

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Pakistani Public Opinion in widespread support of Govt Policy to repatriate illegal Afghan refugees, after 40 years hospitality turns into tiredness for most Pakistanis vis a vis Afghans: Gallup Pakistan Report on Public Opinion on Afghan Refugee Issue**

*Islamabad, November 28<sup>th</sup> 2023*

Gallup Pakistan Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees is a comprehensive report that unveils the sentiments of the public regarding the caretaker government's recent policy on Afghan Refugees. It examines opinions about the government's decision to expel the illegal Afghan refugees from the country, and the public's perception of how the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland will impact Pakistan. This report can be accessed [HERE](#).

The survey, conducted with a diverse and representative sample of the Pakistani population, spread across all four provinces and over 100 districts, reveals the opinions associated with the Government's Afghan Refugee Policy.

## **Key Findings**

### **Awareness of Government Policy:**

An extensive 69% of Pakistanis are informed about the government's recent policy aimed at expelling illegally residing Afghan refugees.

### **Support for the Policy:**

A resounding 84% of respondents expressed strong approval of the government's policy, considering it a commendable decision.

### **Opinions on Afghan Refugees Staying in Pakistan:**

Views on the presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan were divided, with 14% supporting their continued stay, while 77% advocated for their return to Afghanistan.

### **Entry of Afghan Refugees:**

Concerning the entry of new Afghan refugees, 73% of respondents believed that the Pakistani government should prohibit their entry, with 19% supporting their admission.

### **Requests for Afghan Refugees to Stay in Pakistan:**

In cases where Afghan refugees request to stay in Pakistan, 42% of respondents believed that the government should permit them to stay, while 46% favored rejecting such requests.

### **Economic Impact of Repatriation:**

With regard to the economic consequences of Afghan refugee repatriation, 55% of participants believed that the return of Afghan refugees to their home country would positively impact the Pakistani economy. In contrast, 22% of Pakistanis believed that their repatriation would negatively affect the domestic economy.

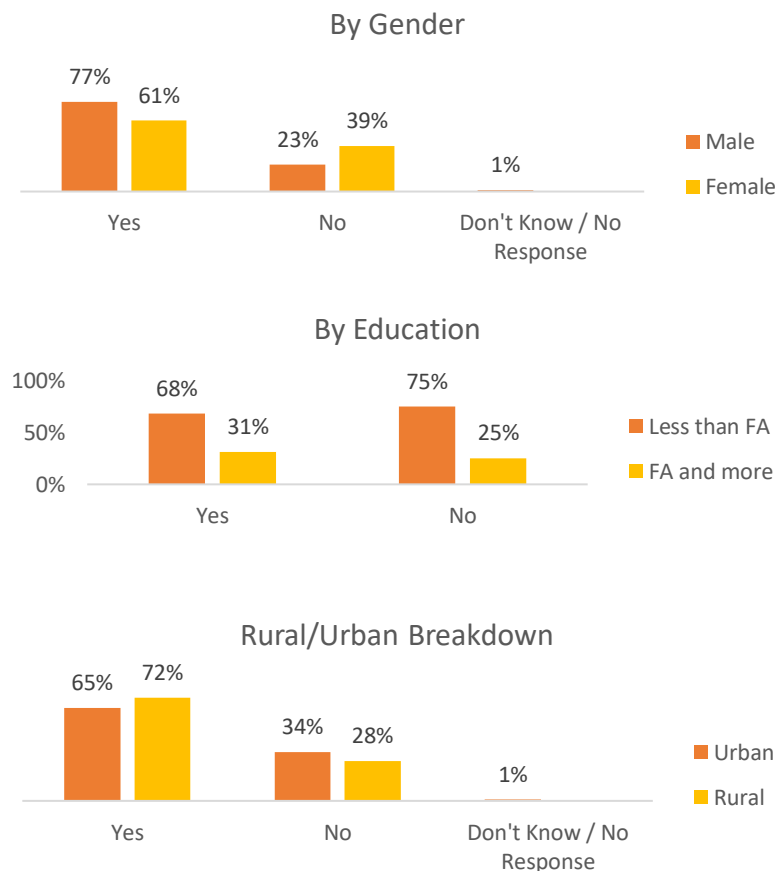
### **Impact on Domestic Peace and Order:**

An overwhelming 64% of respondents believed that the repatriation of Afghan refugees would enhance domestic peace and order. Only 4% thought it would have an adverse effect, while 22% believed it would have no impact.

## 1. Awareness of Government Policy

The snap poll reflects that 69% of Pakistanis knew about the recent policy to expel illegally residing Afghan refugees, while 30% were not aware about it. Taking into account different variables, the highest percentage difference arises when one considers the gender of respondent. **77% of males were aware of the policy as compared to 61% of the females – amounting to a difference of 16%.** The variables with the lowest percentage difference are the location and education of respondents. **There is a difference of 7% between awareness amongst individuals whose education is less than FA (68%) and those who have attained education at FA level and beyond (75%). A similar percentage difference of 8% can be seen amongst awareness level within urban locations (65%) as compared to rural locations (72%).**

**Q. Recently, the government of Pakistan ordered the illegally residing Afghans to leave the country. Have you read/heard anything about this?**

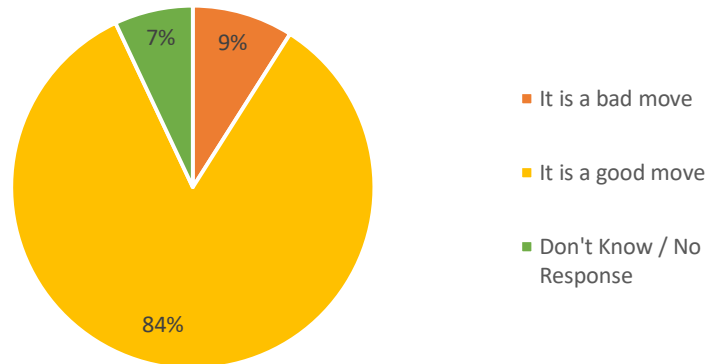


Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

## 2. Support for the policy

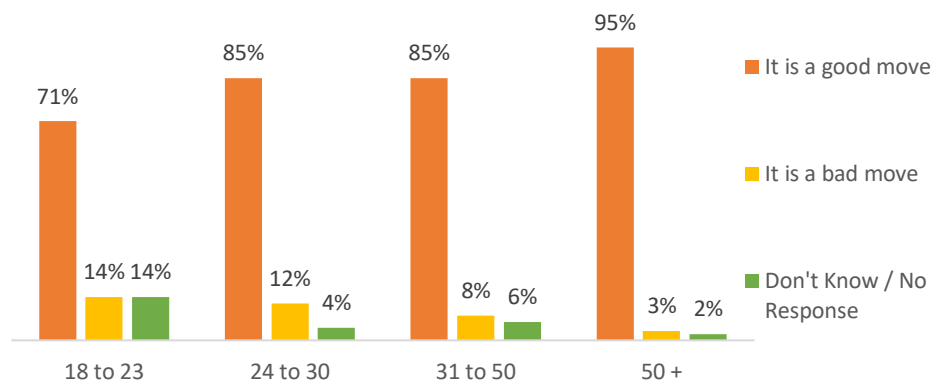
Out of those Pakistanis who were aware of the policy, A significant majority (84%) believe that ordering the illegally residing Afghans to leave the country is a good move, on part of the government. **The greatest difference occurs when one considers the age groups of the respondents. 14% of individuals aged 18 to 23 think that it is a bad move, while only 3% of the individuals who are 50+ think the same.** There is not much discrepancy between the other variables.

**Q. Some people think that ordering the illegally residing Afghans to leave the country is a good move, on part of the government. While some people have a negative opinion of this. According to them, this is not a good move at all. What is your opinion about this decision by the government?**



Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

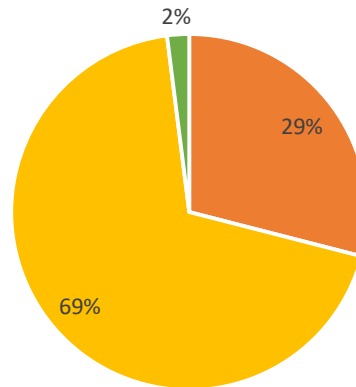
### Breakdown by Age



Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

**Q. Please tell me, are there any Afghan refugees residing in your area (present area of residence)?**

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't Know /No Response

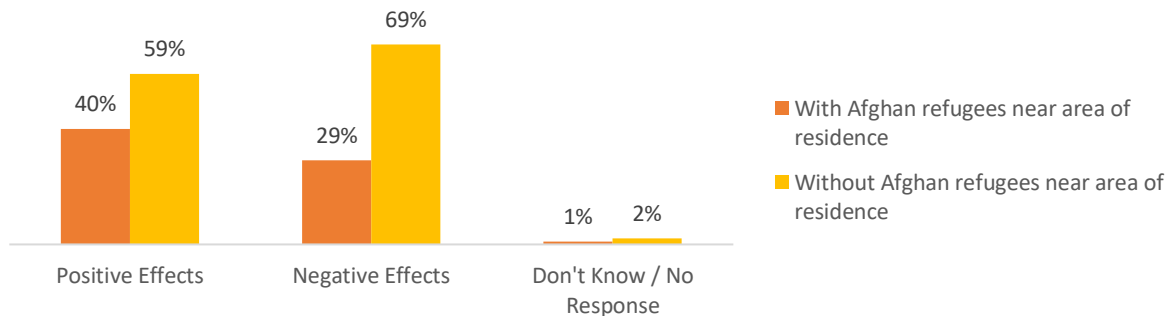


Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

While there is immense support for the policy, it can be gauged that it is not entirely based on interactions with the Afghan refugee community. Only 29% of the respondents have any Afghan refugees residing in their area, whereas 69% do not.

Analysis of the findings shows that proximity with the refugees does change some opinion regarding the refugees; while they are less likely to think that the refugees have a negative effect on the country, it does not translate into an increased belief that they have a positive effect.

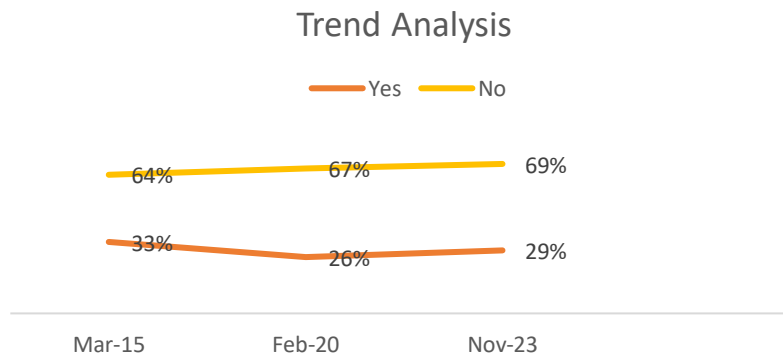
**Q. As you know Afghan refugees have been living in Pakistan for almost four decades. Some people think that the presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan has had a bad effect on the country, while some believe that there have been may positive effects due to them, and some others believe that there have neither been positive nor negative effects. What do you think overall?**



Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

## Trend Analysis

Across the years, there has been a 4% decrease in the number of Pakistanis who have Afghan refugees residing in their neighborhoods. The dip occurs primarily in 2020, as the percentage falls from 33% to 26%. By 2023, while it has increased to 29% it is still less than what it was in 2015. Almost proportionally, there has been a 5% increase from 2015 to 2023 in the number of Pakistanis who do not have Afghan refugees residing in their neighborhoods.

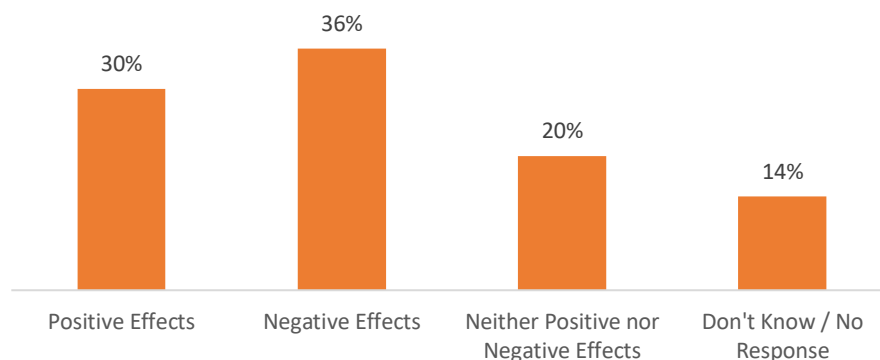


Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

## 3. Opinions on Afghan Refugees staying in Pakistan

The significant difference of 63% between those who want Afghan refugees to return to Afghanistan as compared to those who want them to stay in Pakistan does not seem to align with perceived impact. A fairly equitable split is shown between those who believe the presence of Afghan refugees has had a positive impact (30%) on Pakistan, as compared to those who believe they have a negative impact (36%).

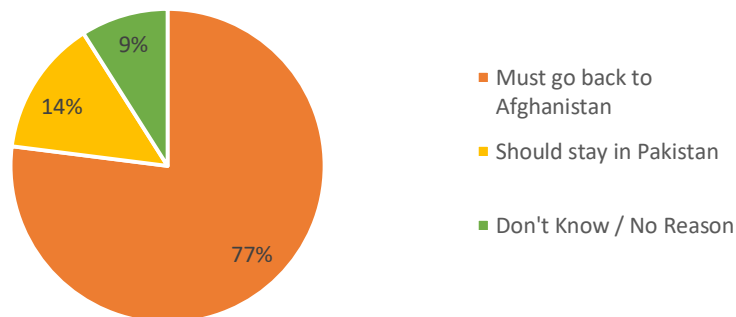
**Q. As you know Afghan refugees have been living in Pakistan for almost four decades. Some people think that the presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan has had a bad effect on the country, while some believe that there have been many positive effects due to them, and some others believe that there have neither been positive nor negative effects. What do you think overall?**



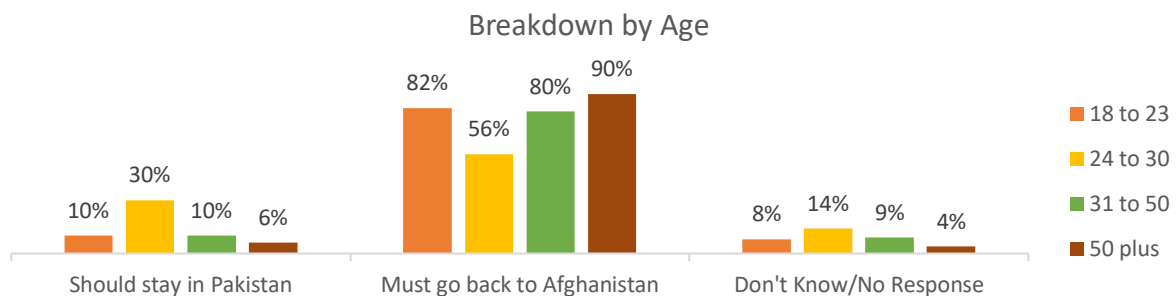
Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

While the government policy that most Pakistanis are in support of pertains to illegally residing Afghan refugees, it appears that the sentiments of the public remain the same for Afghan refugees in general. **A vast majority of Pakistanis (77%), think that Afghan refugees must go back to Afghanistan, with only 14% believing that they should stay in Pakistan.** It is only within the age breakdown that a slight discrepancy can be noticed- with **30% of the respondents between 24 to 30 believing that Afghan refugees should stay in Pakistan.**

Q. Please tell me whether you think Afghan refugees should stay in Pakistan or go back to their country?



Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

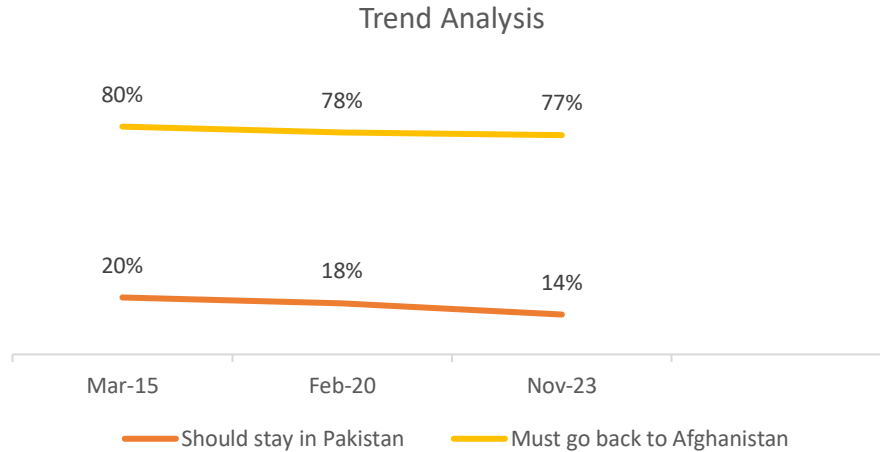


Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

## Trend Analysis

Although there has been an incremental decrease of 3% in the sentiment that all Afghan refugees must go back to Afghanistan, from 2015 to 2023, it is an opinion that remains echoed by the

majority of Pakistanis over these 9 years. However, there is a greater decrease of 6% amongst those who believe they should stay in Pakistan- the percentage falling from 20% to 14%.

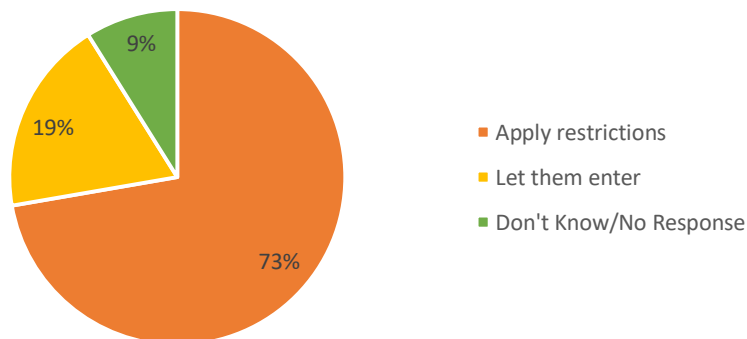


Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

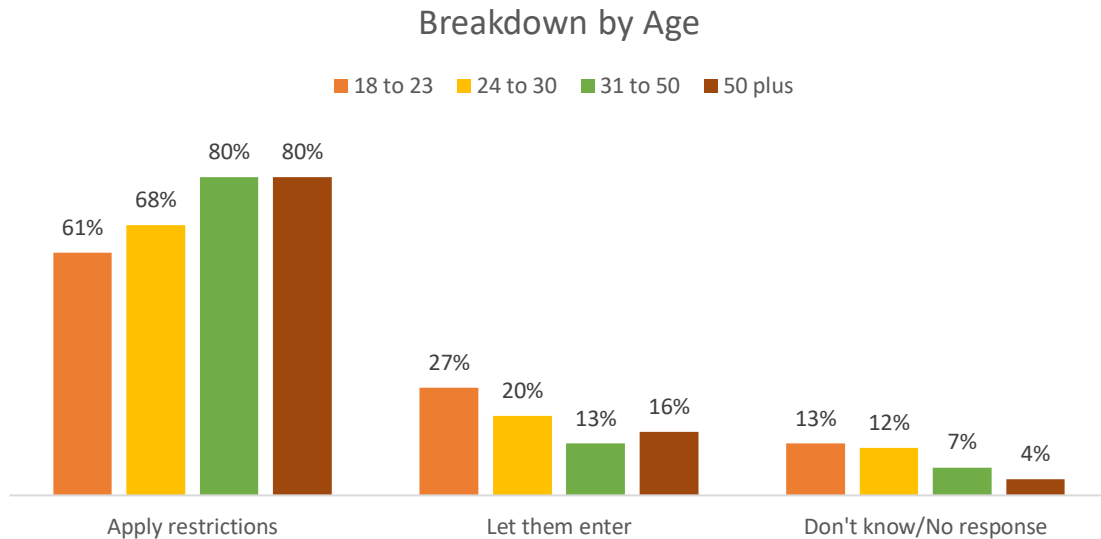
#### 4. Entry of Afghan Refugees

73% of Pakistanis believe that restrictions should be applied in regards to the entry of Afghan refugees whereas 19% of them think that they should be allowed to enter. **There is a noticeable trend of an increase in restrictions with increasing age groups. There is a difference of 19% between respondents who are between ages 18 to 23 and those aged 50 plus.** A similar demographic trend can be seen between respondents from urban and rural location; with **62% of those from urban locations believing there should be restrictions, as compared to 79% of those from rural locations who think the same.**

**Q. Some people are of the opinion that the Pakistani government should ban the entry of Afghan Refugees. While some are of the opinion that they should be allowed to enter. What do you think?**



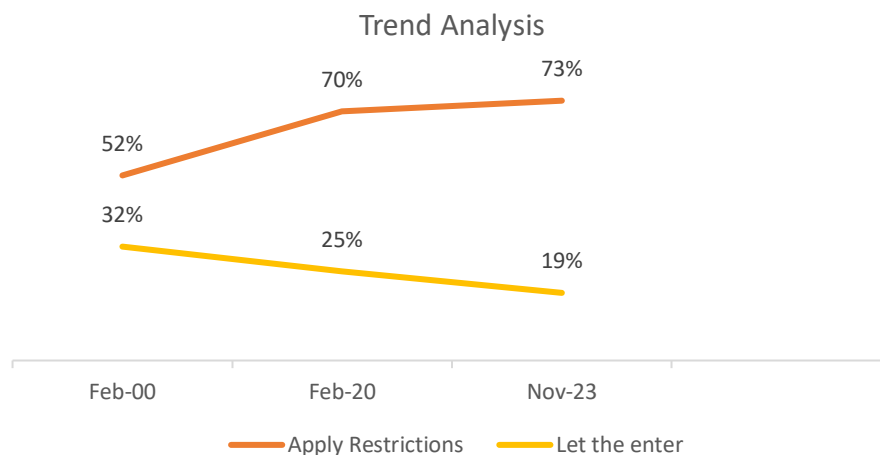
Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan



Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

## Trend Analysis

There is a significant shift within those who think restrictions should be applied to the entry of Afghan refugees. It first increased from 52% in 2000 to 70% in 2020, to later increase to 73% in 2023. The overall increase is 21%. On the other hand, there has been a 13% decrease amongst those who believe Pakistan should let the refugees enter- falling from 32% in 2000 to 19% in 2023.



Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

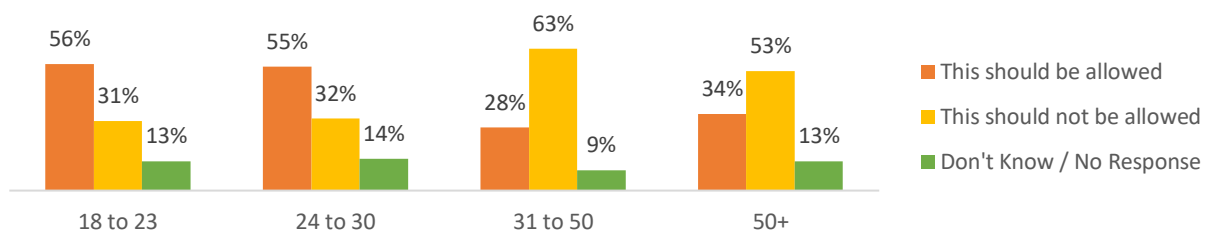
## 5. Requests by Afghan Refugees to stay in Pakistan

When asked if they think Afghan refugees should be allowed to stay in Pakistan upon request, 42% agreed, while 46% did not think that they should be allowed to stay – the difference between the two being only 4%. The trend of respondents believing this should be allowed is directly proportional to increasing monthly income: **40% of those who are within the low-income category believe it should be allowed, while 45% do not. Compared to the high-income category, 67% believe it should be allowed while only 32% believe it should not.** An increase in education of the respondents also displays a positive attitude towards Afghan refugees, with more than half (53%) of those who are educated up till and beyond FA believing that Afghan refugees should be allowed to stay upon request.

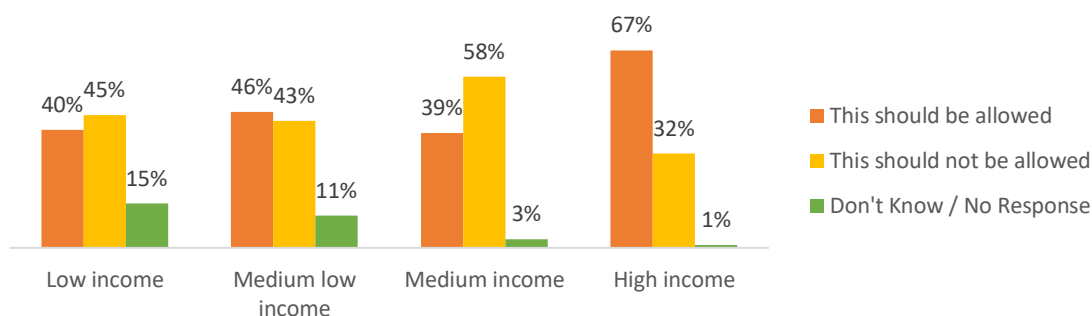
In the demographic breakdown for this question, as well as earlier questions, it is noticed that younger age groups tend to have a more positive attitude towards the Afghan refugees. **56% of those falling between 18 to 23, and 55% of those between 24 to 30 believe that Afghan refugees should be allowed to stay upon request.** This is contrasted with the opposing numbers of the older groups: **63% of those between 31 to 50, and 53% of those who are 50+ believe that they should not be allowed to stay.**

**Q. If some Afghanis request to stay in Pakistan, do you think the government of Pakistan should allow them to stay?**

Breakdown by Age



Breakdown by Income

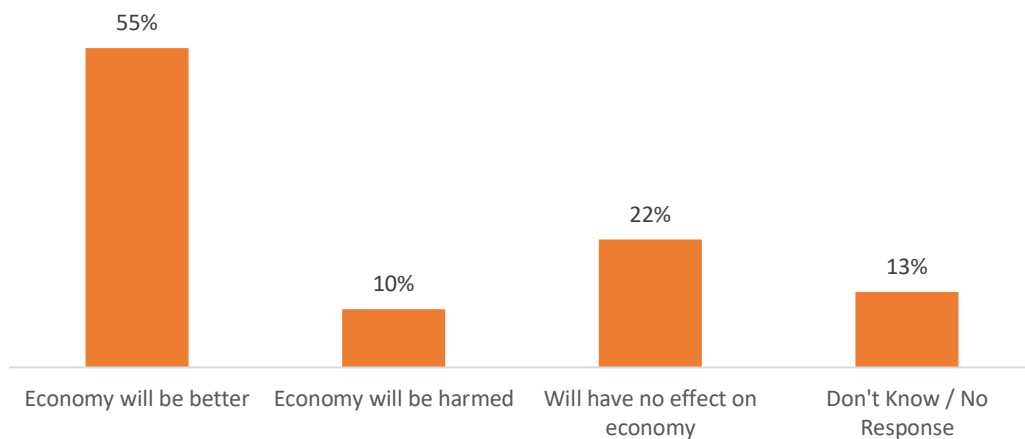


Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

## 6. Economic Impact of Repatriation

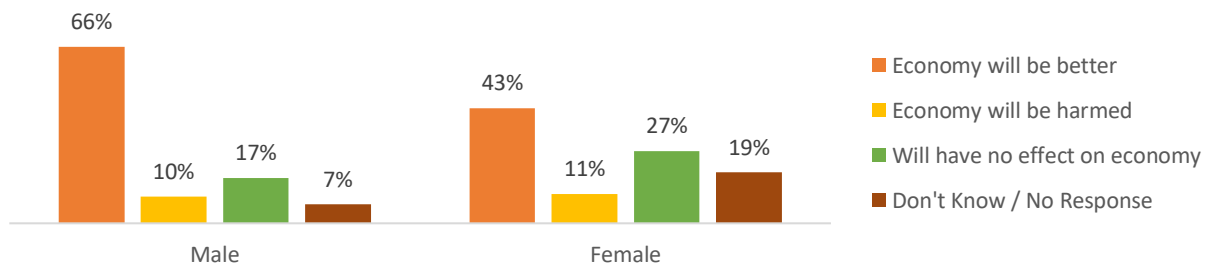
More than half (55%) of Pakistanis think that the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland will benefit the economy of Pakistan. Out of the remaining, 10% think that it will harm the economy, while 22% believe that it will have no effect on the economy. Concerning those who believe the economy will get better, the demographic breakdown represents 66% male, 68% over the age of 50, 57% educated up till and beyond FA level, 63% belonging to a high-income group and 55% coming from the rural population.

**Q. Some people think that the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland will benefit the economy of Pakistan, while some people think that the return of Afghan refugees to their homeland will harm the economy of Pakistan, while some others say that it will make no difference to Pakistan's economy, what is your opinion about this?**



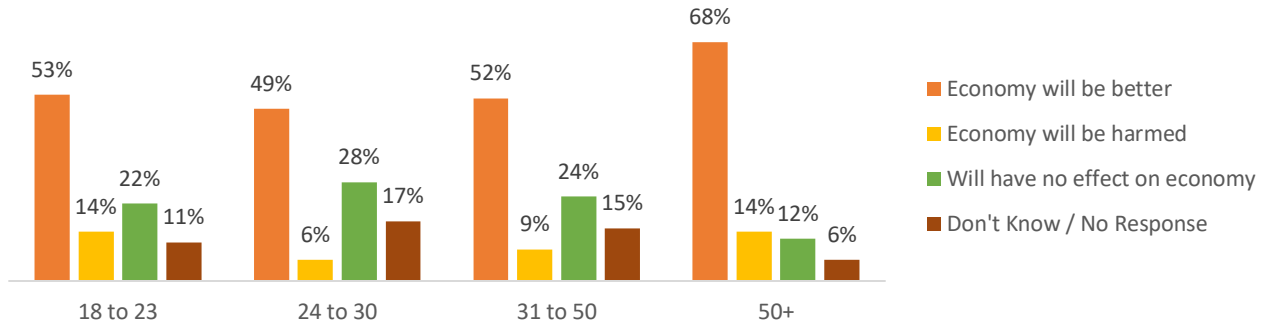
Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

### Breakdown by Gender



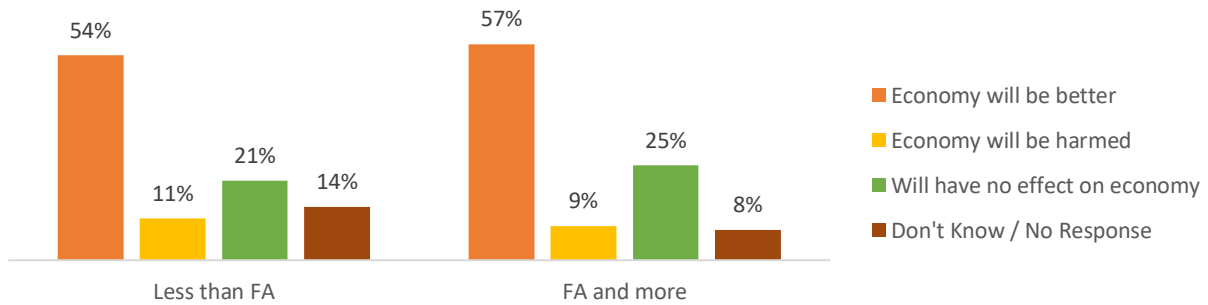
Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

### Breakdown by Age



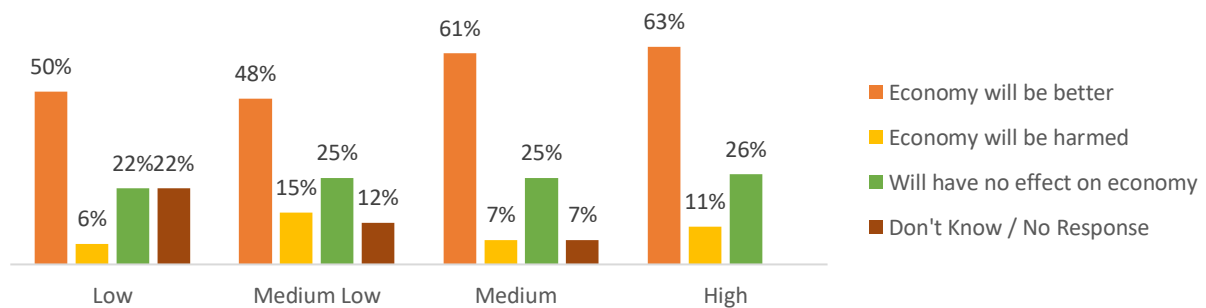
Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

### Breakdown by Education

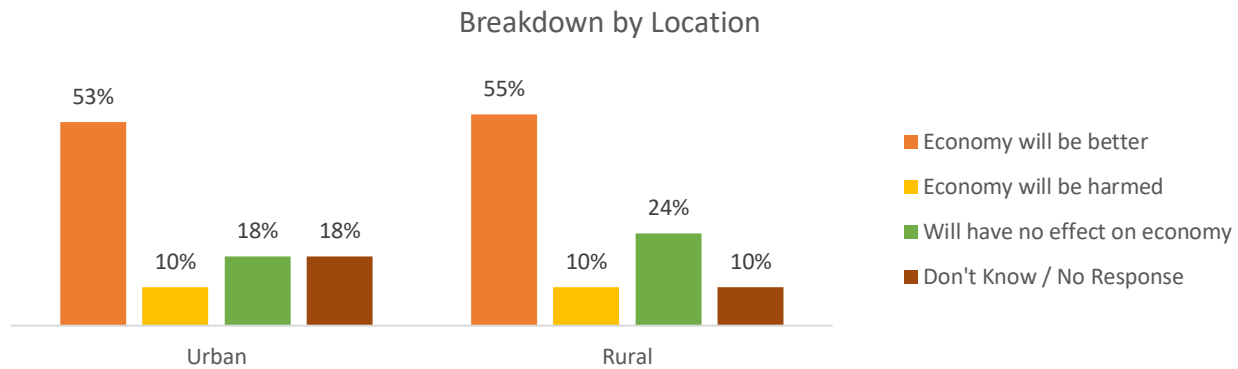


Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

### Breakdown by Income



Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan



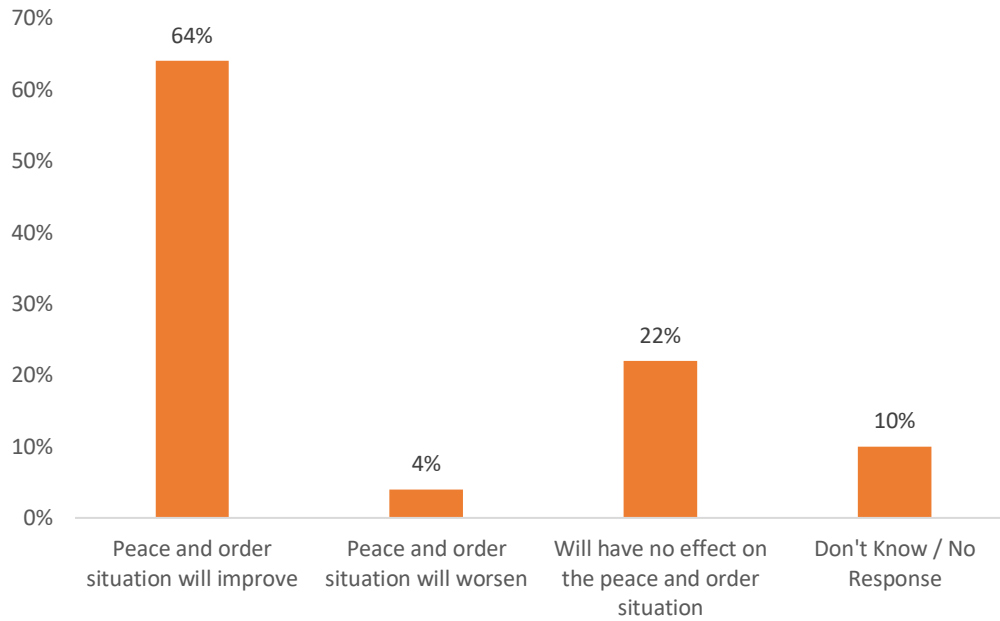
Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

## 7. Impact on Domestic Peace and Order

Similar to the majority proportion of Pakistanis in who considered the Afghan refugees to be a burden on the economy, most (64%) also think that the peace and order situation stands to benefit from the refugees' departure. 22% think it will have no effect, while only 4% disagree. This signifies an association of Afghan refugees with criminality and disruption- which might be due to the narrative built considering only 29% of Pakistanis actually have Afghan refugees living in their neighborhoods.

**Men seem to be more inclined towards agreeing that peace and order situation will improve, with a 13% difference between Male (70%) and Female (57%) respondents.** In addition to that, once again, it is the respondents falling within the age group of 50 plus (73%), educated up till FA and beyond (71%) and coming from a high-income group (75%) that believes the impact on domestic peace and order will be positive with the expulsion of Afghan refugees.

**Q. Some people think that Afghan refugees leaving Pakistan will improve the peace and order situation in Pakistan, while some people think that Afghan refugees leaving Pakistan will have a bad effect on the peace and order situation in Pakistan, while some others say that it will have no effect on the peace and order situation of Pakistan. What is your opinion about this?**



Source: Snap Poll on Afghan Refugees – Gallup Pakistan

## KEY DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

### **Awareness of Government Policy:**

- **77%** of males were aware of the policy as compared to **61%** of the females – amounting to a difference of **16%**

### **Support for the Policy:**

- **14%** of individuals aged 18 to 23 think that the policy is a bad move, while only **3%** of the individuals who are 50+ think the same

### **Opinions on Afghan Refugees Staying in Pakistan:**

- While only **14%** overall believe that Afghan refugees should stay in Pakistan, the demographic breakdown suggests that **30%** of the respondents between 24 to 30 believe that they should stay.

### **Entry of Afghan Refugees:**

- There is a difference of **19%** between respondents who are between 18 to 23 (**61%**) and those who are 50+ (**80%**) in terms of believing there should be restrictions on entry of Afghan refugees.

### **Requests for Afghan Refugees to Stay in Pakistan:**

- **40%** of those who are within the low-income category believe it should be allowed, while **45%** do not. This difference is comparatively higher in the high-income category, where **67%** believe it should be allowed while only **32%** believe it should not

### **Economic Impact of Repatriation:**

- Concerning those who believe the economy will get better from afghan refugees' departure, the demographic breakdown shows **66%** male, **68%** over the age of 50, **57%** educated up till and beyond FA level, **63%** from high-income group and **55%** from the rural population.

### **Impact on Domestic Peace and Order:**

- Men seem to be more inclined towards agreeing that peace and order situation will improve with the departure of Afghan refugees, with a **13%** difference between Male (**70%**) and Female (**57%**) respondents

## SUMMARY METHODOLOGY

**Sample size** : 750+ Households  
(18+ Males and Females)

**Coverage** : National Cross Section  
All Pakistan Urban and Rural

### Breakdown

#### Provincial Breakdown:

|             | Weighted |
|-------------|----------|
| Punjab      | 53%      |
| Sindh       | 22%      |
| KPK         | 17%      |
| Balochistan | 6%       |
| GB/AJK      | 3%       |

#### Location Breakdown:

|                                   | Weighted |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Large Cities (over 2 million)     | 36%      |
| Medium Cities (over half million) |          |
| Towns (Population 5000 plus)      |          |
| Villages                          | 64%      |

**Sampling Method** : Random Digit Dialing

**Error Margin** :  $\pm 3-5\%$  at 95% confidence level

**Interview Mode** : Telephonic

**Field Dates** : 1 November – 4 November, 2023

Gallup Pakistan adheres to ESOMAR/WAPOR Code of Ethics of Opinion and Marketing Research (*form more details please see detailed methodology*)

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Gallup Pakistan has conducted this poll according to the ESOMAR Code of Ethics and internationally recognized principles of scientific polling. The results in this Report do not represent views held by the authors or Gallup Pakistan. The results only represent public opinion, computed on the basis of views expressed by anonymous respondents selected through the procedure outlined in the Methodology section of this Report. Gallup Pakistan has provided this data in the public interest and gratis. It cannot be held liable, contractually or otherwise, to the users of this data.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Profile of Respondents

(n=752)

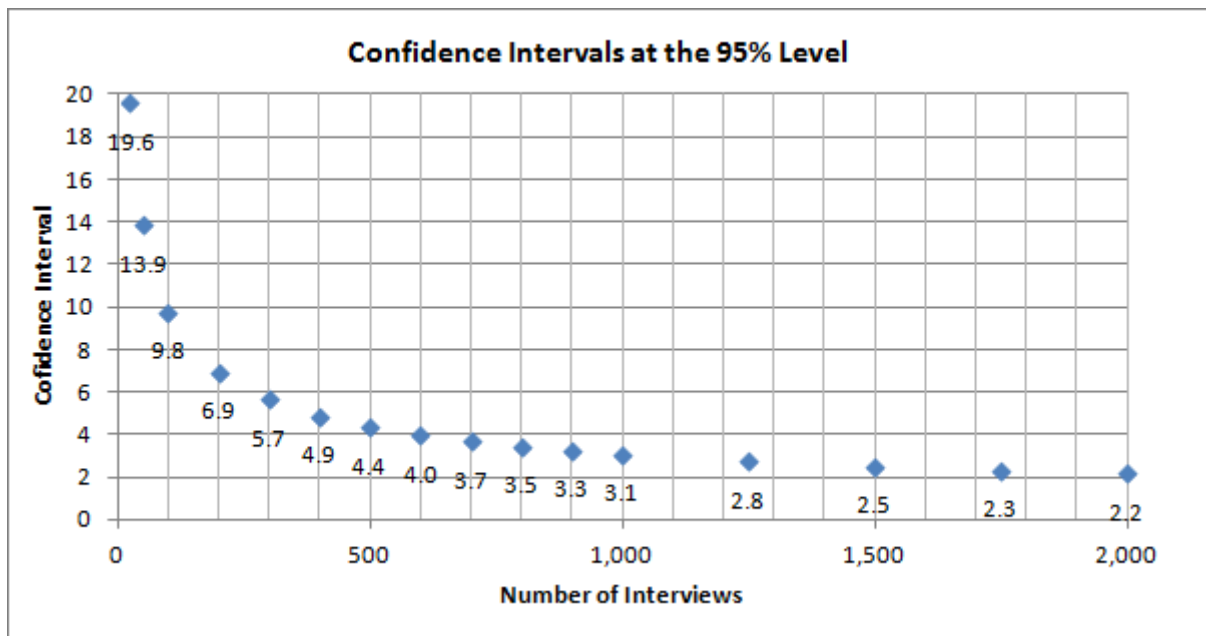
|                         |                                   | Weighted |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|
|                         |                                   | Col%     |
| <b>BASE: All</b>        |                                   | 100%     |
| <b>Gender</b>           |                                   |          |
|                         | Male                              | 51%      |
|                         | Female                            | 49%      |
| <b>Location</b>         |                                   |          |
|                         | Rural                             | 64%      |
|                         | Urban                             | 36%      |
| <b>Province</b>         |                                   |          |
|                         | Punjab                            | 53%      |
|                         | Sindh                             | 22%      |
|                         | KPK                               | 17%      |
|                         | Balochistan                       | 6%       |
|                         | GB/AJK                            | 3%       |
| <b>Age Groups</b>       |                                   |          |
|                         | 18 to 23                          | 25%      |
|                         | 24 to 30                          | 22%      |
|                         | 31 to 50                          | 35%      |
|                         | 50+                               | 19%      |
| <b>Education</b>        |                                   |          |
|                         | Less than FA                      | 84%      |
|                         | FA and more                       | 16%      |
| <b>Monthly HHIncome</b> |                                   |          |
|                         | Low (Up to Rs.15000)              | 27%      |
|                         | Medium Low (Rs. 15,001 to 35,000) | 51%      |
|                         | Medium (Rs. 35,001 to 50,000)     | 6%       |
|                         | High (More than 51,000)           | 3%       |
|                         | DK/NR                             | 14%      |

**Source:** Powered by Gallup Pakistan, 1 November – 4 November, 2023

### Note on Sample Size

The sample size used in this survey is quite adequate even in comparison to international standards. Gallup US Daily poll is 500 and the Gallup Poll Social Series is 1000, both having track record of reliable predictability for USA (a country nearly 100 million larger in population of Pakistan). According to FiveThirtyEight, one of the most credible sources on polling in the US: "Surveying 2,000 voters substantially reduces error compared with surveying 400 of them but surveying 10,000 voters will produce only marginal improvements in accuracy compared with the 2,000- person survey".

Obviously, choosing a higher confidence interval will give greater accuracy to the survey results, however, as the chart below shows, at a certain point the benefits of conducting more surveys begins to tail off:



25 interviews have a confidence interval of 19.6 and 100 interviews has a confidence interval of 9.8, whilst it falls to 4.4 at 500 interviews and 3.1 at 1000 interviews. However, a further 1000 interviews only lower the confidence interval by 0.9 to 2.2. A confidence interval of 1 (not shown on the graph) would require a massive 9604 interviews.

**Is a larger sample always better than a smaller sample?**

Larger samples are generally more precise, but sometimes not. The important rule in sampling is not how many poll respondents are selected but, instead, how they are selected. A reliable sample selects poll respondents randomly or in a manner which ensures that everyone in the area being surveyed has a known chance of being selected.

### **How do you interpret Error Margins?**

How do you interpret a margin of error? Suppose you know that 51% of people sampled say that they plan to vote for Mr. X in the upcoming election. Now, projecting these results to the whole voting population, you would have to add and subtract the margin of error and give a range of possible results in order to have sufficient confidence that you're bridging the gap between your sample and the population. Supposing a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points, you would be pretty confident that between 48% ( $= 51\% - 3\%$ ) and 54% ( $= 51\% + 3\%$ ) of the population will vote for Mr. X in the election, based on the sample results. In this case, Mr. X may get slightly more or slightly less than the majority of votes and could either win or lose the election. This has become a familiar situation in recent years when the media want to report results on Election Night, but based on early exit polling results, the election is "too close to call."

### **What Error Margins do not mean**

The margin of error measures accuracy; it does not measure the amount of bias that may be present. Results that look numerically scientific and precise don't mean anything if they were collected in a biased way