRENT SITUATION IN FORMER PLACE OF RESIDENCE

Do you know where your parents are?

52% Father is either dead or don’t know where he is
24% Mother is either dead or don’t know where she is

CURRENTLY COMMUNICATES WITH...*

- Mother: 63%
- Father: 34%
- Older siblings: 14%
- Younger siblings: 18%
- Aunt or Uncle: 5%
- Grandparents: 1%
- Other relatives: 3%
- Don’t know: 9%
- Don’t want to answer: 7%

COMMUNICATE VIA...*

- Phone: 65%
- Social media: 23%
- Other: 3%
- Don’t know: 18%
- Don’t want to answer: 8%

Reading note: charts marked with * can add up to a total higher than 100%, as the respondents could provide multiple answers to the questions.