Supplemental Appendix

Refugee Return and Conflict:
Evidence from a Natural Experiment

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S1 Context Appendix

In this brief appendix, we elaborate key contextual details of the intervention we study.

S1.1 Incentivized and Assisted Return Programs Worldwide

A growing number of refugee-receiving countries and international organizations now offer assistance and incentives for repatriation to origin countries. These programs typically pay cash and in-kind benefits. Table S1 offers an illustrative but non-exhaustive list of these assisted repatriation programs.

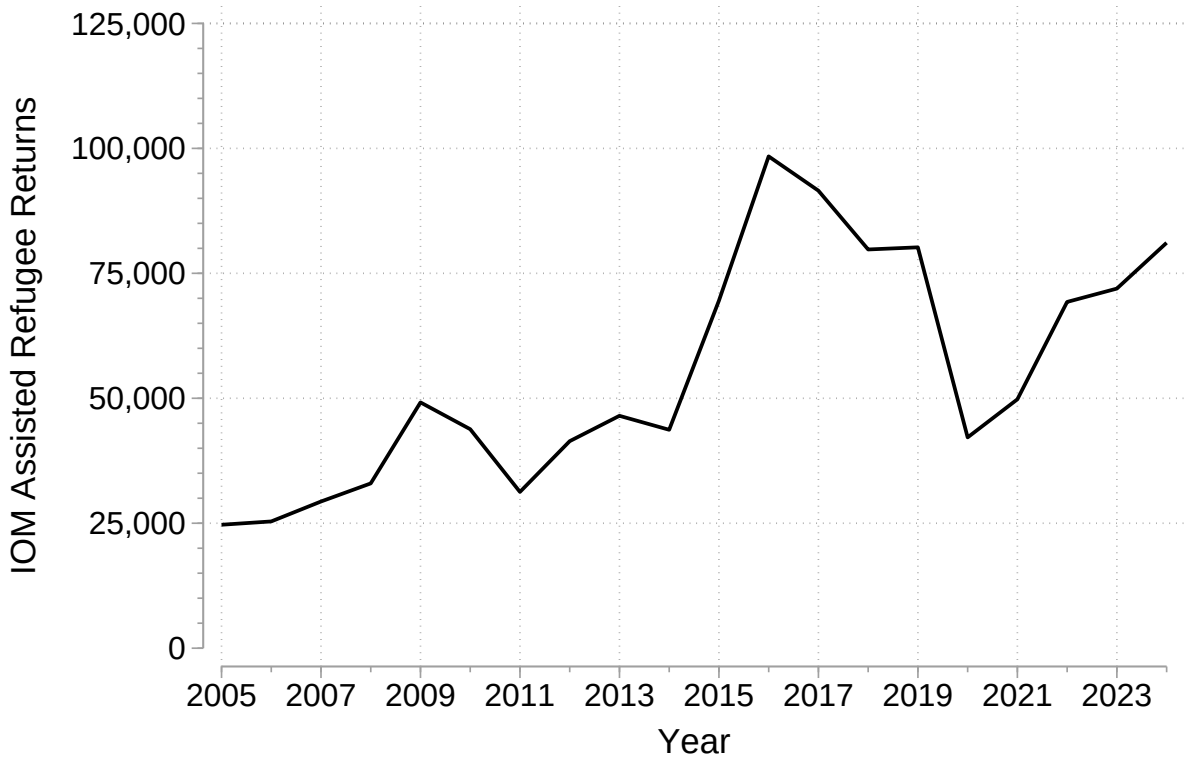
Table S1: Prominent Repatriation Assistance and Cash-for-Return Programs

Host Country	Amount	Program Name	Source
Australia	—	RRAP	Kalicki (2020)
Austria	—	—	Kalicki (2020)
Belgium	$2,000	REAB	Kalicki (2020)
Cambodia	—	—	UNHCR
Canada	—	AVRR	Kalicki (2020)
Czechia	$1,000	—	Kalicki (2020)
Denmark	$5,700 - $18,700	—	Gerver (2017)
France	$1,700	Aide au Retour Volontaire	Kalicki (2020)
Germany	$1,400 - $6,200	REAG, GARP, StarthilfePlus, DLDZJ	Kalicki (2020)
Ghana	$100	—	Gerver (2017)
Greece	—	—	IOM
Iraq	—	—	IOM
Ireland	$1,400 - $2,900	—	IOM
Israel	$3,500	—	Gerver (2017)
Italy	—	—	IOM
Japan	$3,000	Nikkeijin	Kalicki (2020)
Libya	—	—	IOM
Myanmar	—	—	UNHCR
Netherlands	—	REMPLOD, REAN	Kalicki (2020)
Norway	—	—	IOM
Pakistan	$200 - $400	—	Esper, Krishnan and Wieser (2022)
Rwanda	—	—	UNHCR
Somalia	$400 - $800	—	UNHCR
Spain	$9,400	APRE	Kalicki (2020)
South Sudan	—	—	UNHCR
Sri Lanka	—	—	UNHCR
Sweden	$1,600 - $7,200	—	Gerver (2017); Kalicki (2020)
Syria	—	—	UNHCR
Switzerland	—	—	IOM
Tanzania	In-Kind	—	Schwartz (2019)
United Kingdom	$3,500	VARR, AVRFC	Gerver (2017); Kalicki (2020)
United States	$1,000	CBP One	Sanchez and Elba (2025)

Note: We document a non-exhaustive list of 32 refugee-hosting countries that have implemented, independently or in collaboration with international organizational partners, repatriation assistance programs. Under these programs, countries and implementing organizational partners offer cash and/or in-kind assistance to migrants to induce migrants to return to their origin countries. Not all programs listed are currently active. Amounts of assistance paid are expressed in U.S. dollars, and represent the reported amount the average returnee is offered. In the source column, UNHCR and IOM indicate that program information was sourced from myriad reports published by one or both of those organizations.

We assemble data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to characterize the rise in assisted repatriation programming over time. In 2024, more than 81,108 refugees participated in IOM-implemented incentivized repatriation programs, operating across 121 host countries and 143 origin countries (IOM, 2025). Data on repatriation assistance programs implemented directly by host countries or by the UNHCR are not systematically available, so true numbers of incentivized returns are higher.

Figure S1: Beneficiaries of IOM-Assisted Return Programs



Note: The solid line shows the number of refugee beneficiaries returning with IOM cash and in-kind assistance. Afghan returnees from Pakistan in 2016 are not included in these figures, as they returned under a UNHCR-administered program. *Source*: IOM (2025).

S1.2 Is it Morally Permissible to Incentivize Refugee Return?

A small but growing literature in political philosophy and law examines whether it can ever be morally permissible to incentivize refugee repatriation. We survey debates in this literature below.

Under international law, the right to return is recognized as a fundamental right enshrined in statutory instruments and customary human rights law. Similarly, displaced people also enjoy the right to non-refoulement—freedom from being forcibly returned "to the frontiers of territories where [their] life or freedom would be threatened on account of [their] race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion." Together, the rights of return and non-refoulement define the legal backbone of refugee repatriation. Legal scholars emphasize that refugees' enjoyment of these rights hinges critically on the voluntariness of their choices. Refugee repatriation must be free from coercion or manipulation in order to be considered truly voluntary (Bradley, 2013). A range of factors that shape refugees' choices about whether and when to return are relevant when evaluating the voluntariness of their repatriation decisions. For instance, Long (2013) argues that refugee protection standards are violated where refugees decide to return as a result of poor information about conditions in origin countries, where hostile policies in hosting countries drive refugees to repatriate, or where refugees feel compelled to accept return offers because of power asymmetries between themselves and host state or international organizational officials. In all of these contexts, the consensual nature of repatriation is compromised. Legal and normative theorists generally agree that robust safeguards are needed to protect the voluntariness of repatriation decisions, including access to legal counsel, transparency about risks in origin countries, and independent monitoring of repatriation processes.

Building from these insights, political philosophers debate the moral permissibility of material inducements given to refugees to incentivize return. As we elaborate below, the consensus view is that paying refugees to repatriate is only morally permissible under a narrow set of circumstances that rarely materialize in actuality. Particularly important is that incentives used in repatriation programs must not transform voluntary return into a disguised form of refoulement or expulsion, which host countries and international organizations use to evade asylum obligations and coerce displaced people back to unsafe origin countries (Long, 2013; Schwartz, 2025). This requires that financial incentives for repatriation must be coupled with guarantees of free choice and genuine consent, and that refugees

who refuse incentivized repatriation offers will not face worsening or coercive conditions in host countries (Gerver, 2017, 2018*b*). Critically, there must be at least one available option other than assisted repatriation that still ensures an acceptable standard of welfare.

Proponents Advocates of repatriation assistance programs make a range of primarily utilitarian arguments in support of incentivized return. For instance, Kalicki (2020) suggests that assisted return is consistent with basic liberal principles because it allows refugee-hosting countries to exercise their rights to migration control through a cheaper and (allegedly) more humane mechanism than punitive border and immigration policing tactics states would otherwise have to resort to to reduce asylum inflows. Officials at the IOM extend this argument, suggesting that incentivized repatriation is "more cost effective and administratively expedient than forced return" (IOM, 2011). Indeed, this rationale is one of the explicit motivations for the U.S.'s recent decision to pay migrants $1,000 to "self-deport." Officials at the Department of Homeland Security argue that traditional enforcement and deportation operations cost taxpayers $17,000 per removed migrant, making $1,000 payments a significant cost-savings (Lowenkron and Caldwell, 2025).

Another argument put forth by advocates of incentivized repatriation focuses on foreign policy advantages of these programs. In particular, repatriation assistance can promote warmer bilateral relations between host and origin countries. Two factors drive this effect. First, origin countries often desire to encourage repatriation because return is a benchmark indicator of stability and progress. Second, if host countries are intent on reducing their populations of displaced people and are considering coercive means like deportation, incentivized repatriation represents a "politically more palatable and less sensitive [option] than the return of émigrés 'in shackles"' (IOM, 2011). In other words, returnee-receiving countries may find it less galling to receive returnees repatriating with material inducements than to receive returnees simply forced to repatriate by coercive enforcement tactics perpetrated by host country authorities.

A final set of arguments in favor of cash-for-repatriation programs highlight purported benefits of repatriation assistance for displaced people themselves. For one, proponents of assisted repatriation hail the promise of aid in facilitating peaceful and productive reintegration of refugee returnees. Sustainable repatriation requires repatriates to reintegrate into economic and social networks in their origin countries. Ruben, van Houte and Davids (2009)

argue return assistance is particularly helpful for facilitating reintegration, for instance by enabling repatriated refugees to find jobs and housing. Second, incentivized programs may also help refugees realize their return intentions. For displaced people who intend to return but cannot afford to do so, assistance programs that relax credit constraints and subsidize return journeys may help refugees actualize their desires to return (IOM, 2011).

Critics Critics of incentivized repatriation programs offer a range of arguments against these policies, and have made significant progress in clarifying the normative contours of the debate. First, detractors have established that voluntariness is the most important evaluative criterion for judging assisted repatriation programs. Incentives to repatriate are not morally permissible if they compromise the free, consensual nature of refugees' decisions to return (Long, 2013; Gerver, 2018*a*). This idea underscores why it is inappropriate to frame repatriation assistance as a "humane alternative to deportation"—as IOM (2011) staff have argued. Refugees confronted with an incentivized return offer "must have at least one [alternative] option that ensures an acceptable level of welfare" if they reject assisted repatriation (Gerver, 2017, p. 635). Consider a host country that offers a refugee a choice between accepting $1,000 to return home, or the promise of detention and deportation at the hands of host state immigration authorities. In this setting, a refugee's choice to accept assisted repatriation is involuntary, since no alternative to assisted return provides an acceptable modicum of welfare. Put differently, to be voluntary, refugees must perceive the decision to take up assisted return as a positive opportunity, and not merely a means to avoid worse alternatives (Scalettaris and Gubert, 2019).

Several other conditions are also relevant for evaluating the morality of incentivized repatriation. One important requirement is that refugees who accept repatriation assistance must be fully informed about risks they may face during the return journey and as they attempt to reintegrate into their origin countries (Gerver, 2018*b*). Second, refugees who accept material inducements in exchange for repatriating must be allowed to re-enter host countries if conditions deteriorate and they are required to flee again (Gerver, 2017). Third, cash or in-kind transfers must be sufficient to ensure refugees' post-return safety and reintegration. Finally, the implementation of incentivized return policies must not reinforce host countries' deportation efforts or encourage host countries to expand the use of anti-migrant coercion Gerver (2018*a*). In practice, these conditions are rarely met. Feneberg (2025) and Schwartz (2025) show that repatriation assistance programs often encourage states to expand coercive

migrant deportations, restrict access to asylum, and shirk international legal responsibilities on refugee protection.

S1.3 How Return Migration Shapes Conflict

Existing scholarship on the consequences of return migration highlights a variety of negative and positive pathways operative in fragile repatriation settings. Economic, structural, institutional, and individual channels are relevant for shaping how return affects conflict. We classify mechanisms developed in extant work in Tables S2 – S3 below, before surveying the broader literature in detail.

S1.3.1 Negative Effects of Return

Militancy Refugee repatriation is generally viewed as an indicator of peace and stability in post-conflict societies, but large-scale return can also ignite conflict. For instance, if militants have infiltrated refugee populations abroad, mass return can give fighters cover to re-enter origin countries for attacks (Harpviken and Lischer, 2013). In Afghanistan and Rwanda, rebel cadres have embedded among returnee populations to move combat matériel, disseminate their ideologies, and conscript vulnerable youths (Lischer, 2011; Schultz, 2011). When refugees return to contested or insurgent-held communities, governments may engage in preemptive repression, fueling grievances and militant mobilization (van Houte, 2017). Where returnees support government forces, violence may increase as insurgents launch retributive attacks to deter collaboration (van Houte, 2014). Conditions in origin countries can also drive returnees to support militants. Impoverished repatriates are often forced into itinerant or illicit jobs (Fransen, Ruiz and Vargas-Silva, 2017; Verwimp and Muñoz-Mora, 2018), making them ripe targets for rebel recruitment (Haer and Hecker, 2018). If returnees have acquired arms and criminal capital while displaced (Nguyen and Nguyen, 2025), if they are negatively selected for risk tolerance (Ghosn et al., 2021), if they hold enduring ideological and identity-based motivations to fight (Joireman, 2017), or if they lack psychosocial support (Siriwardhana and Stewart, 2013) they may be highly attractive to insurgent recruiters. Other economic and institutional effects of return are also relevant. Where returnees were sending remittances from abroad, repatriation implies a drop in remittance income in receiving communities, lowering the opportunity costs of mobilization (Blair, Krick and Wright, 2025). This situation may be further exacerbated by return-induced demand shocks putting upward pressure on food prices (Camarena, 2016). State institutions

Table S2: Negative Pathways Linking Return With Conflict

Category	Mechanism	Characteristic Example	Anticipated Effect on Conflict	Source(s)
Economic	Skill Deterioration and Human Capital Loss	Refugees facing restrictions on labor market participation in host countries suffer skill and human capital losses. When they return, they hold fewer economic assets and report lower subjective well-being.	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	Fransen, Ruiz and Vargas-Silva (2017); Verwimp and Muñoz-Mora (2018)
	Acquisition of Criminal Capital	Refugees exposed to economic informality in host countries develop expertise in smuggling, fraud, and other illicit enterprises.	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	van Houte (2014); Nguyen and Nguyen (2025)
	Resource Scarcity and Competition	Returnees compete with stayees over land, water, employment opportunities, housing, and access to schools and healthcare.	Worsens Communal Violence	Allen and Morsink (1994) Joireman (2018)
	Price Shocks	Sudden, large-scale returns generate demand shocks, causing rapidly increasing prices (e.g., of food, housing).	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	Camarena (2016)
	Remittance Shocks	Returnees who were sending remittances from abroad cease to do so upon repatriation.	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	Scalettaris and Gubert (2019); Blair, Krick and Wright (2025)
Structural	Acquisition of Arms	Returnees displaced in regional conflicts repatriate with arms acquired abroad.	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	Hoogeveen, Rossi and Sansone (2019); Akoi and Pendle (2020)
	Foreign Radicalization and Training	Refugees are recruited and militarized by armed groups in host countries. Upon return, they engage in militancy.	Worsens Insurgent Violence	Lischer (2011); Harpviken and Lischer (2013); Byman (2015); Haer and Hecker (2018)
	Preemptive Repression	Government forces engage in preemptive repression to deter insurgent infiltration of returnee populations.	Worsens Insurgent Violence	Stein and Cuny (1994)
	Foreign Subversion	Adversarial powers exploit return shocks to covertly surge support to proxy forces in a returnee-receiving country.	Worsens Insurgent Violence	Blair, Krick and Wright (2025)
	Identity-Based Division	Returnees entrench sectarian divides and reignite ethnopolitical mobilization.	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	van Houte (2014); Joireman (2017)
Institutional	Policy-Induced Divisions	Returnee-receiving states implement policies that privilege returnees or stayees. Unprivileged groups mobilize in response.	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	Schwartz (2019)
	Unmet Expectations	Poorly-managed reintegration programs create crises of unmet expectations, as hopeful returnees learn about low state capacity. or returnee-receiving states.	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	Kindersley (2017); Ambrosius and Meseguer (2020)
	Institutional Strain	Fragile state institutions are overwhelmed by large-scale returns, and returnees' demands for service provision.	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	Camarena (2016*b*) Scalettaris and Gubert (2019)
Individual	Negative Selection	Individuals who decide to return are more risk-tolerant, and consequently more inclined to participate in conflict.	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	Jaeger et al. (2010); Ghosn et al. (2021)
	Ideological Motivation	Exposure to violence forces individuals to become refugees. Upon return, these repatriates are motivated to exact revenge on initial perpetrators.	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	Pérez-Armendáriz and Duquette-Rury (2021); Krick (2025)
	Alienation and Trauma	Returnees feel marginalized and socially-isolated, and lack developed emotional or cognitive coping strategies.	Worsens Insurgent and Communal Violence	Siriwardhana and Stewart (2013); Dinçer and Şahin-Mencütek (2025)

Note: The table describes major mechanisms linking return migration with conflict in extant scholarship. We group mechanisms by category, focusing on economic, structural, institutional, and individual-level explanations. For each mechanism we offer a characteristic example and classify the predicted effect on conflict. The last column highlights key sources that develop the respective mechanism.

in fragile origin countries are often ill-equipped to alleviate these tensions (Scalettaris and Gubert, 2019), increasing dissatisfaction with the state (Ambrosius and Meseguer, 2020; Lakhani and Amiri, 2020).

Social Conflict In addition to militancy, refugee return may affect social conflict. As Schwartz (2019, p. 110) notes, "conflict between returning and non-migrant populations after civil war is a nearly ubiquitous issue for societies recovering from such wars." Return-induced competition over jobs, housing, and land may spur criminality and communal strife (Allen and Morsink, 1994; Harild, Christensen and Zetter, 2015). In countries like Afghanistan, where livelihoods are tied to agriculture, property disputes are a particularly common source of grievance. In these settings, violent land clashes have erupted between returnees and host community members (Kamminga and Zaki, 2018; Ruiz and Vargas-Silva, 2022). These clashes have significant welfare implications. Economically, they destroy the productivity of land by increasing contamination with mines and damaging irrigation infrastructure (Seefar, 2019). Socially, land conflicts are likely to metastasize into broader tribal disputes or honor feuds, which can spur recriminatory killings (Murtazashvili, 2016; Joireman, 2018). Property disputes can also exacerbate insurgent violence, especially where returnees or stayees ally with militants to combat alleged usurpers (Lakhani and Amiri, 2020). More broadly, intergroup tensions can precipitate social violence. If returnee inflows alter sensitive demographic balances (Joireman, 2017; Camarena and Hägerdal, 2020), repatriation can spur ethnic conflict. Migration status (i.e., returnee or stayee) may itself take on identity salience if policies attach privileges to those collective categories. For instance, when government regulations were perceived as benefiting returnees in Burundi, violent cleavages erupted between returnees and non-migrant community members (Schwartz, 2019). This dynamic is especially likely to unfold over humanitarian assistance. Aggrieved hosts frequently clash with returnees who they believe hold disproportionate access to aid (Kibreab, 2002).

S1.3.2 Positive Effects of Return

Other work emphasizes the contributions of returnees to security and stability. Above all, this perspective views returnees as a source of human capital, and hence an engine for peacebuilding and development. When returnees repatriate with knowledge, training, and expertise acquired through employment while displaced, they may transmit new skills into origin economies, fueling productivity and wage growth (Hausmann and Nedelkoska, 2018; Bahar et al., 2024). These effects reduce rebel and social conflict in returnee-receiving communities

Table S3: Positive Pathways Linking Return With Conflict

Category	Mechanism	Characteristic Example	Anticipated Effect on Conflict	Source(s)
Economic	Skill Acquisition and Human Capital Gain	Refugees participate in labor markets in host countries, gaining knowledge, training, and technology. When they return, they transmit skills and productivity gains.	Reduces Insurgent and Communal Violence	Hausmann and Nedelkoska (2018) Bahar et al. (2024)
	Productive Social Norms	Refugees gain exposure to productive social norms favoring education, healthcare, and political engagement in host countries. Upon return, they transmit these norms.	Reduces Insurgent and Communal Violence	Chauvet and Mercier (2014) Bucheli and Fontenla (2025) Godlonton and Theoharides (2025)
	Infrastructural Investment	Governments and humanitarian organizations invest in service provision and public goods in returnee-receiving communities.	Reduces Insurgent and Communal Violence	Kibreab (2002); Davies et al. (2011)
	Aid Spillovers	Aid channeled toward returnee reintegration spillovers to stayees, boosting community-wide living standards and cohesion.	Reduces Insurgent and Communal Violence	Kibreab (2002) Harild, Christensen and Zetter (2015)
Individual	Positive Selection	Individuals who decide to return are positively selected for emotional attachments to home and interest in peacebuilding	Reduces Insurgent and Communal Violence	Blitz, Sales and Marzano (2005); Müller-Funk and Fransen (2023)
	Ideological Motivation	Exposure to violence forces individuals to become refugees. Upon return, these repatriates are motivated to prevent conflict.	Reduces Insurgent and Communal Violence	van Houte (2014)
	Post-Traumatic Growth	Returnees' traumatic experiences of displacement motivate strong commitments to peacebuilding.	Reduces Insurgent and Communal Violence	Lakhani and Amiri (2020)

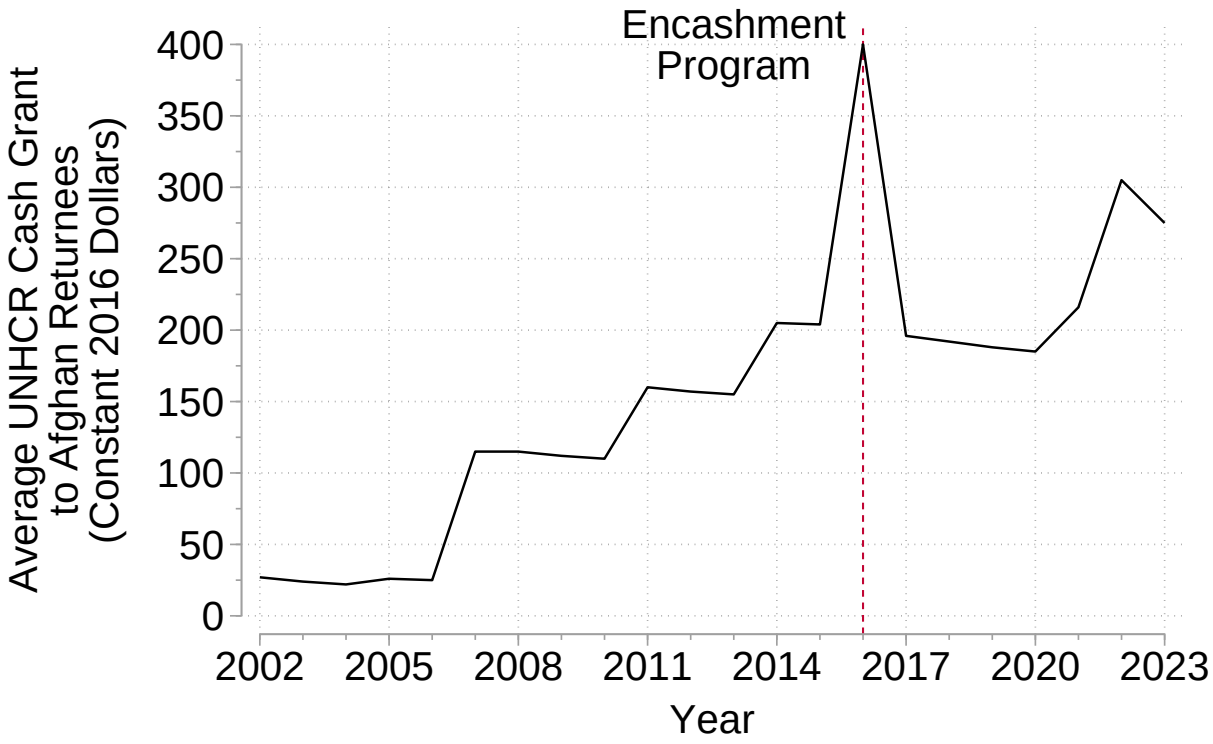
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by increasing the attractiveness of licit employment versus violent mobilization (Bucheli, Fontenla and Waddell, 2019). New social norms that returnees acquire while displaced and impart to their non-migrant neighbors can also fuel entrepreneurship, educational attainment, health, and political participation (Chauvet and Mercier, 2014; Bucheli and Fontenla, 2025; Godlonton and Theoharides, 2025). At the individual level, returnees' past experiences of violence foster emotional attachments to home (Blitz, Sales and Marzano, 2005), as well as self-efficacy and commitment to peacebuilding (Müller-Funk and Fransen, 2023). These factors make returnees a crucial asset for post-conflict reconciliation. Returnees' familiarity with hardships of war may also lead them to oppose future violence as a result of post-traumatic growth (Lakhani and Amiri, 2020). More instrumentally, mass returns may attract aid and infrastructural investment, as governments and humanitarian organizations direct development programming and public goods provision to returnee-receiving communities (Kibreab, 2002; Davies et al., 2011). Positive externalities of these investments can benefit returnees and stayees, increasing market exchange and fostering cohesion (Harild, Christensen and Zetter, 2015).

S1.4 UNHCR Repatriation Cash Assistance for Afghan Returnees

Since 2002, the UNHCR has offered small, one-time repatriation cash assistance grants to Afghan returnees from Pakistan. Historically, these grants were calibrated to be just sufficient to cover the immediate transportation, logistical, and food expenses that returnees incurred on their journeys home. While UNHCR staff periodically increased cash assistance (e.g., in 2007, 2011, 2014), the adjustments were merely intended to keep pace with "rising commodities and transportation costs in Afghanistan" (UNHCR Afghanistan, 2014). Surveys fielded by UNHCR in Afghanistan in 2015, prior to the encashment program we study, validate these notions. For instance, 74% of surveyed returnees reported that they mainly spent their repatriation assistance grants on "pa[ying] transportation costs" or "b[uying] food and other commodities" (UNHCR Afghanistan, 2015). The 2016 encashment program was unique because it marked the first time that UNHCR officials raised repatriation cash allowances far beyond the costs of transportation and other essentials. As shown in Figure S2, the size of the grant issued during the program was unparalleled—at no subsequent point have grants reached the same level.

Figure S2: UNHCR Repatriation Cash Assistance for Afghan Returnees



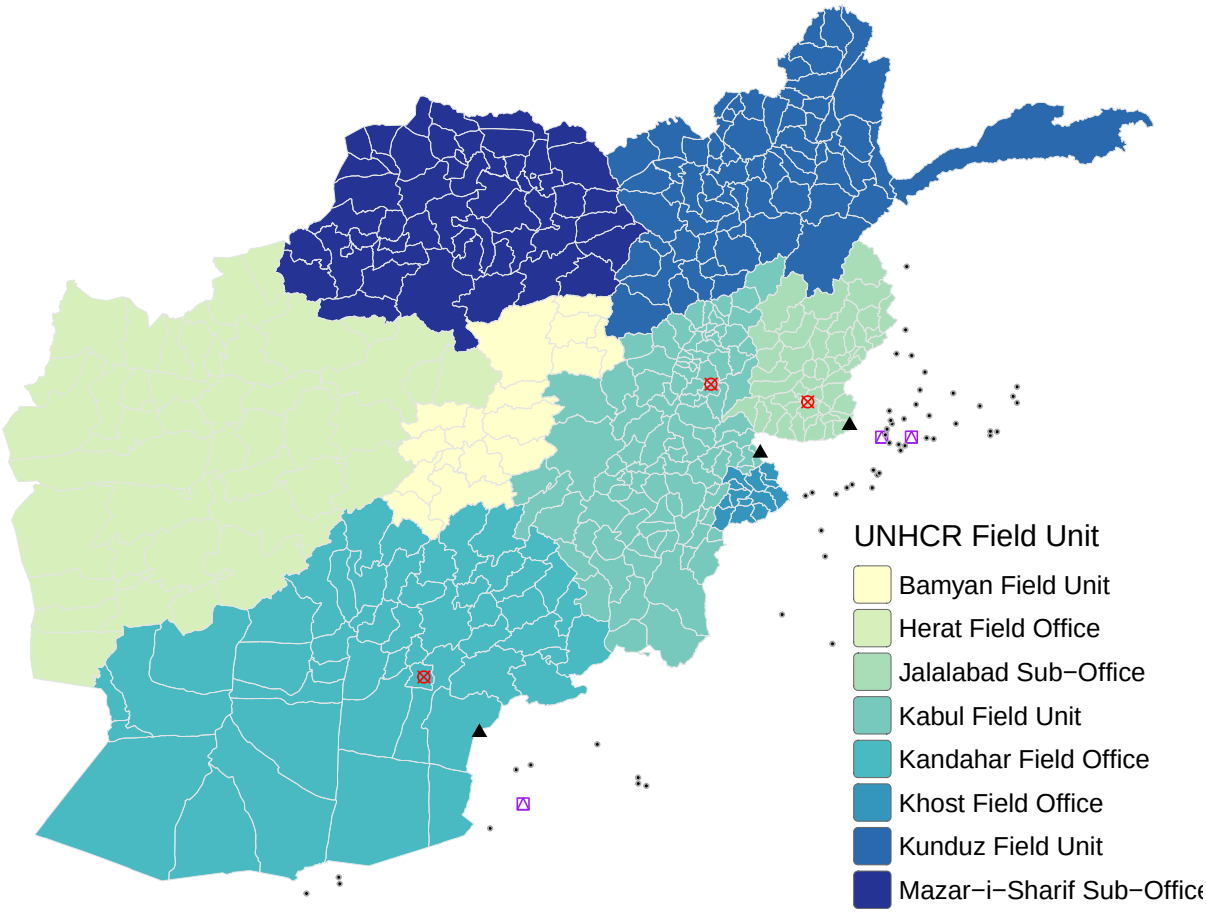
Note: The solid line shows the inflation-adjusted value (in 2016 dollars) of average UNHCR cash grants to Afghan refugee returnees. The dashed red line marks the year of the encashment program we study.
Source: Various UNHCR–Afghanistan Voluntary Repatriation reports.

S1.5 The UNHCR Encashment Process

Under the 2016 UNHCR program, all registered Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan and holding a valid Proof of Registration (PoR) card were eligible to repatriate with UNHCR assistance. Individuals with no PoR card, and those who had returned and received assistance in previous years, were not eligible for the expanded repatriation grant. The procedures of encashed return were as follows.

First, registered Afghan refugees wishing to return would approach the nearest UNHCR Voluntary Repatriation Centre (VRC). Two long-standing VRCs were operated in Baleli, Quetta, Pakistan and Chamkani, Peshawar, Pakistan. A third VRC was opened at Azakhel, Peshawar, Pakistan in September 2016 to help process the mass flow of intended returnees during the program. At the VRC, refugees were de-registered from the Pakistani system, had

Figure S3: Mapping the Process of Assisted Return from Pakistan



Note: Gray dots mark Afghan refugee settlements in Pakistan. Purple tents mark Voluntary Repatriation Centres (VRCs) in Pakistan. Black triangles mark border crossings through which returnees re-entered Afghanistan after processing at VRCs. Red reticles (crosshairs) mark Encashment Centres (ECs) where returnees collected cash payments, and from which they returned to destination districts. Districts are shaded according to the UNHCR office responsible for a given area. *Source*: UNHCR Geoservices.

their PoR cards invalidated, and were issued with Voluntary Repatriation Forms (VRFs). All returning family members had to be present at the VRC to declare their return, and an iris scan or thumb impression was conducted on all returnees over five years of age to ensure that no one received assistance twice.

Following PoR invalidation, refugees no longer held legal status in Pakistan. However, VRF forms allowed safe travel under UNHCR supervision between the VRC and the nearest border crossing. Designated routes were specified for returnees to travel from VRCs to bor-

der crossings, and returns were processed through one of three border crossings: Torkham, Chaman, or Kharlachi. No customs or fees were assessed on household items and goods brought by returning refugees.

Once across the border into Afghanistan, all registered returnees had to travel to one of three Encashment Centres (ECs). The three ECs processing returnees from Pakistan were Jamail Mayna in Kandahar, Samar Khail in Nangarhar, and the Returnee Centre in Kabul. To ensure timely return, UNHCR required that returnees must approach an EC within seven days of having been issued a VRF in Pakistan. Returnees who failed to arrive at an EC in the requisite seven day period would not receive cash assistance, though exceptions were made for groups who experienced death or serious illness of a family member between the time of VRF issuance and EC arrival. No cash assistance was ever provided to returnees arriving more than 15 days after VRF issuance.

At ECs in Afghanistan, returning refugees were given several important trainings. In particular, returnees were briefed on mine awareness and access to education in Afghanistan. In addition, basic health services were provided, and all children five years of age or younger were vaccinated for measles and polio. Interviews were also conducted with returnees at ECs. During interviews, returnees could report instances of bribery and extortion during the journey from VRCs.

The most important procedure at ECs was cash distribution. On average, each returnee during the 2016 program received $400 in cash, up from an average grant of $200 given before (and after) the program. The average $400 grant consisted of $350 for short-term integration and $30-70 for transportation costs. The transportation grant varied according to the travel distance from a refugee returnee's area of residence in Pakistan to their area of origin in Afghanistan. After encashment, all returnees were free to leave the EC and repatriate to their intended destination community.

The size of the 2016 cash grant was large relative to key economic benchmarks. In Table S4, we compare the amount of the grant paid to each individual returnee against GDP per capita and average rents and wages in Afghanistan at the time of the program. Returnees received at least several months of rent or income.

Table S4: Returnee Cash Assistance Was Economically Meaningful

	Annual Afghan GDP/Capita ($509)	Monthly National Average Rent ($250)	Monthly National Average Wage ($160)
Returnee Cash Assistance ($400)	79%	160%	250%
	Monthly Returnee Wage–Low ($73)	Monthly Returnee Wage–High ($146)	Monthly Part-Time Fighter Wage ($300)
	548%	274%	133%

Note: All cells depict returnee cash assistance as a percentage of the top row indicator. 2016 Afghan GDP/capita comes from the World Bank. Mean monthly rent comes from Majale (2017). Mean monthly wages nationwide come from a representative survey fielded by the Asia Foundation. Haroon et al. (2019) report mean monthly wages of the "bread-winner" in each family of Afghan returnees from Pakistan, with low and high estimates. Landinfo (2017) report mean monthly wages of part-time Taliban cadres during the fighting season. Amounts in US dollars are converted from Afghanis by June 29, 2016 exchange rates.

S1.6 Financing Return

In Table S5 we study data from the Survey of Afghan Returnees. We specifically examine a response to the question "How did you finance your trip back to Afghanistan?" Our focal outcome, reflected in columns 1–2, is "support from UNHCR." In columns 3–7 we study placebo outcomes based on other responses to the financing question, like savings, gifts/loans, and "support from IOM." By definition, encashment beneficiaries repatriated through UNHCR-administered rather than IOM-administered channels. The distinguishable negative effect of beneficiary status on financing through IOM aid is therefore natural.

Table S5: Encashment Beneficiaries Financed Return with UNHCR Aid

	Financed Return Through: (=1)						
	(1) UNHCR Aid	(2) UNHCR Aid	(3) Savings	(4) Gifts or Loans	(5) Selling Property	(6) IOM Aid	(7) MoRR Aid
Encashment Beneficiary	0.146	0.097	-0.084	0.018	0.063	-0.104	-0.001
	(0.029)	(0.047)	(0.073)	(0.044)	(0.031)	(0.036)	(0.001)
Observations	7238	7238	7238	7238	7238	7238	7238
Clusters	65	65	65	65	65	65	65
Control Group Mean	0.074	0.074	0.541	0.257	0.067	0.043	0.000
Control Group SD	0.262	0.262	0.498	0.437	0.250	0.202	0.019
PARAMETERS							
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Urbanicity		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Age		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethnicity		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Income		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dwelling		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marital Status		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tazkira		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country of Asylum		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Registration Status x Month of Return		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interview Order		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. Encashment beneficiary is an indicator for documented refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan between July–December 2016. Country of asylum and registration status by month of return fixed effects absorb constituent terms of the interaction that comprises our indicator for likely program recipients. Urbanicity is an indicator for urban (vs. rural) respondents. Gender is an indicator for male (vs. female) respondents. Tazkira is an indicator for respondents with a national identity card. Age, education, and dwelling have five categories. Income has 10 categories. Marital status has four categories. Interview order captures the order of interviews within sampling points. Estimates are scaled using sampling weights.

S1.7 Motivations for Implementing the Encashment Program

As described in the main text, the encashment program resulted from more than a year of secret negotiations between UNHCR and the government of Pakistan. Throughout the period in the lead-up to the program, and for several months after the program began, Pakistan engaged in a parallel campaign to coerce Afghan returns. To contextualize these developments, and clarify the motivations of Pakistani and UNHCR officials, we offer brief background below. Interested readers may also consult Bjelica (2016) and Human Rights Watch (2017).

The repatriation cash assistance scheme we study was implemented by UNHCR in response to Pakistani efforts to reduce the Afghan refugee population hosted in Pakistan's tribal areas. What explains intensifying Pakistani pressure to reduce the refugee-hosting burden? Evidence suggests that Pakistan's insistence on reducing its hosting burden grew out of two major issues in Pakistani domestic politics and Afghanistan-Pakistan foreign relations: (1) the 2014 Peshawar school attack; and (2) growing economic ties between Afghanistan and India, Pakistan's major geopolitical rival (Bjelica, 2016). Both of these issues contributed to worsening Pakistani treatment of Afghan refugees in 2015, and pressure for incentivized returns in 2016.

The immediate catalyst for Pakistani politicians' desire to reduce the Afghan refugee-hosting burden was a school massacre perpetrated by Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants in December 2014. Specifically, on December 16, 2014, six TTP militants killed 149 people in an attack on a school in Peshawar, Pakistan. Although no Afghan refugees were involved in the violence, the attack spurred a wave of anti-Afghan xenophobia. The Pakistani government contributed to this xenophobic backlash by claiming the attack was planned in Afghanistan, and by identifying two of the six perpetrators as Afghan nationals. In the immediate aftermath of the attack, Afghan refugees in Pakistan reported rising anti-Afghan sentiment, retributive evictions and job losses, extensive police harassment, and an increasingly coercive environment throughout 2015 (Bjelica, 2016; Human Rights Watch, 2017). Calls from Pakistani politicians advocating deportations and forced returns grew louder at this time, particularly during Pakistan's 2015 local elections.

Pakistan's growing concern over Afghanistan's warming ties with India provided the second key motivation for Pakistani desires to restrict Afghan refugees. Specifically, in response

to worsening relations with Pakistan in 2014–2015, Afghanistan began deeper pursuit of trade ties with India. The result was a series of bilateral agreements, the largest of which was the India-Afghanistan Friendship Dam announced in December 2015 (Bjelica, 2016). This and other Indo-Afghan infrastructure agreements were particularly concerning for Pakistan, since these projects aimed at diversifying Afghanistan's trade and energy infrastructure away from reliance on Pakistan (Human Rights Watch, 2017, p. 16-17). Afghan cooperation with India exacerbated prevailing anti-Afghan sentiment in Pakistan, and further reinforced Pakistan's intransigent negotiating position in secret talks with UNHCR.

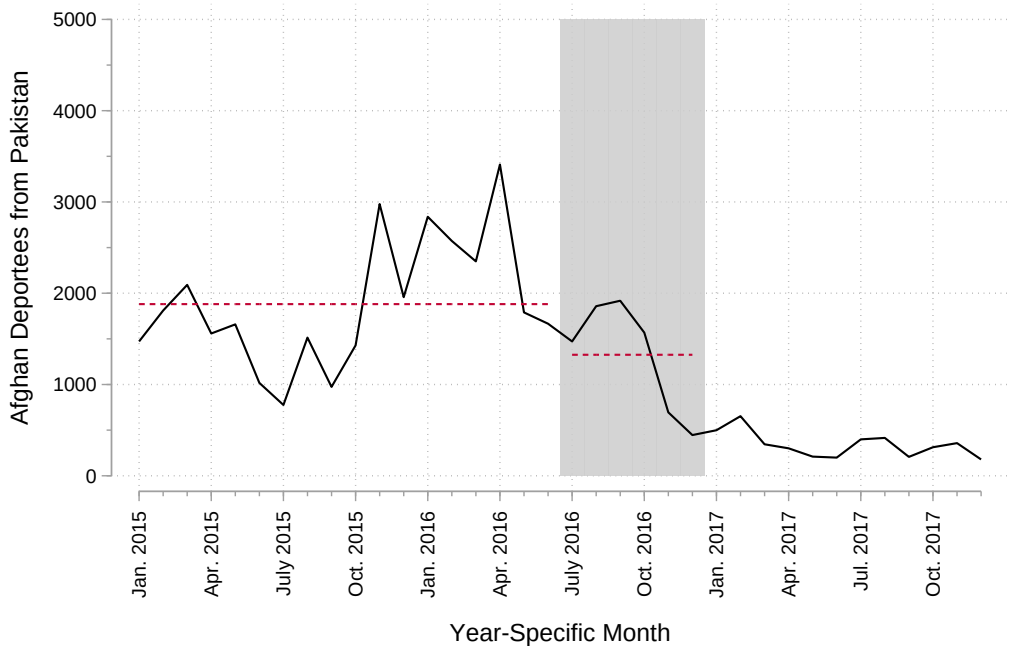
S1.8 Anti-Refugee Coercion in Pakistan

Reporting by Human Rights Watch (2017, p. 18-27) suggests that in summer 2016, after the cash program had begun, Pakistani police and landlords continued to pursue anti-refugee harassment, including bribe-taking, rent hikes, and arbitrary increases in fees for access to documents and services. These specific forms of coercion are all consistent with predation following the unexpected windfall in returnee support, and were likely used to stimulate refugee uptake of the encashment program itself. In short, the program likely motivated these forms of economic coercion. Figure S5 clarifies this point.

To better understand anti-refugee coercion in Pakistan, we plot deportations of Afghans from Pakistan over time in Figure S4. Deportations are highly correlated with broader, anti-refugee repression (Human Rights Watch, 2017; Seefar, 2019), and so can help illuminate relevant trends in harassment and abuse. Levels of deportations were high and increasing throughout much of the pre-program period. The start of the program coincided with a modest uptick in coercion that then sharply decreased after September 2016. Overall, the average number of deportations per month was slightly lower during the encashment program (1326) than before (1881).

Of course, anti-refugee coercion in Pakistan before and during the cash program raises natural identification questions. In order to bias our estimations, coercion in Pakistan would have had to escalate at the same time the program was implemented. Yet, as reporting by Bjelica (2016) and Human Rights Watch (2017) makes clear, coercion was an enduring feature of the period from December 2014 through September 2016—a period spanning 18 months before the cash program and the first 4 months of the program itself. Figure S4 makes this explicit—deportations were actually greater before than during the cash program. If

Figure S4: Anti-Refugee Coercion in Pakistan



Note: The solid line shows deportations of Afghans from Pakistan. Dashed red lines denote mean levels of deportation before and during the repatriation cash program. Gray bars denote the period of the repatriation cash program. *Source*: IOM reports.

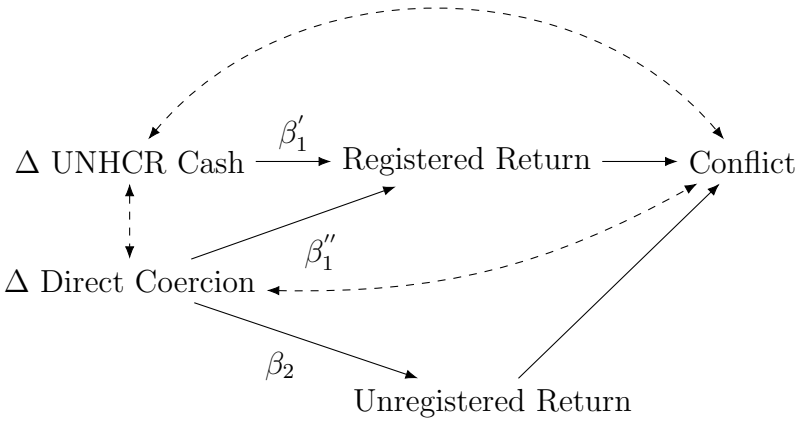
coercion was primarily driving the returns we study, we would expect to see large increases in return in the pre-program period, as Afghan refugees fled Pakistani crackdowns. We do not observe any such pattern (Figure 1 in the main text). Instead, returns spiked shortly after the encashment program began and subsided directly as it ended. Moreover, while spontaneous, undocumented returns historically exceeded documented, assisted returns in Afghanistan, this trend reversed during the encashment program (Figure 1 in the main text). This pattern is highly suggestive of returnees making conscious efforts to repatriate through formal channels to obtain the cash grant.

To further assuage concerns, we provide multiple additional pieces of evidence. First, we formalize our design with a directed graph, which clarifies key parameters of interest (Figure S5). Second, we highlight qualitative evidence from interviews conducted by Human Rights Watch (2017), which underscores the importance of cash assistance in enabling repatriation. Third, in Tables S6 – S7 we present survey evidence on returnees' self-reported reasons for

return. We find no evidence that program beneficiaries were more likely to report repatriating because of repressive conditions in Pakistan. Fourth, we show that our focal effects are unique to encashed returns. In contrast, spontaneous, undocumented returnees—who did not receive cash assistance—had no distinguishable effects on conflict (Table 4 in the main text). By demonstrating that non-beneficiary returnees who repatriated during the program period did not impact the conflict, we offer strong suggestive evidence that cash assistance is the core mechanism.

Directed Graph Some subset of the variation in return may have been purely motivated by the cash assistance program, even in the absence of coercion, while another subset was motivated by the combination of these factors. We lay out this causal chain as a directed graph in Figure S5. Note that the direct effect of policy-induced return on conflict is captured in $\beta_1^{'}$, while the indirect effect of the policy on return, mediated by coercion, is captured by $\beta_1^{''}$. What we estimate in the main specification is the reduced form combination of these pathways. We can call this parameter β_1. We cannot separately estimate $\beta_1^{'}$ and $\beta_1^{''}$. Yet, we provide multiple points of evidence for the importance of the cash mechanism.

Figure S5: Directed Graph on Encashment, Coercion, and Refugee Return



Note: Directed graph clarifying mapping between conceptual mechanisms and estimated quantities in research design. Parameters are intended to capture the reduced form effect of each parameter through the corresponding, total pathway. Dashed lines indicate unlikely direct causal pathways.

Leveraging the notation in Figure S5, we can account for a secondary pathway through which coercion that escalated after the program's announcement impacted violence in Afghanistan:

β_2. Unregistered returns during the period of the encashment program—the type of returns most likely to be caused by any escalating coercion (Human Rights Watch, 2017; Seefar, 2019)—did not have the same effect on conflict in Afghanistan as encashed returns. We provide evidence of this point in Table 4 in the main text, where we consider the impact of spontaneous, unregistered returns. These returnees may have been influenced by coercion during the program period, but were not eligible for cash assistance. While we cannot recover β_1'', we can estimate β_2. If β_1 remains robust while accounting for the channel captured in β_2, this suggests the reduced form evidence in the main specification is not contaminated by the other pathway through which coercion influenced return (i.e., return without cash aid). Furthermore, if β_1 is distinct from β_2 in magnitude and/or sign, this suggests the dominant driver of return-related shifts in conflict is due to the presence of financial assistance and not just the escalation of coercion. On the other hand, we should see similar effects of both registered (i.e., encashed) return and unregistered (i.e., spontaneous, undocumented, un-encashed) return on conflict in Afghanistan if escalating coercion and not cash assistance is the main mechanism. Using data on undocumented returns from the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix, we re-estimate our focal specifications while adding a term for the undocumented returnee share interacted with an indicator for the grant period (Table 4 in the main text). These results show that the main effects are robust, and unique to assisted returnees who received repatriation cash. In contrast, effects are null or opposite for undocumented returnees, who did not receive cash assistance. We provide an additional discussion of these tests in Supplemental Appendix Section S2.7.

S1.9 Reasons for Return

In Tables S6 and S7 we study data from the Survey of Afghan Returnees. Specifically, we examine responses to the question "Why did you return?" Open-ended responses were collected and categorized with pre-codes determined by the survey administration team. In Table S6 we assess six outcomes related to negative experiences in the host country: (1) "Deported/forcibly removed from host country"; (2) "People of the host country were unwelcoming"; (3) "Could not get visa/permanent residency in host country"; (4) "Poor security conditions in the host country"; (5) "Poor economic conditions in the host country"; and (6) "Unemployment in host country."

Table S6: Encashment Beneficiaries' Self-Reported Push Factors

	Reason for Return: Push Factors (=1)					
	(1) Deported/ Forcibly Removed	(2) Unwelcoming Conditions	(3) Lacked Visa/ Permanent Residency	(4) Poor Security	(5) Poor Economy	(6) Unemployment
Encashment Beneficiary	-0.040	-0.008	0.015	0.004	-0.004	0.017
	(0.049)	(0.024)	(0.038)	(0.032)	(0.040)	(0.042)
Observations	7274	7274	7274	7274	7274	7274
Clusters	65	65	65	65	65	65
Control Group Mean	0.212	0.056	0.080	0.097	0.120	0.220
Control Group SD	0.409	0.231	0.272	0.296	0.325	0.414
PARAMETERS						
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Urbanicity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Age	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethnicity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Income	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dwelling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marital Status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tazkira	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country of Asylum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Registration Status x Month of Return	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interview Order	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. Encashment beneficiary is an indicator for documented refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan between July–December 2016. Country of asylum and registration status by month of return fixed effects absorb constituent terms of the interaction that comprises our indicator for likely program recipients. Urbanicity is an indicator for urban (vs. rural) respondents. Gender is an indicator for male (vs. female) respondents. Tazkira is an indicator for respondents with a national identity card. Age, education, and dwelling have five categories. Income has 10 categories. Marital status has four categories. Interview order captures the order of interviews within sampling points. Estimates are scaled using sampling weights.

In Table S7 we assess six additional outcomes related to positive expectations about conditions in Afghanistan: (1) "Economic situation improved in Afghanistan"; (2) "Security situation improved in Afghanistan"; (3) "Family reunification"; (4) "People are being treated well in Afghanistan"; (5) "Education situation improved in Afghanistan"; and (6) "Patriotism." Although the survey did not ask directly about cash assistance as an inducement to return, we believe that the role of cash assistance is most likely to be captured by perceptions that the "economic situation [had] improved in Afghanistan." Strikingly, this is the only factor for which we find a distinguishable positive effect. Encashment beneficiaries are 1.6 percentage points more likely to self-report returning because of improving economic conditions in Afghanistan.

Table S7: Encashment Beneficiaries' Self-Reported Pull Factors

	Reason for Return: Pull Factors (=1)					
	(1) Improving Economy	(2) Improving Security	(3) Family Reunification	(4) Welcoming Conditions	(5) Improving Education	(6) Patriotism
Encashment Beneficiary	0.016	0.011	0.016	-0.012	0.003	-0.001
	(0.009)	(0.022)	(0.042)	(0.013)	(0.003)	(0.020)
Observations	7274	7274	7274	7274	7274	7274
Clusters	65	65	65	65	65	65
Control Group Mean	0.010	0.022	0.122	0.010	0.006	0.028
Control Group SD	0.099	0.146	0.327	0.101	0.079	0.165
PARAMETERS						
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Urbanicity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Age	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethnicity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Income	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dwelling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marital Status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tazkira	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country of Asylum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Registration Status x Month of Return	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interview Order	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

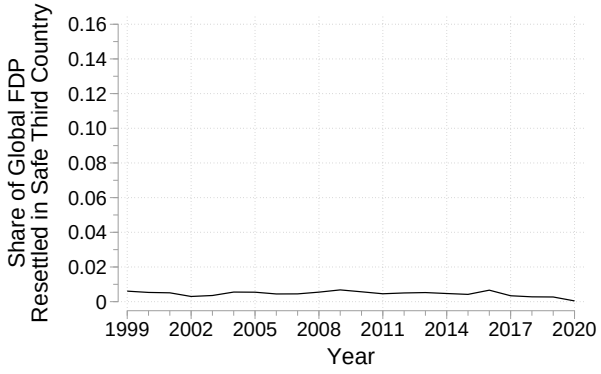
Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. Encashment beneficiary is an indicator for documented refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan between July–December 2016. Country of asylum and registration status by month of return fixed effects absorb constituent terms of the interaction that comprises our indicator for likely program recipients. Urbanicity is an indicator for urban (vs. rural) respondents. Gender is an indicator for male (vs. female) respondents. Tazkira is an indicator for respondents with a national identity card. Age, education, and dwelling have five categories. Income has 10 categories. Marital status has four categories. Interview order captures the order of interviews within sampling points. Estimates are scaled using sampling weights.

S1.10 Collapse of the Durable Solutions Architecture

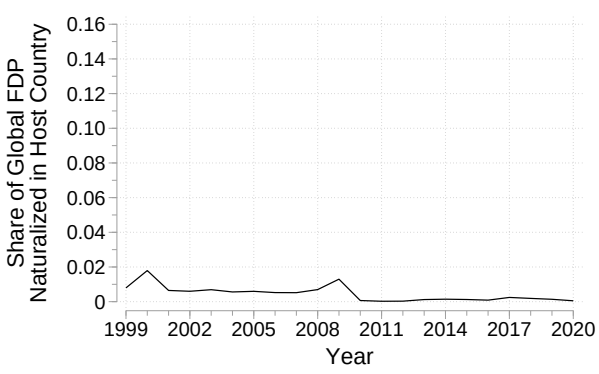
The international community defines three "durable solutions" for refugees: resettlement in safe third countries, naturalization in first countries of asylum, or repatriation to origin countries. Over the past 25 years, no more than 16% of refugees and asylum-seekers (i.e., forcibly displaced people, FDP) have been able to access any durable solution. The collapse of the international solutions architecture is particularly apparent over the past decade; since 2013, fewer than 3.8% of global FDP have been resettled, naturalized, or returned home.

Figure S6: Access to Durable Solutions for Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

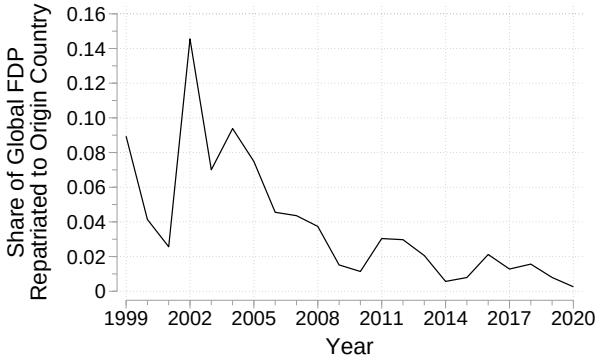
(a) Share of Global FDP Resettled



(b) Share of Global FDP Naturalized



(c) Share of Global FDP Repatriated



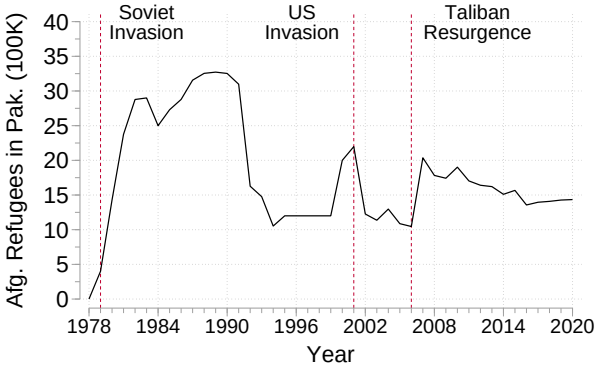
Note: Panels (a), (b), and (c) respectively plot annual shares of the world's forcibly displaced people (FDP) who were resettled to a safe third country, permanently naturalized into a host country, or repatriated to an origin country. *Source*: UNHCR Refugee Population Statistics database.

S1.11 Afghan Refugee Flight to and Return from Pakistan

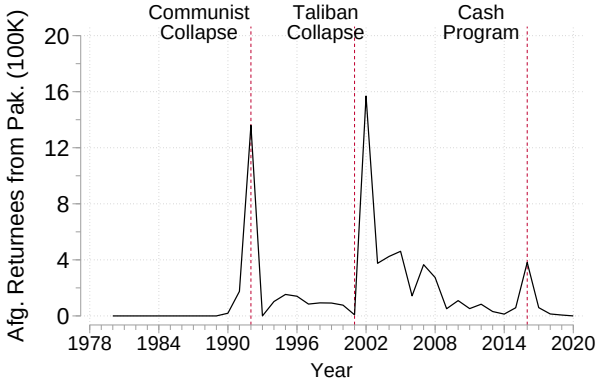
From 1979–2020, the Afghan refugee population has ranged between 500,000 and 3.5 million. In the same period, the number of annual documented returns from Pakistan to Afghanistan has ranged from 0 to 1.6 million. In the median year over this period, Pakistan hosted 1.6 million Afghans, of whom 58,000 returned.

Figure S7: Afghan Refugee Flight to and Return from Pakistan

(a) Afghan Refugee Stock in Pakistan



(b) Afghan Refugee Returns from Pakistan



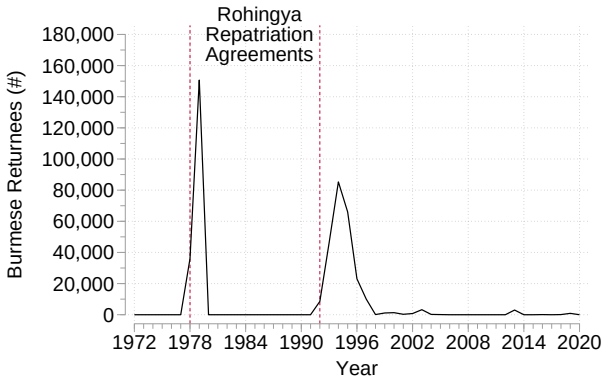
Note: Panel (a) depicts the stock of Afghan refugees in Pakistan over time. Panel (b) depicts documented Afghan refugee returns from Pakistan over time. *Source*: UNHCR Refugee Population Statistics database.

S1.12 Wave Dynamics in Global Refugee Return

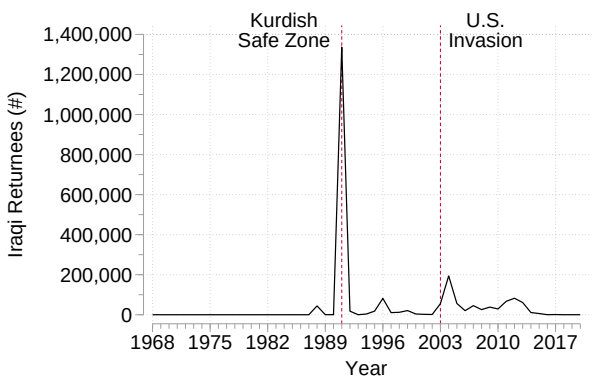
Forced displacement and refugee repatriation often occurs in waves (Holland and Peters, 2020). Repatriation from Pakistan to Afghanistan spiked in 1992 upon collapse of the communist PDPA government, in 2002 after the Taliban collapse, and in 2016 after the UNHCR encashment program. We study the 2016 return shock (panel (b) of Figure S7). To build confidence in the generality of the repatriation shock we evaluate, we show that comparable wave-like dynamics emerge in patterns of refugee return across numerous other global contexts.

Figure S8: Wave Dynamics in Patterns of Global Refugee Return

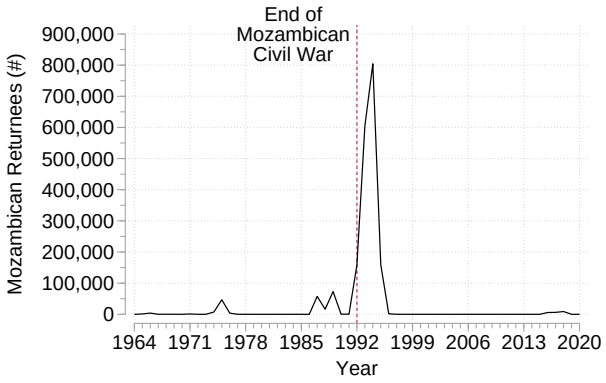
(a) Repatriation to Myanmar



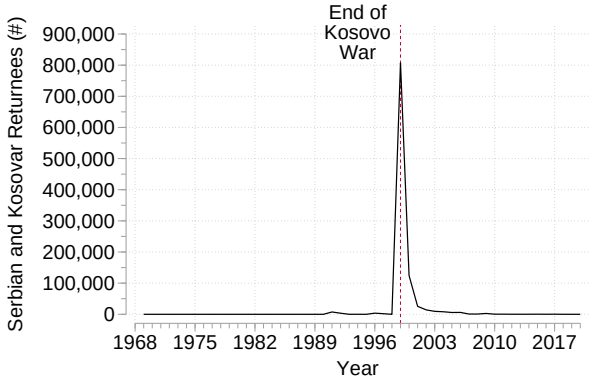
(b) Repatriation to Iraq



(c) Repatriation to Mozambique



(d) Repatriation to Serbia



Note: Panels (a) – (d) respectively depict refugee returns to Myanmar, Iraq, Mozambique, and Serbia over time. *Source*: UNHCR Refugee Population Statistics database.

S1.13 Spontaneous Returns During the Encashment Program

As Figure 1 in the main text shows, flows of both assisted (i.e., documented) and spontaneous (i.e., undocumented) Afghan returnees from Pakistan increased during the 2016 encashment program. Spontaneous returns were particularly large in the first two months of the program (July and August 2016), before gradually tapering. Our primary focus is on assisted returnees, who received UNHCR cash assistance upon repatriation, rather than spontaneous returnees, who did not receive cash assistance. Still, it is important to clarify why relatively large numbers of spontaneous returnees repatriated during the program period, despite the absence of a cash incentive. Three factors are relevant.

First, the chief reason levels of undocumented return also spiked, especially in the first two months of encashment program, was information scarcity. Prospective refugee returnees residing in Pakistan are predominantly illiterate and poorly educated (Haroon et al., 2019). Media penetration of refugee settlements in Pakistan is also weak. Consequently, word-of-mouth is the primary means by which refugees learn about voluntary repatriation opportunities. Just prior to the implementation of the 2016 encashment program we study, UNHCR found that 84% of Afghan refugees in Pakistan either had no information about the voluntary repatriation process, or only knew about this process through rumor networks within the Afghan displaced population (UNHCR, 2016*a*). The earliest returnees could have become aware of the incentivized repatriation program was June 23, 2016, when it was first announced. However, with news spreading by word-of-mouth, information about the program and the process required to access repatriation cash took several weeks to disseminate. In August 2016, UNHCR moved to rectify refugee confusion about the specific procedures returnees had to follow to repatriate with UNHCR assistance. Specifically, UNHCR launched "mass and targeted information campaigns" to publicize the program and procedures (UNHCR, 2016*b*). The largest such campaign was "Khpal Watan, Gul Watan" ("My country, my beautiful country"), a joint effort of UNHCR and the Afghan government. Through this program, radio broadcasts and billboard advertisements were posted in Afghan refugee-populated areas of Pakistan. These publicity efforts seemed to work. Qualitative UNHCR surveys show that during the encashment program, the share of Afghan refugees who reported hearing about the voluntary repatriation process from media or UNHCR communications increased from 5%–24% (UNHCR, 2017).

Bureaucratic overload is the second factor explaining why spontaneous returns also spiked

during the early phases of the encashment program. Following the sudden rollout of the expanded cash intervention, the numbers of Afghan refugees seeking repatriation surged dramatically. Within eight weeks of implementation, more Afghans had returned with UNHCR facilitation than had returned in 2014 and 2015 combined. Thousands of refugees arrived at Voluntary Repatriation Centres (VRCs) in Pakistan every day, overwhelming UNHCR staff responsible for processing repatriation requests. Although UNHCR quickly scaled logistical capacity, increasing staffing and equipment and reducing cumbersome administrative processes to expedite return, many prospective Afghan returnees faced long queues and extended wait times (UNHCR, 2016*b*). This was especially true early in the encashment period, when only two VRCs were operating in Pakistan. Facing a prolonged wait for case processing, some refugees who intended to repatriate through the formal UNHCR channel simply opted to cross into Afghanistan on their own, wrongly assuming they could still claim cash assistance upon arrival in Afghanistan. These individuals spontaneously returned because of bureaucratic overload at UNHCR facilities, and their own mistaken beliefs about the compensation process. In September 2016, UNHCR completed a third VRC at Azakhel in Peshawar, Pakistan, alleviating most prevailing administrative and processing delays (UNHCR, 2017). This also helps explain the reduction in spontaneous returns from September–December 2016.

Adverse hosting conditions in Pakistan are the third reason some returnees spontaneously repatriated during the encashment period. In particular, some Afghan refugees reported escalating hostility from Pakistani officials and host community members in summer 2016 (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Facing acute crises like discriminatory job losses, evictions, and police harassment, these Afghan refugees may have chosen to flee back to Afghanistan immediately, rather than waiting for UNHCR assistance. We discuss these forced returns in greater detail in the main text. Available evidence suggests that this factor explains a small but important share of overall spontaneous returns during the encashment program.

S2 Empirical Appendix

In this brief empirical appendix, we introduce supplemental results.

S2.1 Summary Statistics: District-Level Analyses

Descriptive statistics for variables from our main, district-level analyses are provided here.

Table S8: Summary Statistics: District Analyses

	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Dependent Variables					
Incidence of Insurgent-Initiated SIGACTs (=1)	4378	0.706	0.456	0.000	1.000
Insurgent-Initiated SIGACTs/100k Pop.	4378	4.967	12.436	0.000	464.178
Incidence of Communal Violence (=1)	4378	0.087	0.282	0.000	1.000
Communal Violence/100k Pop.	4378	0.040	0.267	0.000	12.533
Independent Variables					
Share of 2013 Assisted Returnees from Pakistan	4378	0.016	0.029	0.000	0.087
Grant Increase	4378	0.545	0.498	0.000	1.000
Share Returning to Origin Province	4378	0.523	0.407	0.000	1.000
Share Returning to Origin District	4378	0.405	0.383	0.000	1.000
Prefer Shura to State Court	3817	0.424	0.155	0.123	0.942
Prefer Elders to Gov't Officials	3817	0.372	0.136	0.000	0.906
Took Dispute to Shura	3795	0.177	0.123	0.000	1.000
Taliban Control	4378	0.390	0.488	0.000	1.000
Control Variables					
Share of Population Speaking Pashtun	4378	0.425	0.383	0.000	1.000
Distance to International Border	4378	0.906	0.600	0.024	2.840
Travel Time to Provincial Center	4378	78.950	152.996	0.000	1477.900
Provincial Unemployment	4378	13.176	9.322	1.900	42.300
Provincial GINI Coefficient	4378	26.881	4.700	18.800	36.100
Nightlights/Population	4378	2.429	4.090	0.000	56.201
Ruggedness	4378	306.968	214.774	4.933	1030.219
Share of Land Under Cultivation	4378	25.381	23.537	0.000	100.000
Share of Cultivated Land Under Irrigation	4378	69.825	34.566	0.000	100.000
Hectares of Opium Cultivation	4378	1.818	3.047	0.000	10.552
Hectares of Opium Eradication	4378	0.741	1.760	0.000	7.936
Governance Spending/Population	4378	199817.713	551475.897	0.000	4687742.159
Infrastructure Spending/Population	4378	61655.035	211931.468	0.000	2140158.119
Health Spending/Population	4378	472988.223	1902769.039	0.000	39326316.661
Conflict Stabilization Spending/Population	4378	683879.716	4683804.894	0.000	52504168.908
Refugees Spending/Population	4378	2150.014	12830.783	0.000	301105.179

Note: Observations are district-months used in the main estimating sample (2016). Hectares of opium cultivation and eradication are transformed by the inverse hyperbolic sine. Summary statistics are weighted by district population.

S2.2 Summary Statistics: Survey Analyses

Descriptive statistics for variables from our survey analyses are provided here.

Table S9: Summary Statistics: Survey Analyses

	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Dependent Variables					
Returnee-Stayee Relations Index (ICW)	7283	0.027	0.981	-4.523	1.590
Returnee-Stayee Relations Index (PCF)	7283	0.027	0.971	-4.970	1.219
Experienced Communal Violence (=1)	7283	0.123	0.328	0.000	1.000
Experienced Linguistic Discrimination (=1)	7283	0.281	0.450	0.000	1.000
Financed Return With UNHCR Aid (=1)	7238	0.081	0.272	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Deported/Forcibly Returned (=1)	7274	0.215	0.411	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Unwelcoming Host Community (=1)	7274	0.056	0.230	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Lacked Visa/Permanent Residency in Host (=1)	7274	0.079	0.270	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Poor Security Conditions in Host (=1)	7274	0.098	0.297	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Poor Economic Conditions in Host (=1)	7274	0.118	0.322	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Unemployment in Host (=1)	7274	0.219	0.413	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Improving Economy in Afghanistan (=1)	7274	0.010	0.101	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Improving Security in Afghanistan (=1)	7274	0.023	0.150	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Family Reunification (=1)	7274	0.121	0.326	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Welcoming Conditions in Afghanistan (=1)	7274	0.010	0.099	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Improving Education in Afghanistan (=1)	7274	0.006	0.077	0.000	1.000
Reason for Return: Patriotism (=1)	7274	0.029	0.167	0.000	1.000
Independent Variables					
Encashment Beneficiary	7283	0.042	0.200	0.000	1.000
Social Capital Index (ICW)	7134	0.025	0.981	-3.430	0.807
Resides Near Out-Group	7194	0.584	0.493	0.000	1.000
Control Variables					
Host Country: Pakistan	7283	0.559	0.496	0.000	1.000
Host Country: Iran	7283	0.355	0.478	0.000	1.000
Host Country: Elsewhere	7283	0.086	0.280	0.000	1.000
Registered Return	7283	0.333	0.471	0.000	1.000
Urban	7283	0.255	0.436	0.000	1.000
Female	7283	0.466	0.499	0.000	1.000
Age	7283	2.347	1.128	1.000	5.000
Education	7283	0.985	1.332	0.000	5.000
Income	7283	2.408	1.854	0.000	9.000
Ethnicity: Pashtun	7283	0.535	0.499	0.000	1.000
Ethnicity: Tajik	7283	0.290	0.454	0.000	1.000
Ethnicity: Uzbek	7283	0.030	0.172	0.000	1.000
Ethnicity: Hazara	7283	0.104	0.306	0.000	1.000
Ethnicity: Other	7283	0.039	0.195	0.000	1.000
Tazkira-Holder	7283	0.852	0.355	0.000	1.000
Dwelling: Single Family House	7283	0.748	0.434	0.000	1.000
Dwelling: Shared House	7283	0.228	0.420	0.000	1.000
Dwelling: Single Family Apartment	7283	0.015	0.121	0.000	1.000
Dwelling: Shared Apartment	7283	0.007	0.081	0.000	1.000
Dwelling: Tent	7283	0.002	0.041	0.000	1.000
Relationship Status: Single	7283	0.144	0.351	0.000	1.000
Relationship Status: Married	7283	0.834	0.372	0.000	1.000
Relationship Status: Widow/Widower	7283	0.022	0.146	0.000	1.000
Relationship Status: Divorced/Separated	7283	0.000	0.017	0.000	1.000
Comfort During Interview	7283	1.277	0.482	1.000	4.000
Interview # Within Sampling Point	7283	2.988	1.412	1.000	5.000

Note: Observations are individual responses used in the main estimating sample. ICW denotes an index constructed by inverse covariance-weighting. PCF denotes an index constructed by principal component factor analysis. Summary statistics are weighted by sampling weights.

S2.3 Baseline Correlations: 2013 Returnee Share and District Characteristics

To assess balance and potential confounding, Table S10 presents correlations between districts' 2013 shares of assisted returnees from Pakistan (the key source of identifying variation in our main analysis) and baseline district characteristics measured in 2013. The strongest correlates are population-related variables (correlation of 0.437 with total population and 0.586 with population density, both significant at 1%), which is unsurprising given that return flows naturally scale with district size (Petrin, 2002). Importantly, baseline violence measures show near-zero correlations with returnee shares (range: -0.023 to 0.006), suggesting that returnee shares are not endogenous to conflict intensity. Our main specifications include district fixed effects (which absorb all time-invariant characteristics including 2013 population) and month fixed effects interacted with baseline covariates, thus controlling for these correlations. Evidence in Figure 5 in the main text further supports our identification strategy by showing that treatment and control districts followed similar pre-treatment trends.

Table S10: Baseline Correlations: 2013 Returnee Share and District Characteristics

District Characteristic (in 2013)	Correlation with Returnee Share	Observations
Violence in 2013 (Per 100k Pop.)		
All SIGACTs	-0.011	398
Insurgent SIGACTs	-0.007	398
COIN SIGACTs	-0.015	398
Criminal SIGACTs	0.006	398
Tribal Feud SIGACTs	-0.023	398
Geography		
Distance to Border (km)	-0.090	398
Ruggedness	-0.173	398
Demographics		
Total Population	0.437	398
Pashtun Share of Population	0.161	398
Population Density	0.520	398
Ethnic Fractionalization Index	-0.071	398
Ethnic Polarization Index	-0.063	398
Development		
Provincial Unemployment Rate	-0.122	398
Provincial Gini Coefficient	-0.077	398
Population-Normalized Nightlights	0.053	398
Travel Time to Provincial Center	-0.080	398
Agriculture		
Share of Land Cultivated (%)	0.082	398
Share Irrigated Cultivation (%)	0.103	398
Opium Cultivation (IHS)	-0.044	398
Opium Eradication (IHS)	0.010	398
Reconstruction Aid (Per 100k Pop.)		
Government & Civilian Aid	0.015	398
Social Infrastructure Aid	0.023	398
Health Aid	-0.007	398
Conflict Mitigation Aid	0.093	398
Refugee Aid	0.019	398

Note: * p<0.10, ** p<0.05, *** p<0.01. This table presents correlations between districts' 2013 shares of assisted returnees from Pakistan (the key source of identifying variation in the main analysis) and baseline district characteristics measured in 2013. All variables are measured at the district level.

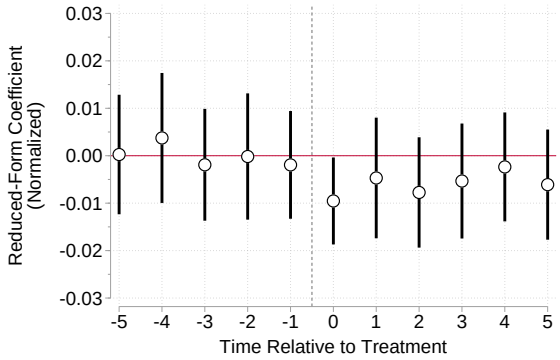
S2.4 Shift-Share Pre-Trends Test

To further assess the parallel trends assumption underlying our shift-share identification strategy, we implement the Goldsmith-Pinkham, Sorkin and Swift (2020) shift-share pre-trends test. This test examines whether the time-invariant share variable (2013 documented returnee shares) predicts violence levels in the pre-treatment period. Following Goldsmith-Pinkham, Sorkin and Swift (2020), we run period-by-period cross-sectional regressions of violence outcomes on the 2013 returnee share for each month from five periods before through five periods after treatment (t=-5 to t=+5). Under parallel trends, pre-period coefficients should exhibit no systematic trend.

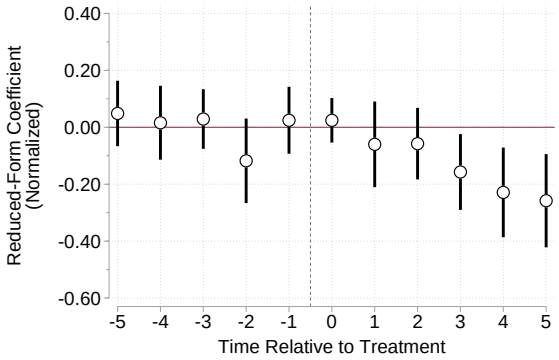
Figure S9 presents results from this test for both the extensive margin and per capita level of insurgent violence, with baseline (no controls) and saturated (time-invariant district controls) specifications. Coefficients are normalized by subtracting the mean of pre-period coefficients (t=-5 to t=-1) to center the pre-treatment period at zero for clearer visualization. Across all specifications, pre-period coefficients are flat and exhibit no systematic trend (linear trend test p-values range from 0.22 to 0.44), while post-period coefficients show clear treatment effects relative to the pre-period baseline. These results provide additional support for the parallel trends assumption.

Figure S9: Goldsmith-Pinkham, Sorkin, and Swift (2020) Shift-Share Pre-Trends Test

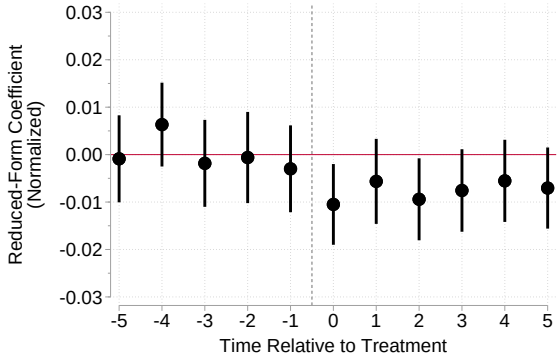
(a) Extensive Margin of Insurgent Violence (Baseline)



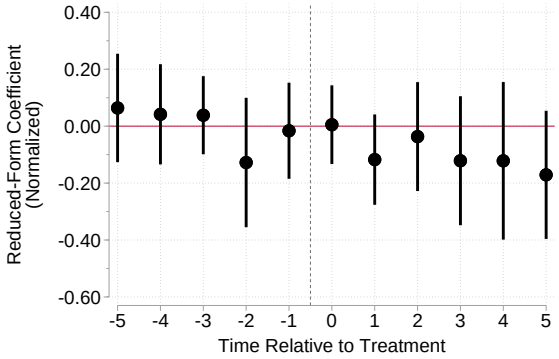
(b) Per Capita Insurgent Violence (Baseline)



(c) Extensive Margin of Insurgent Violence (Saturated)



(d) Per Capita Insurgent Violence (Saturated)



Note: Each point represents a coefficient from a separate cross-sectional regression of the insurgent violence outcome on the standardized 2013 returnee share for that month. Coefficients are normalized by subtracting the mean of t=-5 to t=-1 coefficients to center the pre-period at zero. Panels (a) and (b) show results without controls; panels (c) and (d) include time-invariant district controls from our main specifications. Error bars show 95% confidence intervals with district-clustered standard errors. The vertical dashed line marks the start of treatment in July 2016.

S2.5 Equivalence of Difference-in-Differences and Shift-Share in Single-Shift Setting

Consider districts $d = 1, \ldots, D$ observed in two periods $t \in \{0, 1\}$, where $t = 0$ denotes the pre-period and $t = 1$ the post-period. Let S_d denote a predetermined share—in our case, the 2013 share of returnees to district d—and let $g_t \in \{0, 1\}$ represent a single national shock that turns on in the post period ($g_0 = 0, g_1 = 1$). The endogenous exposure variable can be

written as

$$x_{dt} = \pi\, S_d g_t + \nu_{dt}, \tag{1}$$

where π captures the strength of the relationship between baseline shares and realized exposure, and ν_{dt} is an idiosyncratic component. The outcome equation, controlling for district and period fixed effects, is

$$y_{dt} = \alpha_d + \delta_t + \beta\, x_{dt} + u_{dt}. \tag{2}$$

Differencing across periods removes the fixed effects:

$$\Delta y_d = \beta\, \Delta x_d + \varepsilon_d, \qquad \text{where } \varepsilon_d = u_{d1} - u_{d0}. \tag{3}$$

Because $g_1 - g_0 = 1$, the Bartik-style instrument simplifies to

$$\Delta z_d = s_d(g_1 - g_0) = S_d. \tag{4}$$

The model can thus be estimated by IV, using S_d as an instrument for Δx_d.

Identification requires that the instrument be exogenous, i.e. that historical shares are uncorrelated with the change in the unobserved component of outcomes:

$$\mathbb{E}[\varepsilon_d \mid S_d] = 0. \tag{5}$$

This is precisely the *share exogeneity* or *exclusion restriction* in the shift-share framework.

Now consider the corresponding difference-in-differences formulation. Let $y_{dt}(0) = \alpha_d + \delta_t + u_{dt}$ denote the potential outcome in the absence of the policy shock. The standard DiD (strong) *parallel-trends* assumption in the continuous treatment setting requires that, in the absence of the program, expected outcome trends would not differ systematically across districts with different baseline shares:

$$\mathbb{E}[y_{d1}(0) - y_{d0}(0) \mid S_d] = \mathbb{E}[y_{d1}(0) - y_{d0}(0)]\,. \tag{6}$$

Subtracting the fixed effects, this can be written as

$$\mathbb{E}[u_{d1} - u_{d0} \mid S_d] = 0, \tag{7}$$

or equivalently,

$$\mathbb{E}[\varepsilon_d \mid S_d] = 0. \tag{8}$$

Thus, the difference-in-differences parallel-trends condition and the shift-share exclusion restriction coincide algebraically and conceptually: both state that differences in unobserved outcome trends are uncorrelated with pretreatment shares.

Intuitively, when the aggregate shock is a single national event that turns on uniformly across time, the instrument collapses to the predetermined shares themselves. The identifying assumption that these shares are uncorrelated with shock-specific residuals is therefore equivalent to requiring parallel outcome trends across districts with different baseline exposure intensities. In this special case, share exogeneity and difference-in-differences parallel trends are simply two ways of expressing the same restriction. With additional time-varying controls, the arguments are analogous but everything is conditional on the controls.

S2.6 Encashed Returns and the Incidence of Communal Violence

Our core estimates on social conflict in Table 3 in the main text center on an index of returnees' relations with their non-migrant neighbors. Given the difficulty of measuring communal disputes systematically, we believe this offers the most reasonable approach to understanding how the encashment program shaped social strife. As described in Supplemental Appendix Section S2.1, we also assembled observational data on social conflict. We study these data in Table S11, following the reduced-form specification we use in Table 1 in the main text.

Table S11: Communal Violence Increased Under the Encashment Program

	Communal Violence			
	Extensive Margin (0/1)		**Per 100k Pop.**	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	0.009	0.013	0.003	0.007
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Observations	4378	4378	4378	4378
Clusters	398	398	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.097	0.097	0.047	0.047
Pre-Treatment SD	0.297	0.297	0.302	0.302
PARAMETERS				
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month		✓		✓
Demographic Controls x Month		✓		✓
Development Controls x Month		✓		✓
Agricultural Controls x Month		✓		✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month		✓		✓
Lagged DV		✓		✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July–December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

In Table 2 in the main text we estimate naive and two-stage least squares regressions, taking observed district shares of returnees from Pakistan for each year-specific month. We repeat these specifications while studying communal violence in Table S12. A one standard deviation increase in the district-month share of encashed returns increased the probability of communal violence by 5.9 percentage points (column 6) and increased communal violence per 100,000 residents by 0.033 attacks (column 10). Relative to the pre-treatment mean, these effects represent increases in violence of roughly 61% and 70% respectively.

Table S12: Naive and 2SLS Estimates of Communal Violence

			Communal Violence							
	Share of Returnees from Pakistan		**Extensive Margin (0/1)**				**Per 100K Pop.**			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
	1st Stage OLS	1st Stage OLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	0.451	0.217								
	(0.057)	(0.019)								
Share of Returnees from Pakistan			0.020	0.046	0.024	0.059	0.004	0.021	0.006	0.033
			(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.003)	(0.009)	(0.003)	(0.010)
Observations	14328	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378
Clusters	398	398	398	398	398	398	398	398	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean			0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047
Pre-Treatment SD			0.297	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.302	0.302	0.302	0.302
Kleibergen-Paap F Statistic				89.852		123.471		89.852		125.635
PARAMETERS										
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic Controls x Month	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Development Controls x Month	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month	✓	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓
Lagged DV					✓	✓			✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July through December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Share of returnees from Pakistan is each district's standardized share of the sum of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in a given year-specific month. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample in column 1 includes district-months in 2013–2016. The estimation sample in columns 2-10 includes district-months in 2016.

S2.7 Temporal Dynamics and Effect Persistence

In our main analyses, we study effects of the repatriation cash assistance program in 2016, during the period of enhanced cash distribution to refugee returnees from Pakistan. This

decision is motivated by the fact that the treatment "turns off" in 2017—UNHCR repatriation cash assistance grants reverted to the pre-program level in that year, and returnee flows from Pakistan to Afghanistan substantially subsided correspondingly. Goodman-Bacon (2021, supplemental appendix D) shows that specifications including the period after treatment reversion are likely to be conservative if treatment effects persist once treatment stops. We think this is likely to be the case in our setting because the size of the cash transfer during the treatment period was large, allowing returnee beneficiaries to potentially build savings, make productive investments, and smooth consumption over time.

It is substantively interesting to examine whether the effects persist after the UNHCR cash program paused in December 2016. We are also interested in understanding whether effects reversed in 2017. We implement six complementary temporal specifications to test effect persistence across different time horizons and baseline periods.

Specification 1: Post-June 2016 Effects First, we estimate a parsimonious specification using a January 2016 - July 2017 sample, where we interact the pre-treatment (2013) assisted returnee share with a single indicator for the post-June 2016 period:

$$Y_{dt} = \beta_1(\text{S}_{d,2013} \times \text{Post-June2016}_t) + \delta_d + \beta_t + \gamma_{u \times t} + \mu(X_d \times \beta_t) + \varepsilon_{dt} \tag{9}$$

where Post-June2016_t equals 1 for July 2016 - July 2017, and 0 for January-June 2016. This specification tests whether the overall post-treatment effect differs from zero when pooling the grant period and post-pause period together, relative to the pre-treatment baseline.

Specification 2: Post-June 2016 Effects Second, we estimate a parsimonious specification using a January 2016 - December 2017 sample, where we interact the pre-treatment (2013) assisted returnee share with a single indicator for the post-June 2016 period:

$$Y_{dt} = \beta_2(\text{S}_{d,2013} \times \text{Post-June2016}_t) + \delta_d + \beta_t + \gamma_{u \times t} + \mu(X_d \times \beta_t) + \varepsilon_{dt} \tag{10}$$

where Post-June2016_t equals 1 for July 2016 - December 2017, and 0 for January-June 2016. This specification tests whether the overall post-treatment effect differs from zero when pooling the grant period and post-pause period together, relative to the pre-treatment baseline.

Specification 3: Post-Pause vs. Grant Period Third, we focus on a narrower time window spanning July 2016 through July 2017, and compare the post-pause period to the grant period:

$$Y_{dt} = \beta_3(\text{S}_{d,2013} \times \text{Post-Pause}_t) + \delta_d + \beta_t + \gamma_{u \times t} + \mu(X_d \times \beta_t) + \varepsilon_{dt} \tag{11}$$

where Post-Pause_t equals 1 for January-July 2017 and 0 for July-December 2016. This specification directly tests whether effects differ between the period when cash was actively distributed versus the period immediately following the program's pause.

Specification 4: Post-Pause vs. Grant Period Fourth, we focus on a time window spanning July 2016 through December 2017, and compare the post-pause period to the grant period:

$$Y_{dt} = \beta_4(\text{S}_{d,2013} \times \text{Post-Pause}_t) + \delta_d + \beta_t + \gamma_{u \times t} + \mu(X_d \times \beta_t) + \varepsilon_{dt} \tag{12}$$

where Post-Pause_t equals 1 for January-December 2017 and 0 for July-December 2016. This specification directly tests whether effects differ between the period when cash was actively distributed versus the year following the program's pause.

Specification 5: Both Grant and Post-Pause Dummies Fifth, we estimate a specification that includes separate dummies for both the grant period and the post-pause period, using the full January 2016 - July 2017 sample:

$$Y_{dt} = \beta_5(\text{S}_{d,2013} \times \text{Grant}_t) + \beta_6(\text{S}_{d,2013} \times \text{Post-Pause}_t) + \delta_d + \beta_t + \gamma_{u \times t} + \mu(X_d \times \beta_t) + \varepsilon_{dt} \tag{13}$$

where Grant_t equals 1 for July-December 2016 and Post-Pause_t equals 1 for January-July 2017, with the pre-treatment period (January-June 2016) as the omitted baseline. This specification allows us to estimate both period effects relative to the same pre-treatment baseline.

Specification 6: Both Grant and Post-Pause Dummies Sixth, we estimate a specification that includes separate dummies for both the grant period and the post-pause period, using the full January 2016 - December 2017 sample:

$$Y_{dt} = \beta_7(\text{S}_{d,2013} \times \text{Grant}_t) + \beta_8(\text{S}_{d,2013} \times \text{Post-Pause}_t) + \delta_d + \beta_t + \gamma_{u \times t} + \mu(X_d \times \beta_t) + \varepsilon_{dt} \quad (14)$$

where Grant_t equals 1 for July-December 2016 and Post-Pause_t equals 1 for January-December 2017, with the pre-treatment period (January-June 2016) as the omitted baseline. This specification allows us to estimate both period effects relative to the same pre-treatment baseline, and extends the estimation sample through the 2017 fighting season.

All six specifications use the same controls and fixed effects as our main specification: district fixed effects (δ_d), year-specific month fixed effects (β_t), UNHCR area $\times$ month interactions ($\gamma_{u \times t}$), the standard set of baseline controls for demographics, development, agriculture, reconstruction aid interacted with month fixed effects ($\mu(X_d \times \beta_t)$), and lagged dependent variables. Standard errors are clustered at the district level, and regressions are weighted by district population.

Results Table S13 presents results for all six specifications, focusing on the insurgent violence outcome. For the extensive margin of insurgent violence (columns 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11), Specifications 1 and 2 show a significant negative effect when pooling all post-June 2016 months ($\hat{\beta}_1 = -0.009$, p = 0.01; $\hat{\beta}_2 = -0.008$, p = 0.02), indicating that assisted returns reduced violence over the full year following treatment. Specification 5 decomposes this pooled effect and reveals important temporal heterogeneity. With the pre-treatment period as baseline, the grant period shows a large, statistically significant negative effect ($\hat{\beta}_5 = -0.012$, p < 0.01), while the post-pause coefficient is smaller in magnitude and statistically insignificant ($\hat{\beta}_6 = -0.006$, p = 0.12). Specification 6 also follows Specification 5, but extends the Post-Pause period through 2017. Again, with the pre-treatment period as baseline, the grant period shows a large, statistically significant negative effect ($\hat{\beta}_7 = -0.011$, p < 0.01), while the post-pause coefficient is smaller in magnitude and narrowly significant ($\hat{\beta}_8 = -0.006$, p = 0.10). These patterns indicate that the violence-reducing effect of encashed returns was strongest during the period of active cash distribution.

Specifications 3 and 4 corroborate this interpretation by directly comparing the two post-treatment periods. The positive coefficients in column 5 and 7 ($\hat{\beta}_3 = 0.006$, p < 0.06; $\hat{\beta}_4 = 0.006$, p = 0.03) indicate that the extensive margin of insurgent violence was significantly higher during the post-pause period relative to the grant period baseline, consistent

Table S13: Temporal Specifications: Effect Persistence Tests

	Insurgent Initiated SIGACTs											
	Spec. #1		Spec. #2		Spec. #3		Spec. #4		Spec. #5		Spec. #6	
	(1) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(2) Per 100k Pop.	(3) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(4) Per 100k Pop.	(5) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(6) Per 100k Pop.	(7) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(8) Per 100k Pop.	(9) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(10) Per 100k Pop.	(11) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(12) Per 100k Pop.
2013 Returnee Share x Post-June 2016	-0.009	-0.097	-0.008	-0.054								
	(0.003)	(0.057)	(0.003)	(0.054)								
2013 Returnee Share x Post-Pause					0.006	0.019	0.006	0.086				
					(0.003)	(0.065)	(0.003)	(0.045)				
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Period									-0.012	-0.109	-0.011	-0.111
									(0.003)	(0.050)	(0.003)	(0.051)
2013 Returnee Share x Post-Pause									-0.006	-0.087	-0.006	-0.025
									(0.004)	(0.075)	(0.004)	(0.060)
Sample	Jan. 2016 – July 2017	Jan. 2016 – July 2017	Jan. 2016 – Dec. 2017	Jan. 2016 – Dec. 2017	July 2016 – July 2017	July 2016 – July 2017	July 2016 – Dec. 2017	July 2016 – Dec. 2017	Jan. 2016 – July 2017	Jan. 2016 – July 2017	Jan. 2016 – Dec. 2017	Jan. 2016 – Dec. 2017
Observations	7164	7164	9154	9154	5174	5174	7164	7164	7164	7164	9154	9154
Clusters	398	398	398	398	398	398	398	398	398	398	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.717	4.955	0.717	4.955	0.717	4.955	0.717	4.955	0.717	4.955	0.717	4.955
Pre-Treatment SD	0.451	11.851	0.451	11.851	0.451	11.851	0.451	11.851	0.451	11.851	0.451	11.851
Parameters												
District FE												
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lagged DV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
LagDV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Post-June 2016 is an indicator for all months after June 2016. Post-pause is an indicator for all months after December 2016. Grant period is an indicator for all months from July–December 2016. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016 and 2017.

with attenuation of the effects after cash distribution ended. Importantly, however, Specifications 1 and 2 show that even when pooling both periods together, the overall effect remains negative and economically meaningful, at roughly 50% of the grant period magnitude.

In columns 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12 we examine effects on insurgent violence per 100,000 district residents. The results follow a similar pattern. Specification 1 shows a significant negative effect ($\hat{\beta}_1 = -0.097$, p = 0.09) over the full post-treatment period when the estimation sample covers the year after program onset. Specification 2 reveals an imprecise negative effect ($\hat{\beta}_2 = -0.054$, p = 0.32) over the full post-treatment period when the estimation sample is extended to include the entirety of 2017. Specification 5 shows a highly significant negative effect during the grant period ($\hat{\beta}_5 = -0.109$, p = 0.03) and a negative but modestly imprecise effect in the first seven months of 2017 ($\hat{\beta}_6 = -0.087$, p = 0.25). The post-pause effect is comparably large in magnitude to the grant period coefficient, suggesting substantial persistence into 2017. Specification 6 examines persistence over the entirety of 2017, again showing a highly significant negative effect during the grant period ($\hat{\beta}_7 = -0.111$, p = 0.03) and a modest attenuation in the post-pause period ($\hat{\beta}_8 = -0.025$, p = 0.68). The post-pause effect is approximately 23% of the grant period magnitude in Specification 6, underscoring persistence despite loss of statistical significance.

Specifications 3 and 4 corroborate this interpretation. In column 6 we find no distinguishable difference in the effect of encashed returns in the first seven months of 2017, relative to the grant period ($\hat{\beta}_3 = 0.019$, p = 0.76). In column 8 we find that per capita insurgent violence was significantly higher during the full post-pause period relative to the grant period baseline ($\hat{\beta}_4 = 0.086$, p = 0.06). This is consistent with attenuation of effects after cash distribution ended. Importantly, however, Specifications 1 and 2 show that even when pooling these periods together, the overall effect remains negative and economically meaningful.

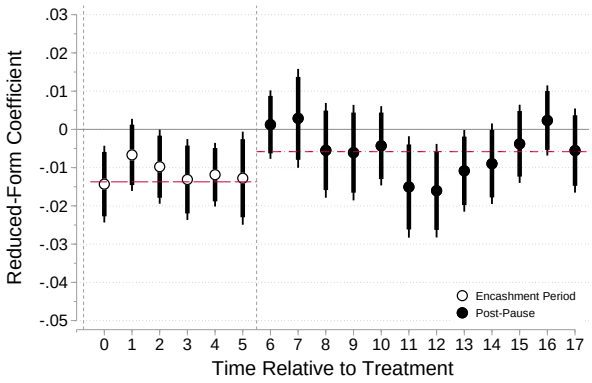
To further visualize temporal dynamics, Figure S10 presents an alternative event study specification. Note that we do not include pre-treatment dummies here to reflect the true data-generating process and hence improve the accuracy of the treatment estimates (Borusyak, Jaravel and Spiess, 2024). This specification uses the January 2016 – December 2017 sample from Specifications 2, 4, and 6 above, and includes month-by-month post-treatment dummies (t=0 to t=17) interacted with pre-treatment (2013) returnee shares, but no pre-treatment dummies. The pre-treatment period (January-June 2016) is absorbed by district and year-specific month fixed effects. Panel (a) plots coefficients on the extensive margin of insurgent violence, while panel (b) plots coefficients on the insurgent violence in levels per capita.

Several patterns emerge from Figure S10. First, during the grant period (months 0-5), coefficients are consistently negative and mostly statistically significant at at least the 10% level, with a grant period mean of -0.014 for the extensive margin and -0.134 for levels per capita. This corroborates the main results showing that encashed returns reduced insurgent violence during the program period. Second, during the post-pause period (months 6-17), coefficients are noisier and much closer to zero, or even positive, with a post-pause mean of -0.006 for the extensive margin and -0.025 for levels per capita. The contrast between period means is visually striking, particularly for the extensive margin. Third, the last five months of the observation window (August–December 2017) show coefficients near or above zero, suggesting effects largely dissipated within one year of program onset.

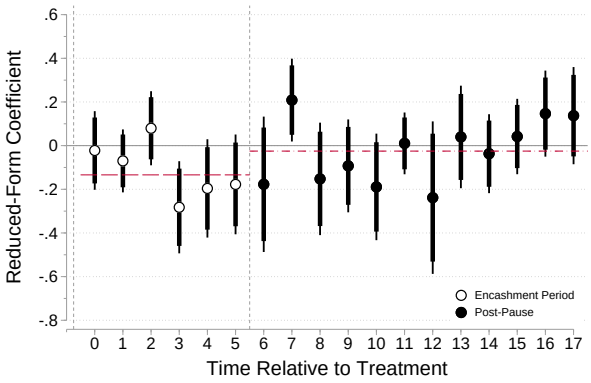
Interpretation Taken together, these results provide strong evidence that assisted returns during the encashment program reduced insurgent violence, with effects driven primarily by the grant period, but exhibiting meaningful persistence. Table S13 shows three key findings. First, Specification 1 demonstrates a large and significant negative effect when pooling the

Figure S10: Month-by-Month Event Study

(a) Extensive Margin of Insurgent Violence



(b) Insurgent Violence Per 100k Pop.



Note: Panels plot coefficients from an event study specification with month-by-month post-treatment dummies (July 2016 – December 2017) interacted with pre-treatment (2013) returnee shares. No pre-treatment dummies are included; the pre-treatment period (January–June 2016) is absorbed by district and month-year fixed effects. Hollow circles indicate the grant period (July–December 2016, under encashment); filled circles indicate the post-pause period (January-June 2017, after cash assistance reverted to the pre-program level). Thin error bars represent 90% confidence intervals; thick error bars represent 95% confidence intervals. Red dashed horizontal lines show period means. Vertical dashed line marks treatment start (July 2016); vertical dotted line marks program pause (December 2016/January 2017 boundary). Specifications include all controls and fixed effects from main analyses. Standard errors clustered at district level; regressions weighted by population.

entire post-treatment period, indicating violence reductions persisted throughout the year following program launch. Specification 2 demonstrates a similarly sized but modestly less precise negative effect when pooling the entire post-treatment period through December 2017. Second, Specifications 5 and 6 decompose this into grant-period and post-pause components, revealing that effects are strongest during active cash distribution (grant period), but remain economically meaningful in the post-pause period. In the full estimation sample in specification 6 (January 2016–December 2017), estimated effects are roughly 55% of the grant-period magnitude for the extensive margin and 23% of the grant-period magnitude for levels per capita. Third, Specifications 3 and 4 confirm some attenuation by showing a marginal increase in violence during the post-pause period relative to the grant period. Figure S10 visualizes this dynamic with month-by-month estimates, showing consistently negative effects during the grant period and smaller but still negative average effects during the post-pause months.

This pattern of strong effects during active cash distribution with partial persistence afterward is consistent with the cash assistance mechanism operating through multiple channels. The immediate effect during the grant period likely reflects direct purchasing power and economic stabilization. The partial persistence suggests spillover effects—such as improved economic conditions, reduced grievances, or strengthened social ties—that decay gradually rather than disappearing immediately when cash stops. Moreover, this temporal pattern provides additional evidence against alternative explanations based solely on undocumented returns or coercion in Pakistan. Critically, Figure 1 in the main text shows that undocumented returns surge again around April 2017 to near-program levels, while documented returns remain low. If undocumented returns, especially those induced by Pakistani coercion, were the primary drivers of our results in the encashment period, we would expect violence-reducing effects to strengthen when undocumented returns resurge in April 2017. Instead, effects attenuate modestly after cash distribution ended in December 2016. The concentration of effects during the grant period, combined with meaningful persistence and the lack of response to the April 2017 undocumented return surge, supports the interpretation that repatriation cash assistance was the key mechanism reducing insurgent violence.

S2.8 Substitution in Tactics and Lethality

To test the reservation wage mechanism, we study tactical diversity and insurgent lethality in Tables 5 in the main text and 6 in the main text. Here, we estimate complementary models. In columns 1 and 2 we study the share of all insurgent-initiated attacks that are explosive, expressed as $\frac{\text{\# of Explosive Attacks}_{d,t}}{\text{\# of Insurgent-Initiated Attacks}_{d,t}}$. This measure is undefined where no insurgent violence occurs. Hence, in column 1 we exclude observations without insurgent-initiated attacks, and in column 2 we fill these observations with zeroes. Column 2 also adds an indicator that takes the value one when a district experiences positive levels of conflict and zero otherwise. In columns 3 and 4 we study the share of all insurgent-caused counterinsurgent casualties from explosive violence, expressed as $\frac{\text{\# of Counterinsurgent Casualties from Explosives}_{d,t}}{\text{\# of Counterinsurgent Casualties}_{d,t}}$. This measure is undefined where no casualties occur. Hence, in column 3 we exclude observations without counterinsurgent casualties, and in column 4 we fill these observations with zeroes. Column 4 also adds an indicator that takes the value one when a district experiences positive levels of casualties and zero otherwise.

Table S14: Substitution Into Explosive Violence

	Tactical Substitution		Substitution in Lethality	
	(1) Explosive Share (Missing)	(2) Explosive Share (Filled)	(3) Casualty Share (Missing)	(4) Casualty Share (Filled)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	0.016	0.021	0.017	0.020
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.002)
Observations	1794	4378	939	4378
Clusters	250	398	160	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.359	0.257	0.052	0.612
Pre-Treatment SD	0.324	0.318	0.442	1.345
PARAMETERS				
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lagged DV	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outcome (=1)		✓		✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July–December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). Reconstruction controls are: per capita spending on governance, infrastructure, health, conflict stabilization, and refugees projects. All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. In column 2, outcome (=1) is an indicator for whether any insurgent-initiated attacks occurred. In column 4, outcome (=1) is an indicator for whether any counterinsurgent casualties occurred. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

S2.9 Civilian Informing and Counterinsurgent Bomb Neutralizations

Rising reservation wages attributable to the repatriation cash assistance program would increase the cost of tips in a market for information from civilians about combatant activities (Berman, Shapiro and Felter, 2011; Vanden Eynde, 2018; Berman, Felter and Shapiro, 2018). We do not observe tips from civilians in our conflict microdata. However, we do observe an outcome highly sensitive to the flow of information from civilians to government forces—the success rate of counterinsurgent bomb neutralizations. In columns 1 and 2 of Table S15 we study the share of all insurgent-emplaced explosives that are successfully found and cleared prior to detonation, expressed as $\frac{\text{\# of Explosives Found and Cleared}_{d,t}}{\text{\# of Explosives Emplaced}_{d,t}}$. This measure is undefined where no insurgent explosive emplacements occur. Hence, in columns 1-2 we

exclude observations without insurgent explosive emplacements, and in columns 3-4 we fill these observations with zeroes. Columns 3-4 also add an indicator that takes the value one when a district experiences positive levels of emplacements and zero otherwise. We find that a one standard deviation increase in exposure to encashed returns reduces the rate of successful bomb clearances by 5% (column 2) to 6% (column 4), relative to the baseline.

Table S15: Counterinsurgent Bomb Neutralizations

	Counterinsurgent Bomb Neutralizations			
	Clearance Rate (Missing)		**Clearance Rate (Filled)**	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	-0.007	-0.019	-0.010	-0.014
	(0.003)	(0.008)	(0.001)	(0.004)
Observations	1621	1005	4378	4378
Clusters	271	178	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.381	0.381	0.227	0.227
Pre-Treatment SD	0.360	0.360	0.335	0.335
PARAMETERS				
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month		✓		✓
Demographic Controls x Month		✓		✓
Development Controls x Month		✓		✓
Agricultural Controls x Month		✓		✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month		✓		✓
Lagged DV		✓		✓
Emplaced (=1)			✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July–December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). Reconstruction controls are: per capita spending on governance, infrastructure, health, conflict stabilization, and refugees projects. All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Emplaced (=1) is an indicator for whether any explosive emplacements occurred. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

S2.10 Social Capital Mitigates Communal Violence

In Table 7 in the main text we use our survey-based data to show that social capital moderates the effect of encashment beneficiary status on relations between returnees and their non-migrant neighbors. In Table S16 we take a comparable approach to understand the role of social capital in mitigating communal violence using our supplemental event data on local feuds. To proxy for social capital in these specifications, we calculate the 2013 share of assisted returnees from Pakistan to their origin province and district (see also Supplemental Appendix Figure S6). In columns 3-4 of Table S16, we interact the reduced-form (2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase) with the share of returnees to a district in their origin province. In columns 5-6, we interact the reduced-form (2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase) with the share of returnees to their origin district. We find that social capital significantly attenuates the positive effect of returnee exposure on communal violence.

Table S16: Social Capital Mitigates Observed Communal Conflict

	Communal Violence					
	Baseline		**Share Returning to Origin Province**		**Share Returning to Origin District**	
	(1) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(2) Per 100k Pop.	(3) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(4) Per 100k Pop.	(5) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(6) Per 100k Pop.
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	0.013	0.007	0.023	0.015	0.021	0.014
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.005)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase x Social Capital			-0.031	-0.021	-0.039	-0.033
			(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.018)	(0.019)
Grant Increase x Social Capital			-0.014	0.006	-0.002	0.011
			(0.016)	(0.025)	(0.018)	(0.027)
Observations	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378
Clusters	398	398	398	398	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.097	0.047	0.097	0.047	0.097	0.047
Pre-Treatment SD	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.302
PARAMETERS						
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lagged DV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July–December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). Reconstruction controls are: per capita spending on governance, infrastructure, health, conflict stabilization, and refugees projects. All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

S2.11 Quantifying Local Institutional Quality in Afghanistan

In Table S18 we study how strong, local institutions mitigate communal violence in the wake of repatriation. We use four cross-sectional measures of informal institutional strength drawn from a variety of sources. We describe these sources here.

First, we draw on three measures from the Afghan Quarterly Nationwide Assessment Research (ANQAR) survey. ANQAR is a NATO-funded, representative survey fielded throughout Afghanistan by the Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR). ACSOR hires and trains local enumerators to conduct field research. Districts are selected via a probability proportional to size systematic sampling approach, and within districts, villages and settlements are randomly selected. A random walk method is used to identify target households, and a Kish grid is used to randomize the respondent within selected households. Before fielding, ACSOR engages with local elders to secure permission for enumerators to enter sample villages. This culturally-sensitive approach ensures survey enumerators have access to contested and insurgent-controlled areas. We use data from all 2013 waves, and collapse the three questions described in Table S17 to the district-level for use in Table S18.

Second, we draw on one measure from ACSOR's field reports, which record whether the Taliban contested or controlled influence in a district in 2013. This enumerability-based measure of insurgent control avoids challenges associated with measuring territorial control in ways explicitly endogenous to local violence.

S2.12 Strong, Local Institutions Mitigate Communal Violence

We calculate the four measures described in Table S17, and use these measures to proxy for strong, local institutions. In columns 3-10 of Table S18, we interact the reduced-form (2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase) with these measures in turn. Columns 1-2 report our baseline estimates for reference. Across measures, we find that the positive effect of exposure to encashed returns on communal violence is substantially attenuated in districts with stronger local institutions.

Table S17: Measuring Local Institutional Quality in Afghanistan

Variable Name	Question	Response	Source
Prefer Shura to State Court	If you had a legal dispute, would you take it to an Afghanistan state court or a local Shura/Jirga?	To a Shura/Jirga	ANQAR
Prefer Elders to Gov't Officials	If you had a problem, would you go to your local tribal leaders or the official government representatives?	Local tribal leaders	ANQAR
Took Dispute to Shura	Have you taken a dispute to an Afghanistan state court or a local Shura/Jirga in the past year?	Yes, local Shura/Jirga	ANQAR
Taliban Control	Coded based on ACSOR field reports, which describe district enumerability for survey administrators	Average level of Taliban territorial control in 2013	ACSOR

Note: Took dispute to shura is only coded using the subset of respondents who reported having a dispute in the past year.

Table S18: Strong, Local Institutions Dampen Return-Induced Communal Violence

	Communal Violence									
	Baseline		Prefer Shura to State Court		Prefer Elders to Gov't Officials		Took Dispute to Shura		Taliban Control	
	(1) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(2) Per 100k Pop.	(3) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(4) Per 100k Pop.	(5) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(6) Per 100k Pop.	(7) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(8) Per 100k Pop.	(9) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(10) Per 100k Pop.
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	0.013	0.007	0.032	0.015	0.054	0.036	0.031	0.021	0.014	0.007
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.018)	(0.022)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.002)	(0.002)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase x Strong, Local Institutions			-0.096	-0.055	-0.151	-0.107	-0.183	-0.156	-0.054	-0.045
			(0.029)	(0.036)	(0.066)	(0.078)	(0.100)	(0.120)	(0.028)	(0.029)
Grant Increase x Strong, Local Institutions			-0.042	-0.113	0.003	-0.005	0.023	-0.044	0.004	-0.012
			(0.046)	(0.109)	(0.049)	(0.078)	(0.047)	(0.068)	(0.018)	(0.023)
Observations	4378	4378	3817	3817	3817	3817	3795	3795	4378	4378
Clusters	398	398	347	347	347	347	345	345	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.097	0.047	0.097	0.047	0.097	0.047	0.097	0.047	0.097	0.047
Pre-Treatment SD	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.302
Data Source	—	—	ANQAR	ANQAR	ANQAR	ANQAR	ANQAR	ANQAR	ACSOR	ACSOR
PARAMETERS										
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lagged DV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July–December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Strong, local institutions are: 2013 average reliance on shuras (columns 3-4) or elders (columns 5-6); usage of shuras (columns 7-8); or Taliban governance (columns 9-10). Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). Reconstruction controls are: per capita spending on governance, infrastructure, health, conflict stabilization, and refugees projects. All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

S2.13 Measuring Communal Violence

Our military records offer a comprehensive portrait of combat between insurgent and counterinsurgent forces. However, these data do not track social conflicts occurring between civilians, tribes, or other groups. We draw on rich survey data to understand communal violence and returnee relations with their non-migrant neighbors in the main analyses. In supplemen-

tary analyses we consider incidents of communal violence recorded in a U.S. government-sponsored conflict tracker, which covers 2016–2017 and combines incidents reported by the Afghan National Police Command Center, open-source media, and embassy-contracted risk analysis firms. For each event in the tracker we observe geographic coordinates, a timestamp, and an incident description. While most events refer to (counter)insurgent violence, a subset of the records cover social strife. We plot these measures in Figure S11.

Communal violence characterizes incidents of extra-governmental conflict between informally-organized groups in which neither state nor rebel forces are a primary target or perpetrator. This excludes conflicts involving pro-government militias. Government or rebel forces often respond to communal violence, but are not its primary targets. As Murtazashvili (2016) describes, this form of violence includes land and property disputes, honor feuds, and tribal or familial clashes. We use supervised keyword text analysis to search and code events on the basis of incident descriptions. This exercise benefits from standard terminological conventions in each narrative. For instance, most incidents involving insurgent attacks begin "INS conducted [tactic]." Sexton (2016) offers a similar approach. Most narratives are general, and do not allow us to distinguish types of social conflicts, or to identify specific disputes involving returnees. To illustrate, we describe two incidents below:

> **Date:** 12:00, 24 March 2016
> **Location:** Qadis District, Badghis Province
> **Narrative:** "Due to private enmity between two tribes in Qadis village of the mentioned district fought to each other and as result (1) got killed from one side and the other (1) wounded from other side."

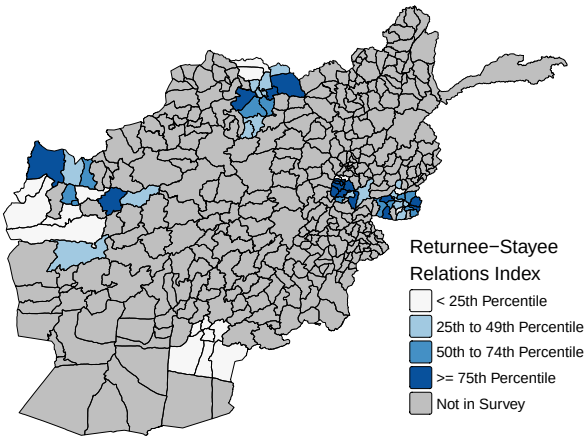
> **Date:** 11:30, 17 December 2016
> **Location:** Hazrati Sultan District, Samangan Province
> **Narrative:** "As a result of conflict between two tribes in Ghazni Gak village of the mentioned District, due to land issues, Consequently (05) LNs [local nationals] injured, ANP [Afghan National Police] assigned to the area."

In total, we identify 122 incidents of communal violence across Afghanistan in 2016, including 48 events during the encashment program. Although we believe our data represent the most complete accounting of social conflict in Afghanistan during this period, it is likely that this violence is under-reported. Measurement error in these data would increase the variance of our estimates, reducing precision of our results. To further mitigate possible

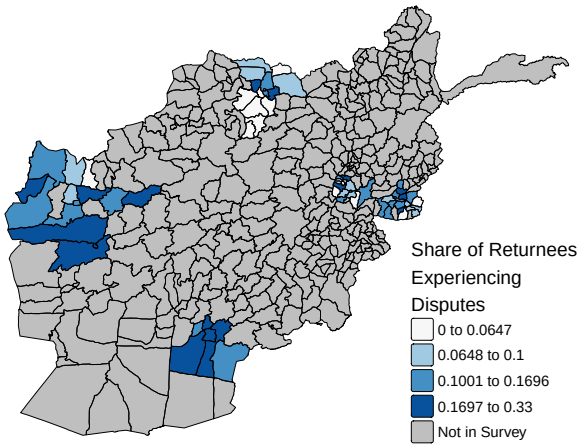
under-reporting, we study the extensive margin of communal violence in our primary estimations using this alternative measure. Results are substantively similar when we assess communal violence in levels or per capita.

Figure S11: Survey-Based and Observational Measures of Communal Violence

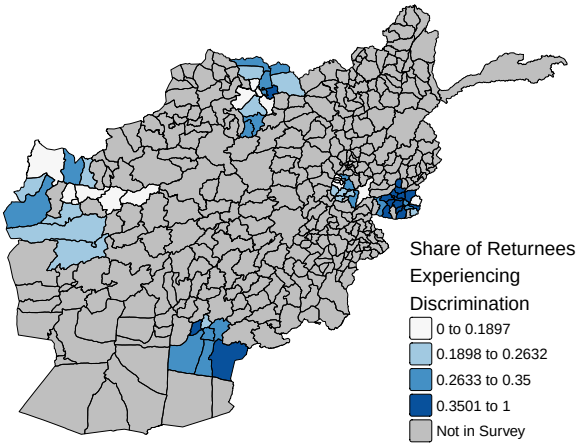
(a) Survey Data: Returnee-Stayee Relations



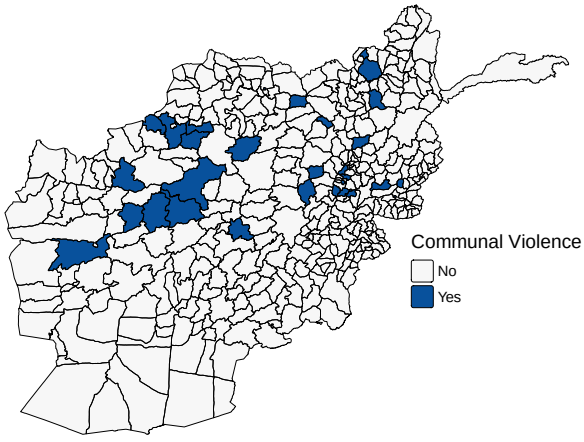
(b) Survey Data: Disputes



(c) Survey Data: Linguistic Discrimination



(d) Event Data: Communal Violence



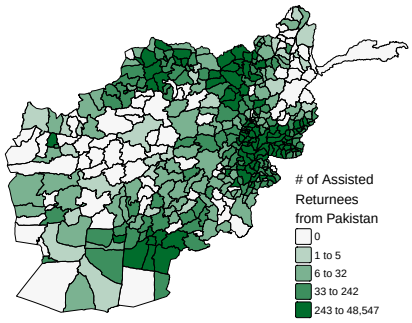
Note: Panel (a) represents average responses on a survey-based, multi-item index measuring relations between returnees and their non-migrant neighbors (i.e., "stayees"). In this case, darker shades indicate more positive relations. Panel (b) represents average responses to a survey item measuring returnees' self-reported experiences of communal violence. Panel (c) represents average responses to a survey item measuring returnees' self-reported experiences of linguistic discrimination. Panel (d) represents the extensive margin of communal violence based on observational event data we assembled. In panels (a) – (c), legend bins reflect quartiles of the distribution.

S2.14 Observed and Predicted Returns from All Host Countries

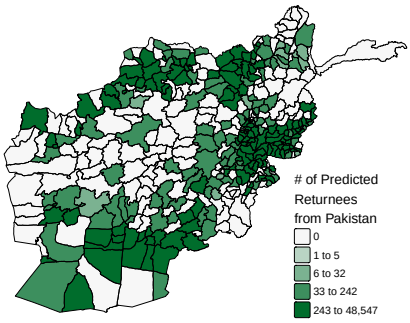
As described in the main text, we predict returns during the encashment program by multiplying 2013 (pre-shock) cross-sectional district shares with the total source-specific returnee flow. All predicted returns are highly correlated with observed returns (Pearson's $\rho > 0.874$).

Figure S12: Observed Versus Predicted Returns During the Cash Program

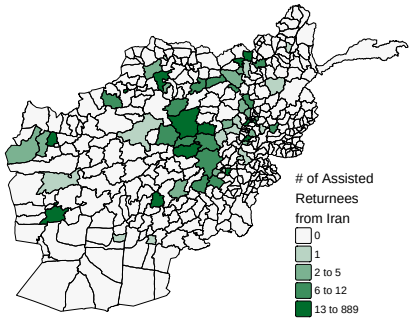
(a) Observed from Pakistan



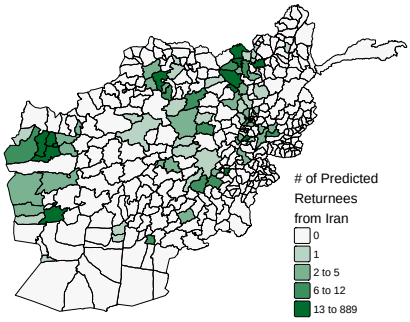
(b) Predicted from Pakistan



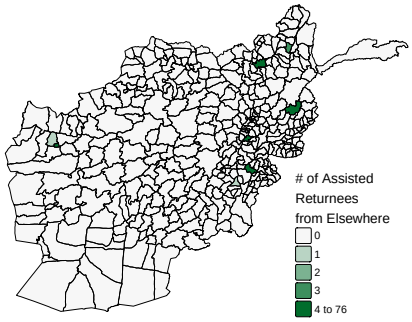
(c) Observed from Iran



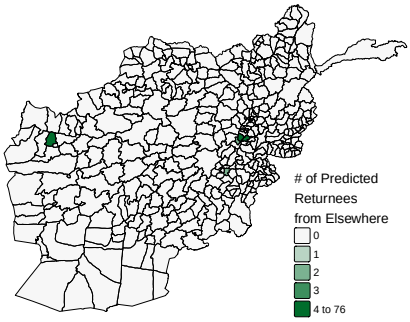
(d) Predicted from Iran



(e) Observed from Elsewhere



(f) Predicted from Elsewhere



Note: The maps show observed and predicted destination districts of assisted returnees from Pakistan (panels (a) and (b)), Iran (panels (c) and (d)), and all other host countries (panels (e) and (f)). Districts are shaded by the total number of assisted returnees who repatriated to the district during the encashment period. Legend bins reflect a zero category and quartiles of the nonzero distribution

S2.15 Origin Districts of Encashed Returnees

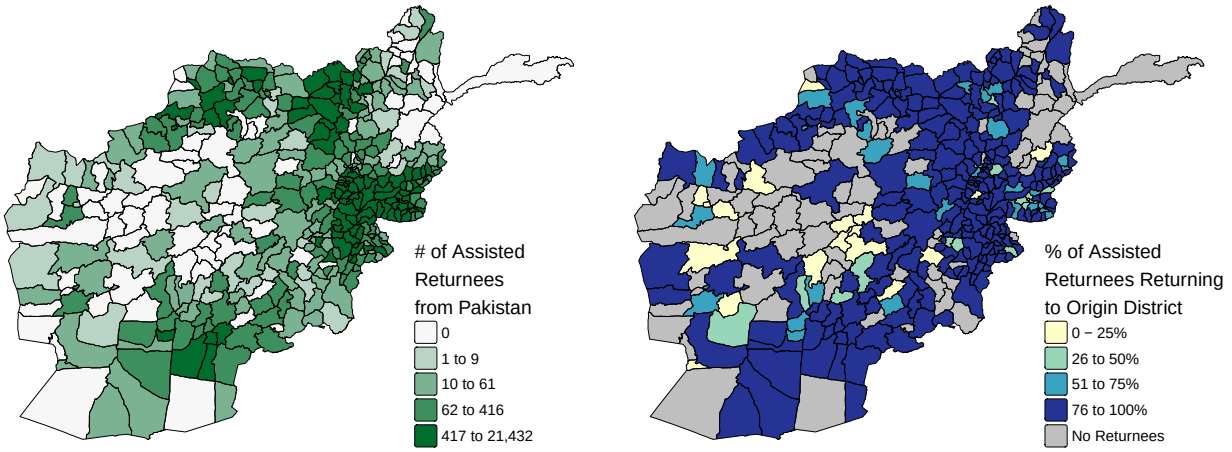
Refugee returnees are highly likely to repatriate to the origin provinces and districts they lived in prior to experiencing displacement (Camarena and Hägerdal, 2020; Alrababa'h et al., 2023). During the 2016 encashment program, 62% of all program-induced returnees from Pakistan returned to their district of origin, and 74% of all program-induced returnees from Pakistan returned to their province of origin. In these areas, returnees often owned land or houses, and had pre-existing familial kinship ties.

In Figure S13 we plot two related measures. First, in panel (a) we depict the origin districts of returnees who repatriated under the 2016 repatriation assistance program. The total number of program-induced returnees originating in a given district is highly correlated with the total number of program-induced returnees repatriating to a given district (Pearson's $\rho = 0.714$). Second, in panel (b) we plot the fraction of assisted returnees who resettled in their home district during the encashment program. This measure is undefined for districts receiving no program-induced returnees.

Figure S13: Returnee Gravitation Toward Origin Districts

(a) Origin Districts of Program-Induced Returnees

(b) Share of Encashed Returnees Repatriating to Origin District



Note: Panel (a) depicts the origin districts of returnees who repatriated under the 2016 repatriation assistance program, shading districts by the total number of program-induced returnees originating in a given district. Legend bins reflect a zero category and quartiles of the nonzero distribution. Panel (b) depicts the percentage of assisted returnees from Pakistan during the 2016 encashment program who returned to their district of origin. Blue shades (50-100%) indicate districts where returnees predominantly returned to their origin district. Yellow-green shades (0-49%) indicate districts where returnees predominantly came from other origin districts. This measure is undefined for districts receiving no program-induced returnees, and these districts are shaded gray.

S2.16 Covariate Balance

In Table S19 we estimate a series of difference-in-means using data from the Survey of Afghan Returnees. Comparing encashment beneficiaries to other returnees reveals few demographic differences. Encashed returnee respondents repatriated in larger groups, and were more likely to be Pashtun, male, and to reside in rural areas and in single family homes.

Table S19: Covariate Balance Between Encashed and All Other Returnees

	All Other Returnees	Encashed Returnees	Difference-in-Means (Non-Beneficiaries - Encashed)
# of Returnees in Household	5.248	6.803	-1.571
	(4.228)	(5.234)	
Urban	0.259	0.177	0.089
	(0.438)	(0.382)	
Female	0.470	0.367	0.102
	(0.499)	(0.483)	
Age: 18-25	0.257	0.263	-0.002
	(0.437)	(0.441)	
Age: 26-35	0.352	0.361	-0.008
	(0.478)	(0.481)	
Age: 36-45	0.227	0.206	0.017
	(0.419)	(0.405)	
Age: 46-55	0.113	0.105	0.008
	(0.316)	(0.307)	
Age: 55+	0.051	0.065	-0.015
	(0.219)	(0.247)	
Ethnicity: Pashtun	0.520	0.890	-0.370
	(0.500)	(0.313)	
Ethnicity: Tajik	0.301	0.051	0.249
	(0.459)	(0.221)	
Ethnicity: Uzbek	0.031	0.008	0.022
	(0.174)	(0.088)	
Ethnicity: Hazara	0.109	0.010	0.102
	(0.311)	(0.099)	
Ethnicity: Other	0.039	0.041	-0.004
	(0.195)	(0.198)	
Monthly Income	2.402	2.543	-0.138
	(1.853)	(1.859)	
Education	0.987	0.940	0.055
	(1.332)	(1.333)	
Madrasa	0.006	0.009	-0.004
	(0.077)	(0.097)	
Dwelling: Single Family Home	0.746	0.802	-0.057
	(0.435)	(0.399)	
Marital Status: Single	0.145	0.125	0.017
	(0.352)	(0.331)	
Marital Status: Married	0.833	0.852	-0.016
	(0.373)	(0.356)	
Marital Status: Widowed	0.022	0.023	-0.001
	(0.146)	(0.151)	
Marital Status: Separated	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.017)	(0.000)	
Tazkira Holder	0.852	0.865	-0.014
	(0.355)	(0.342)	
Social Capital Index (ICW)	0.025	0.030	-0.011
	(0.985)	(0.893)	
Resides Near Out-Group	0.583	0.612	-0.030
	(0.493)	(0.488)	

Note: Column 1 presents means and standard deviations (in parentheses) for survey respondents who were not beneficiaries of the cash program. Column 2 presents means and standard deviations (in parentheses) for survey respondents who were likely beneficiaries of the cash program. Column 3 presents difference-in-means from a series of t-tests.

In Table S20 we estimate an additional series of difference-in-means using data from the Survey of Afghan Returnees. Comparing encashment beneficiaries to other spontaneous (unassisted) returnees from Pakistan during the encashment program reveals few demographic differences. Encashed returnee respondents were more likely to be Pashtun, male, and better educated.

Table S20: Covariate Balance Between Encashed and Spontaneous Returnees

	Spontaneous Returnees During Program	Encashed Returnees	Difference-in-Means (Spontaneous - Encashed)
# of Returnees in Household	7.041	6.803	0.172
	(4.860)	(5.234)	
Urban	0.212	0.177	0.038
	(0.409)	(0.382)	
Female	0.541	0.367	0.172
	(0.499)	(0.483)	
Age: 18-25	0.261	0.263	0.002
	(0.440)	(0.441)	
Age: 26-35	0.366	0.361	0.002
	(0.482)	(0.481)	
Age: 36-45	0.229	0.206	0.021
	(0.420)	(0.405)	
Age: 46-55	0.095	0.105	-0.009
	(0.293)	(0.307)	
Age: 55+	0.050	0.065	-0.016
	(0.218)	(0.247)	
Ethnicity: Pashtun	0.800	0.890	-0.094
	(0.401)	(0.313)	
Ethnicity: Tajik	0.138	0.051	0.091
	(0.346)	(0.221)	
Ethnicity: Uzbek	0.014	0.008	0.006
	(0.118)	(0.088)	
Ethnicity: Hazara	0.016	0.010	0.008
	(0.124)	(0.099)	
Ethnicity: Other	0.032	0.041	-0.012
	(0.177)	(0.198)	
Monthly Income	2.236	2.543	-0.299
	(1.795)	(1.859)	
Education	0.599	0.940	-0.339
	(1.077)	(1.333)	
Madrasa	0.002	0.009	-0.007
	(0.049)	(0.097)	
Dwelling: Single Family Home	0.782	0.802	-0.023
	(0.413)	(0.399)	
Marital Status: Single	0.146	0.125	0.020
	(0.353)	(0.331)	
Marital Status: Married	0.829	0.852	-0.023
	(0.377)	(0.356)	
Marital Status: Widowed	0.026	0.023	0.003
	(0.159)	(0.151)	
Marital Status: Separated	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.000)	(0.000)	
Tazkira Holder	0.814	0.865	-0.052
	(0.390)	(0.342)	
Social Capital Index (ICW)	-0.056	0.030	-0.095
	(1.046)	(0.893)	
Resides Near Out-Group	0.621	0.612	0.001
	(0.486)	(0.488)	

Note: Column 1 presents means and standard deviations (in parentheses) for survey respondents who were returned spontaneously from Pakistan during the encashment program. Column 2 presents means and standard deviations (in parentheses) for survey respondents who were likely beneficiaries of the cash program. Column 3 presents difference-in-means from a series of t-tests.

S2.17 RDD Balance Checks Around Program Onset

We test for balance in the composition of returnees around the June 29, 2016 program start date using a regression discontinuity design (RDD). If returnee characteristics changed discontinuously at the program cutoff, this could suggest selection effects that might bias our main difference-in-differences estimates. We specifically examine 24 household-level outcomes, including group size, gender composition, origin and destination province, and territorial control of returnees' destination districts just prior to their repatriation. Table S21 presents results using `rdrobust` with MSE-optimal bandwidth selection and HC0 heteroskedasticity-robust standard errors. The results show no evidence of systematic compositional changes at the program cutoff, with only one characteristic significant at the 10% level (4.2% of total tests), consistent with random chance rather than systematic selection. These results provide reassurance that returnee composition did not change discontinuously at the program start, supporting the validity of our main, difference-in-differences identification strategy.

Table S21: RDD Balance Check: Assisted Returnees from Pakistan

	RDD Estimate at June 29, 2016 Cutoff			
	Coefficient	[95% CI]	Bandwidth (days)	N (Households)
Group Characteristics				
Group Size (Number of Individuals)	-1.674	[-6.651, 3.303]	16	153
Proportion Female in Group	-0.011	[-0.085, 0.062]	43	2622
Origin Province				
Origin: Nangarhar	0.060	[-0.106, 0.227]	50	3415
Origin: Kabul	0.074	[-0.081, 0.229]	38	2002
Origin: Paktya	-0.125	[-0.269, 0.019]	48	3256
Origin: Logar	-0.088	[-0.323, 0.148]	41	2449
Origin: Kunduz	-0.070	[-0.284, 0.144]	53	3663
Origin: Laghman	0.012	[-0.014, 0.039]	23	507
Origin: Baghlan	-0.031	[-0.157, 0.096]	51	3600
Origin: Kunar	0.019	[-0.034, 0.072]	33	1374
Origin: Kandahar	-0.008	[-0.022, 0.007]	20	241
Origin: Jawzjan	0.006	[-0.037, 0.050]	38	2002
Destination Province				
Destination: Nangarhar	0.089	[-0.094, 0.273]	53	3663
Destination: Kabul	0.078	[-0.115, 0.271]	50	3509
Destination: Kunduz	-0.092	[-0.244, 0.061]	69	6343
Destination: Baghlan	-0.040	[-0.148, 0.068]	47	3182
Destination: Laghman	-0.019	[-0.120, 0.081]	36	1727
Destination: Paktya	0.019	[-0.006, 0.044]	29	942
Destination: Logar	-0.032	[-0.243, 0.179]	47	3182
Destination: Balkh	0.011	[-0.090, 0.111]	43	2622
Destination: Kunar	0.004	[-0.010, 0.018]	19	229
Destination: Jawzjan	-0.000	[-0.033, 0.033]	34	1417
Territorial Control				
Insurgent Territorial Control	-0.144	[-0.371, 0.083]	39	2097
Government Territorial Control	-0.028	[-0.279, 0.224]	50	3415

Note: This table tests for discontinuities in characteristics of assisted returnee households repatriating from Pakistan. We study the June 29, 2016 program cutoff, when the expanded cash assistance program began. Each row shows an RDD estimate of the jump in the respective characteristic for groups returning just after versus just before the cutoff. Estimates use `rdrobust` with MSE-optimal bandwidth selection, robust bias-corrected inference, triangular kernel, and group size weights. Bandwidths are reported in days. N shows the effective number of returnee households within the bandwidth. Under random sampling, we expect approximately 10%, 5%, and 1% of tests to be significant at those respective levels.

S2.18 Intensive Margin of Insurgent Conflict

Our core estimates in Table 1 in the main text center on the extensive margin of insurgent violence and insurgent violence per 100,000 district residents. In Table S22, we examine how program-induced returns affected the intensive margin of rebel violence. Because this is a count outcome, we use a Poisson estimator, which is both more suitable for counts and helps verify robustness of our results to alternative estimators. Consistent with our main finding, we see that returnee exposure reduced insurgent attacks in levels.

Table S22: Refugee Return and Violence in Levels

	Insurgent Violence (#)	
	(1)	(2)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	-0.013	-0.036
	(0.007)	(0.012)
Observations	3971	3971
Clusters	361	361
Pre-Treatment Mean	6.082	6.082
Pre-Treatment SD	8.756	8.756
PARAMETERS		
District FE	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month		✓
Demographic Controls x Month		✓
Development Controls x Month		✓
Agricultural Controls x Month		✓
Lagged DV		✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July–December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

Whereas our OLS models use demeaning to account for fixed effects, in Poisson models the fixed effects are eliminated by conditioning on the sum of the dependent variable over time (Correia, Guimarães and Zylkin, 2020). In the latter case, panels where the dependent variable is constant are not informative, and hence dropped. Given that many panels

are singletons or separated by fixed effects, some loss of observations occurs. To facilitate convergence, we therefore omit reconstruction controls.

S2.19 Effects of Assisted Versus Spontaneous Returnees

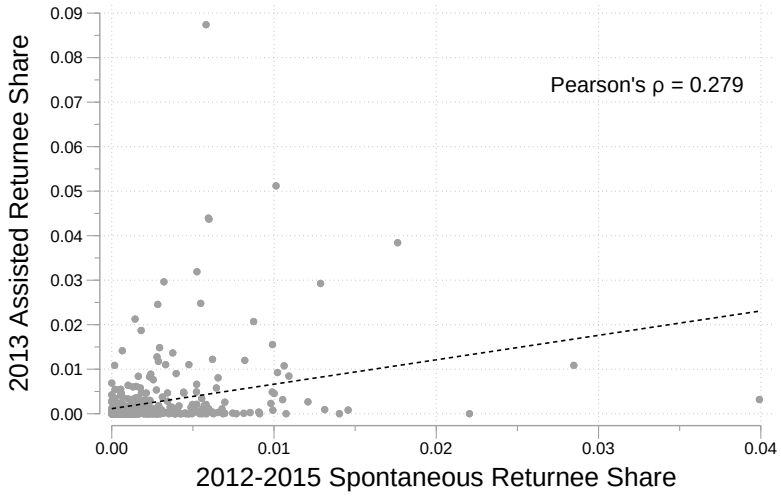
Our main analyses define exposure to assisted returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan using 2013 shares. During the encashment program, all and only these returnees from Pakistan received the UNHCR cash grant, so by capturing assisted Pakistan returns, our reduced-form measure implicitly captures exposure to encashment. However, it is natural to wonder how spontaneous returnees, who did not receive cash, impacted violence.

Our UNHCR data represent the universe of assisted returns, but no similar data exists to measure spontaneous returns during the program period. We reconstruct the nationwide (but not district-specific) flow of spontaneous returns (Figure 1 in the main text) using IOM reports. To test for any impact of spontaneous returns in a regression setting, we use supplemental data from the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), which provides a retrospective estimate of spontaneous returns at the district-level for the period from 2012–2015. This source provides the estimated number of spontaneous (i.e. undocumented) returnees from Pakistan and Iran to a district over the period from 2012–2015. Public-facing IOM data do not allow us to distinguish spontaneous returnees from Pakistan versus those from Iran. We calculate the district share of total spontaneous returnees as $\frac{\text{District Undocumented Returnees}}{\text{Total Undocumented Returnees}}$, standardize this share, and interact the measure with an indicator for the grant period. This yields a reduced-form specification using pre-treatment spontaneous shares as a proxy for districts' propensity to receive spontaneous returnees. We believe this approach is the best possible measurement strategy given data constraints, but we hesitate to draw strong inferences because the data on spontaneous returnees pools returns from Pakistan and Iran, covers a different base period (2012–2015 rather than 2013), and is based on retrospective estimates rather than direct observations during the program period.

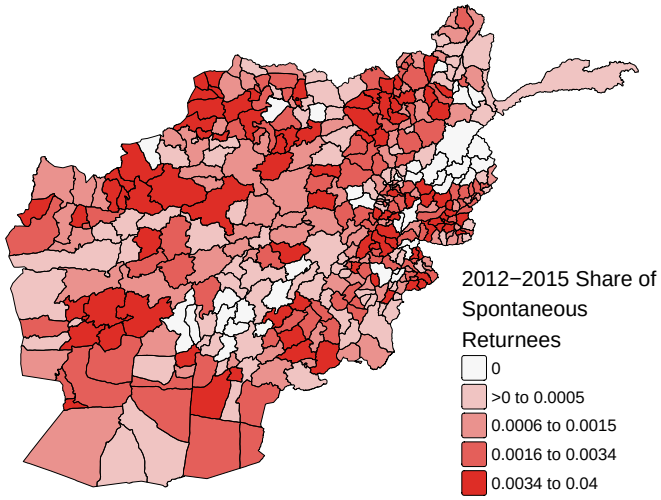
Geographic Overlap Between Documented and Undocumented Returns A natural question is whether assisted and spontaneous returnees historically go to similar districts. Figure S14 provides evidence on this question using pre-treatment settlement patterns. Panel (a) shows the correlation between our main measure of 2013 (assisted) return shares and 2012–2015 spontaneous return shares. The correlation coefficient is $\rho = 0.279$, indicating moderate positive geographic overlap. This correlation is essential for our identification

Figure S14: Historical Settlement Patterns: Assisted vs. Spontaneous Returns

(a) Correlation Between Assisted and Spontaneous Returnee Shares



(b) Mapping Spontaneous Returnee Shares



Note: Panel (a) depicts the correlation between district-level shares of spontaneous refugee returnees from Pakistan and Iran in 2012–2015 and district-level shares of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan in 2013. Panel (b) depicts each district's share of the total number of spontaneous Afghan returnees from Pakistan and Iran in 2012–2015. Darker shades indicate a greater share. Legend bins reflect a zero category and quartiles of the nonzero distribution.

strategy—it provides the variation needed to test whether spontaneous returns confound our estimated effects of assisted returns. Panel (b) maps the distribution of spontaneous return

shares over Afghanistan's districts. Approximately 74% of districts have historically received as many or more spontaneous than assisted returnees (median ratio = 0.16), consistent with the fact that spontaneous returns have historically exceeded assisted returns in Afghanistan. The geographic overlap combined with this variation in relative exposure allows us to test whether the effects of encashed returns affect violence systematically differently in districts with high versus low historical presence of spontaneous returnees.

Table S23: Spontaneous Returnees' Community Relations

	Returnee–Stayee Relations Index (Z-Standardized)			
	ICW		**PCF**	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Encashment Beneficiary	-0.126	-0.127	-0.178	-0.177
	(0.057)	(0.052)	(0.074)	(0.067)
Spontaneous Pakistan Returnee During Encashment Program	0.062	0.083	0.009	0.040
	(0.050)	(0.050)	(0.045)	(0.043)
Observations	7283	7283	7283	7283
Clusters	65	65	65	65
Control Group Mean	0.035	0.035	0.033	0.033
Control Group SD	0.977	0.977	0.967	0.967
Difference: Encashment Beneficiary - Spontaneous	-0.188	-0.210	-0.186	-0.217
	(0.062)	(0.065)	(0.063)	(0.066)
Parameters	✓	✓	✓	✓
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave FE		✓		✓
Urbanicity		✓		✓
Gender		✓		✓
Age		✓		✓
Ethnicity		✓		✓
Education		✓		✓
Income		✓		✓
Dwelling		✓		✓
Marital Status		✓		✓
Tazkira		✓		✓
Country of Asylum		✓		✓
Registration Status x Month of Return		✓		✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. Encashment beneficiary is an indicator for documented refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan between July–December 2016. Country of asylum denotes each respondent's host country while displaced. Urbanicity is an indicator for urban (vs. rural) respondents. Gender is an indicator for male (vs. female) respondents. Tazkira is an indicator for respondents with a national identity card. Age, education, and dwelling have five categories. Income has 10 categories. Marital status has four categories. Interview order captures the order of interviews within sampling points. Note that we do not include the controls for registration status by month of return in these specifications, since they absorb most of the variation in the covariates of interest. Estimates are scaled using sampling weights. ICW denotes an index constructed by inverse covariance-weighting. PCF denotes an index constructed by principal component factor analysis.

Results In Table 4 in the main text, we verify that our core estimates are robust when controlling for the interaction of historical spontaneous returnee shares (2012–2015) and an

indicator for the encashment period. While exposure to encashed returns (2013 shares) is associated with distinguishable reductions in insurgent violence and increases in communal violence during the cash grant program, there are null or weakly opposite effects in districts exposed to spontaneous returns. We conduct an analogous test using our survey data. In particular, we define an indicator for returnees from Pakistan who repatriated during the encashment program but were not registered with UNHCR at the time of their return, and hence were ineligible for cash assistance. Results in Table S23 suggest that the observed negative effect of returnees on communal relations is specific to encashed (i.e., assisted) returnees who repatriated under the program we study. Coefficients on the term for spontaneous returnees from Pakistan during the program are smaller in magnitude and statistically indistinguishable from zero. Moreover, in all specifications, the coefficients on the encashed versus undocumented indicators are significantly different at the 5% level.

S2.20 Alternative Source of Cross-Sectional Variation

Endogeneity in the demand-pull component of return migration is the main threat to inference in our empirical strategy (Boustan, 2010). That is, initial district characteristics may be correlated with 2013 returnee settlement patterns. If districts with higher shares of earlier returnees are systematically safer, wealthier, or otherwise more conducive to returnee integration, our estimates will be biased. We study correlations between baseline shares and initial district characteristics in Table B-1 in the main text. We also present evidence that districts with greater exposure to returnees from Pakistan were not on differential trajectories of violence prior to the encashment program (Figure 4 in the main text). In addition, we include an array of pre-shock controls to account for relevant district characteristics. Still, it remains possible that unobserved factors affect historical returnee settlement choices and violence.

As an alternative, we define cross-sectional exposure to refugee return using the geographic (straight-line) proximity between each Afghan district centroid and a UNHCR Encashment Centre (EC). In 2016, all assisted returnees from Pakistan passed through one of three ECs in Kabul, Jalalabad, or Kandahar (Figure A-4 in the main text), where they were interviewed and provided cash assistance. To reduce travel costs, most returnees resided closer to the facilities where they received their repatriation cash (Haroon et al., 2019). Distance is the chief influence on migrants' destination choice ceteris paribus. Unlike road distance, straight-line distance is unrelated to contemporary conditions in sending or receiv-

ing communities (Boustan, Fishback and Kantor, 2010).

In Table S24 we re-estimate our core specifications from Table 1 in the main text, replacing our cross-sectional measure of 2013 returnee shares with a cross-sectional measure of EC proximity. A natural concern is that UNHCR strategically places ECs in central locales. To address this, we control for travel time to the provincial center in columns 2, 4, 6, and 8. Estimates are less precise for the extensive margin of insurgent violence, but still generally corroborate our main results.

Table S24: Cross-Sectional Variation from Encashment Centre Proximity

	Insurgent-Initiated SIGACTs		**Communal Violence**	
	Extensive Margin	**Per 100k Pop.**	**Extensive Margin**	**Per 100k Pop.**
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Proximity to EC x Grant Increase	-0.045	-1.731	0.050	0.051
	(0.029)	(0.596)	(0.017)	(0.016)
Observations	4378	4378	4378	4378
Clusters	398	398	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.717	4.955	0.097	0.047
Pre-Treatment SD	0.451	11.851	0.297	0.302
Parameters				
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lagged DV	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. Proximity to EC is each district's standardized, straight-line proximity to a UNHCR Encashment Centre for Afghan returnees from Pakistan. Grant increase is an indicator for July–December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

S2.21 Robustness to Spatial Spillovers

A potential concern with our empirical strategy is that spillover effects across district boundaries could bias our estimates. Specifically, two types of spatial spillovers merit consider-

ation. First, *violence spillovers* from neighboring districts could confound our results if nearby violence affects local outcomes independently of local returnee shares. Second, *secondary migration spillovers* could occur if grant-recipient returnees systematically move to neighboring districts after initial settlement, creating measurement error in our treatment assignment. We address both concerns empirically using a combination of spatial econometric techniques controlling for neighboring districts' violence, and direct survey evidence on migration intentions.

Violence Spillovers We first assess whether violence in neighboring districts confounds our main results using spatial lag specifications. Following standard practice in spatial econometrics, we construct a contiguity-based spatial weights matrix where districts sharing borders are considered neighbors. Using the Afghanistan district shapefile, we identify 2,196 neighbor relationships among the 398 districts (average of 5.5 neighbors per district, ranging from 1 to 12). We row-normalize the weights matrix and calculate spatial lags as weighted averages of neighboring districts' violence outcomes: $W \times Y_t$, where W is the spatial weights matrix and Y_t is the vector of violence outcomes at time t.

We re-estimate our main specifications for insurgent and communal violence including these spatial lags as additional controls. If violence spillovers from neighboring districts were driving our results, we would expect the spatial lag coefficients to be significant and the main treatment effects to attenuate substantially. Table S25 presents results for our main insurgent violence analyses. Table S26 presents results for analyses using our observational measure of communal violence.

The main treatment effects remain highly stable after controlling for spatial lags. For the extensive margin of insurgent violence, the baseline reduced-form estimate of -0.006 is essentially unchanged when including the spatial lag (columns 1–2). With full controls, this estimate shifts marginally from -0.013 to -0.012 when adding the spatial lag (columns 3–4). The insurgent violence per capita specifications show similar stability: the baseline estimate of -0.123 shifts to -0.108 with the spatial lag (columns 5–6), and the saturated estimate remains virtually unchanged at -0.137 versus -0.136 (columns 7–8). The spatial lag coefficients themselves are generally small and inconsistent in sign across specifications, suggesting neighboring districts' violence does not systematically confound our estimates.

Similar conclusions emerge in the communal violence specifications. For the extensive margin of communal violence, the baseline reduced-form estimate shifts marginally from 0.009 to 0.008 when including the spatial lag (columns 1–2). With full controls, the estimate is unchanged at 0.013 when adding the spatial lag (columns 3–4). The communal violence per capita specifications show similar stability: the baseline estimate of 0.003 shifts to 0.002 with the spatial lag (columns 5–6), and the saturated estimate shifts from 0.007 to 0.008 when the spatial lag is included (columns 7–8). The spatial lag coefficients themselves are small and inconsistent in sign across specifications.

Together, these spatial lag specifications provide strong evidence that violence spillovers from neighboring districts do not bias our main estimates. The stability of treatment effects after controlling for spatial lags, combined with the weak and inconsistent spatial lag coefficients, indicates that our district-level analysis correctly attributes violence changes to local returnee exposure rather than to spillovers from nearby areas.

Secondary Migration We next assess whether encashment beneficiaries were more likely to engage in secondary migration. This is important because returnees to fragile origin countries are disproportionately likely to suffer repeat displacement (van Houte, 2017). To examine potential secondary migration, we use data from the Survey of Afghan Returnees. The survey asked: "Over the next year, do you plan to settle here in your current district or city, or do you want to move somewhere else?" This question offers direct evidence on returnees' intentions to remain in their initial settlement locations versus relocate elsewhere.

In Table S27 we use this survey data to test whether encashed returnees differ systematically from non-beneficiary returnees in their migration intentions. Across all specifications, we find no significant differences. In our preferred specification (column 2), the coefficient on encashment beneficiary status is 0.0004 (SE = 0.027, p = 0.99). Together, our findings strongly suggest secondary migration is not a significant concern. Overall, 92.8% of returnees plan to settle in their current district, with only 6% planning to move (Table S27). This finding closely aligns with evidence from a 2018 World Bank phone survey of Afghan returnees, which found that "mobility of returnees is low; 91 percent of returnee households indicate that they do not have plans to move and 90 percent live in the province that they first settled in upon returning to Afghanistan" (Haroon et al., 2019, p. 18).

Table S25: Insurgent Violence: Controlling for Spatial Lags

	Insurgent-Initiated SIGACTs							
	Extensive Margin (0/1)				Per 100k Pop.			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	-0.006	-0.006	-0.013	-0.012	-0.123	-0.108	-0.137	-0.136
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.042)	(0.039)	(0.060)	(0.060)
Spatial Lag of Outcome		0.057		-0.077		0.126		0.006
		(0.034)		(0.036)		(0.060)		(0.053)
Observations	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378
Clusters	398	398	398	398	398	398	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.717	0.717	0.717	0.717	4.955	4.955	4.955	4.955
Pre-Treatment SD	0.451	0.451	0.451	0.451	11.851	11.851	11.851	11.851
Parameters								
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month			✓	✓			✓	✓
Demographic Controls x Month			✓	✓			✓	✓
Development Controls x Month			✓	✓			✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month			✓	✓			✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month			✓	✓			✓	✓
Lagged DV			✓	✓			✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of documented, refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July through December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). Reconstruction controls are: per capita spending on governance, infrastructure, health, conflict stabilization, and refugees projects. Additional parameters are described above in section S2.22. All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

Among the small fraction of returnees planning to move (N = 430), we further analyze intended destinations to assess whether these moves would generate spillovers affecting our district-level analysis. We code responses into four categories: international migration (Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Europe), moves to major cities (Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Jalalabad, Kandahar), local moves within the same province, and other domestic moves (Table S27). Only 3.9% of all returnees plan local moves within their current province. The majority of planned moves are to major Afghan cities (39.4%) or other domestic locations (43.4%), with the remainder planning international migration (13.7%). Even if some "other domestic" moves involve neighboring districts outside the home province, the small overall fraction of

Table S26: Communal Violence: Controlling for Spatial Lags

	Communal Violence							
	Extensive Margin (0/1)				Per 100k Pop.			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	0.009	0.008	0.013	0.013	0.003	0.002	0.007	0.008
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Spatial Lag of Outcome		0.157		0.005		0.035		-0.045
		(0.094)		(0.085)		(0.041)		(0.050)
Observations	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378
Clusters	398	398	398	398	398	398	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047
Pre-Treatment SD	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.302	0.302	0.302	0.302
Parameters								
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month			✓	✓			✓	✓
Demographic Controls x Month			✓	✓			✓	✓
Development Controls x Month			✓	✓			✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month			✓	✓			✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month			✓	✓			✓	✓
Lagged DV			✓	✓			✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of documented, refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July through December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). Reconstruction controls are: per capita spending on governance, infrastructure, health, conflict stabilization, and refugees projects. Additional parameters are described above in section S2.22. All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

returnees planning any move (6%), combined with the low rate of local moves, suggests minimal spillover risk. Encashment beneficiary status does not significantly predict destination choice in any category (all p >0.29), indicating that even among the small group planning to move, grant recipients are not systematically choosing different destination types.

Table S27: Migration Intentions of Encashment Beneficiaries

	Intend to Move (0/1)		**If Planning to Move: Where? (0/1)**			
	(1)	(2)	(3) Internationally	(4) Major City	(5) Locally	(6) Other Area in Country
Encashment Beneficiary	0.009	0.000	0.092	0.097	0.031	-0.220
	(0.017)	(0.027)	(0.146)	(0.189)	(0.067)	(0.207)
Observations	7198	7198	430	430	430	430
Clusters	65	65	55	55	55	55
Control Group Mean	0.060	0.060	0.139	0.414	0.037	0.410
Control Group SD	0.237	0.237	0.347	0.493	0.189	0.492
PARAMETERS						
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Urbanicity		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Age		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethnicity		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Income		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dwelling		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marital Status		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tazkira		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country of Asylum		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Registration Status x Month of Return		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interview Order		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. Encashment beneficiary is an indicator for documented refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan between July–December 2016. Country of asylum and registration status by month of return fixed effects absorb constituent terms of the interaction that comprises our indicator for likely program recipients. Urbanicity is an indicator for urban (vs. rural) respondents. Gender is an indicator for male (vs. female) respondents. Tazkira is an indicator for respondents with a national identity card. Age, education, and dwelling have five categories. Income has 10 categories. Marital status has four categories. Interview order captures the order of interviews within sampling points. Estimates are scaled using sampling weights.

S2.22 Robustness to Incorporation of Additional Parameters

Earlier returnees may have a persistent effect on conflict dynamics in areas where they settle. Similarly, belligerents may anticipate future repatriation by observing historical returnee settlement patterns, and strategically allocate fighting resources in response. To more directly address these possibilities, Tables S28 – S29 confirm our core results are robust to controlling for four measures of historical conflict: insurgent-initiated SIGACTs, counterinsurgent-initiated SIGACTs (e.g., air support), criminal-initiated SIGACTs (e.g., robbery), and tribal feud SIGACTs (a proxy for historical communal conflict). Using the record of SIGACTs for 2013 (Condra et al., 2018; Fetzer et al., 2021), we sum these events by district, normalize by population, and interact these measures with year-specific month fixed effects. To further mitigate concerns about trends in violence differing across areas contested by insurgents, we incorporate month-specific effects of territorial control as assessed in 2013.

Further, van Houte (2017) shows that refugee returnees in Afghanistan are at risk of repeat displacement, and especially internal displacement. Hence, districts more impacted by repatriation may also host larger populations of internally-displaced people (IDPs). Competition between returnees and IDPs over scarce jobs and housing has exacerbated strife (Haroon et al., 2019). Our core results are robust to controlling flexibly for each district's share of the pre-program IDP population. Additionally, violence may be more severe in areas where returnees disrupt fragile demographic balances (Joireman, 2017). We calculate ethnic fractionalization and polarization in 2013, and incorporate these controls, again by interacting the measures with month fixed effects. Our core results are precise and consistent in magnitude across these additional specifications. Column 1 of Table S28 contains our baseline estimates from Table 1 in the main text for comparison. Column 1 of Table S29 contains our baseline estimates from Table 2 in the main text for comparison.

Finally, in Table S30 we assess additional confounders in relation to our survey-based results. In particular, we assess robustness to additional controls pertaining to the size of returnee households, land ownership, the ethno-demographic composition of returnees' neighborhoods, and respondents' self-reported reasons for return. To measure returnee household size we study responses to the question "how many people in this household have returned to Afghanistan?". To measure land ownership we study responses to the question "does your household currently own jeribs of land?" To measure the ethno-demographic composition of returnees' neighborhoods we construct an inverse covariance-weighted index composed of responses to two questions. First, we define an indicator for respondents who answered "to be around people of the same ethnicity," "to be around people who speak the same language," or "staying/living with family" when asked "why did you decide to move to the place you are living now?" Second, we define an indicator for respondents who answered that "immediate family," "extended family," "returnees from [their] ethnic group," or "returnees from other ethnic groups" when asked whether "the following types of people live in [their] neighborhood." We combine these items using an index that captures neighborhood social capital provided by networks of kin and other returnees. To measure reason for return we study responses to the question "why did you return?" The core finding—that returnees report worse relations with their non-migrant neighbors—is confirmed in each case. Columns 1 and 6 of Table S30 contain our baseline estimates from Table 3 in the main text for comparison.

Table S28: Insurgent Violence Results Robust to Additional Parameters

	Insurgent-Initiated SIGACTs								
	Extensive Margin (0/1)								
	(1) Baseline	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	-0.013***	-0.014***	-0.013***	-0.013***	-0.013***	-0.012***	-0.012***	-0.012***	-0.012***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Observations	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4367	4378	4378
Clusters	398	398	398	398	398	398	397	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.717	0.717	0.717	0.717	0.717	0.717	0.717	0.717	0.717
Pre-Treatment SD	0.451	0.451	0.451	0.451	0.451	0.451	0.451	0.451	0.451
	Per 100k Pop.								
	(1) Baseline	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	-0.137**	-0.213***	-0.144**	-0.153***	-0.133**	-0.127**	-0.129**	-0.144**	-0.143**
	(0.060)	(0.058)	(0.058)	(0.057)	(0.061)	(0.063)	(0.062)	(0.064)	(0.065)
Observations	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4367	4378	4378
Clusters	398	398	398	398	398	398	397	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	4.955	4.955	4.955	4.955	4.955	4.955	4.955	4.955	4.955
Pre-Treatment SD	11.851	11.851	11.851	11.851	11.851	11.851	11.851	11.851	11.851
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Insurgent SIGACTs x Month		✓							
Counterinsurgent SIGACTs x Month			✓						
Criminal SIGACTs x Month				✓					
Tribal Feud SIGACTs x Month					✓				
Territorial Control x Month						✓			
IDPs x Month							✓		
Ethnic Fractionalization x Month								✓	
Ethnic Polarization x Month									✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of documented, refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July through December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). Reconstruction controls are: per capita spending on governance, infrastructure, health, conflict stabilization, and refugees projects. Additional parameters are described above in section S2.22. All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

Table S29: Communal Violence Results Robust to Additional Parameters

	Communal Violence								
	Extensive Margin (0/1)								
	(1) Baseline	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	0.013***	0.012***	0.013***	0.012***	0.013***	0.013***	0.013***	0.012***	0.012***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Observations	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4367	4378	4378
Clusters	398	398	398	398	398	398	397	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097	0.097
Pre-Treatment SD	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.297	0.297
	Communal Violence								
	Per 100k Pop.								
	(1) Baseline	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	0.007***	0.007***	0.007***	0.007***	0.007***	0.007***	0.007***	0.006***	0.006***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Observations	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4378	4367	4378	4378
Clusters	398	398	398	398	398	398	397	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047
Pre-Treatment SD	0.302	0.302	0.302	0.302	0.302	0.302	0.302	0.302	0.302
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Insurgent SIGACTs x Month		✓							
Counterinsurgent SIGACTs x Month			✓						
Criminal SIGACTs x Month				✓					
Tribal Feud SIGACTs x Month					✓				
Territorial Control x Month						✓			
IDPs x Month							✓		
Ethnic Fractionalization x Month								✓	
Ethnic Polarization x Month									✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of documented, refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July through December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). Reconstruction controls are: per capita spending on governance, infrastructure, health, conflict stabilization, and refugees projects. Additional parameters are described above in section S2.22. All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

Table S30: Survey-Based Results Robust to Additional Parameters

	Returnee–Stayee Relations Index (Z-Standardized)									
	ICW					PCF				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
Encashment Beneficiary	-0.238	-0.236	-0.238	-0.229	-0.250	-0.207	-0.205	-0.207	-0.201	-0.220
	(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.130)	(0.131)	(0.131)	(0.112)	(0.112)	(0.112)	(0.113)	(0.114)
Observations	7283	7283	7283	7197	7283	7283	7283	7283	7197	7283
Clusters	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65	65
Control Group Mean	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033
Control Group SD	0.977	0.977	0.977	0.977	0.977	0.967	0.967	0.967	0.967	0.967
PARAMETERS										
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Urbanicity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Age	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ethnicity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Income	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dwelling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marital Status	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tazkira	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Country of Asylum	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Registration Status x Month of Return	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interview Order	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
# of Returnees in Household		✓					✓			
Landowner			✓					✓		
Social Capital				✓					✓	
Reason for Return					✓					✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. Encashment beneficiary is an indicator for documented refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan between July–December 2016. Country of asylum and registration status by month of return fixed effects absorb constituent terms of the interaction that comprises our indicator for likely program recipients. Urbanicity is an indicator for urban (vs. rural) respondents. Gender is an indicator for male (vs. female) respondents. Tazkira is an indicator for respondents with a national identity card. Age, education, and dwelling have five categories. Income has 10 categories. Marital status has four categories. Interview order captures the order of interviews within sampling points. Estimates are scaled using sampling weights. ICW indicates an index constructed using inverse covariance-weighting. PCF indicates an index constructed using principal component factor analysis.

S2.23 Heterogeneity in the Effect of Encashed Returns

Our baseline exposure measure uses each district's share of 2013 returnees (relative to national flows) interacted with an indicator for the encashment period. We believe that this measure accurately captures treatment variation in the context of the shock we study. In particular, focusing on absolute exposure to encashed returns is sensible in our setting because each returnee brought a fixed cash grant ($400), so the overall magnitude of the economic injection and potential local multiplier effects depend on the total volume of arrivals, rather than how large the encashed returnee population is relative to the stayee population in returnee-receiving communities. Put differently, in short-run general equilibrium, many lo-

cal effects of returnee inflows (e.g., insurgent recruitment dynamics or demand for housing, food, jobs, or public services) depend primarily on the aggregate shock, not its proportion relative to the local population (Taylor et al., 2016). Relative measures, such as the inflow of returnees normalized by the size of the pre-treatment population of returnee-receiving districts, obscure the fact that the aggregate cash transfer and corresponding economic stimulus rise linearly with absolute inflows. When the mechanism of interest, cash, is additive and tied one-for-one with assisted returnee inflows, absolute exposure to encashed returnees is the quantity that we believe best determines the scale of both economic and social impacts. This approach follows canonical work on the economic impacts of refugee aid and refugee camps (Maystadt and Verwimp, 2014; Taylor et al., 2016; Zhou and Shaver, 2021), and the economic effects of return migration (Bahar et al., 2024). Other prominent work on migration using Bartik-style instruments also examines treatments defined by absolute exposure to migrant inflows (e.g., Boustan, 2010; Fouka, Mazumder and Tabellini, 2022).

Still, it is reasonable to wonder whether our results are heterogeneous by the relative size of encashed returnee inflows to the total population of returnee-receiving communities, or whether estimated effects vary in more or less densely-populated areas and areas where differing shares of returnees repatriated to their origins. We take one main approach to examine effect heterogeneity in population density, the relative size of encashed returns, and repatriation-to-origin rates. In Table S31 we directly test for heterogeneous effects. We start from our basic reduced-form specifications in Table 1 in the main text and Table 2 in the main text. In columns 1-2 and 7-8 we study whether effects vary in districts where the relative intensity of assisted returns during the encashment program was higher. We take the district-level sum of assisted returnees from Pakistan during the cash-for-return program, normalize this number by the pre-treatment population of the district, and then split the estimation sample at the median of the population-normalized encashed return measure. In columns 3-4 and 9-10 we study whether effects vary in districts with higher pre-treatment population density. We take pre-treatment population of the district, divide it by the size of the district in square kilometers, and then split the estimation sample at the median of the population density measure. In columns 5-6 and 11-12 we study whether effects vary in districts with higher return-to-origin rates. We sum the total number of 2013 assisted returnees from Pakistan to each district, as well as the sum of these returnees repatriating to their origin district, divide these measures to generate the district-level share of 2013 assisted returnees from Pakistan repatriating to their origin community, and then split the

estimation sample at the median of the returns-to-origin measure. Finally, we re-estimate our core reduced-form specifications in subsamples of districts defined by low and high relative exposure, low and high population density, and low and high returns-to-origin.

We find little distinguishable evidence that the negative effects of encashed return on insurgent violence and the positive effects of encashed return on communal violence are larger in magnitude in districts with more relative exposure to returns, in more population-dense districts, and in areas with lower return-to-origin rates. Together, these results give little evidence of effect heterogeneity, and build confidence that our baseline design correctly captures the relevant treatment intensity.

Table S31: Heterogeneity in the Effect of Encashed Returns

	Insurgent-Initiated SIGACTs						**Communal Violence**					
	(1) Extensive Margin	(2) Per 100k Pop.	(3) Extensive Margin	(4) Per 100k Pop.	(5) Extensive Margin	(6) Per 100k Pop.	(7) Extensive Margin	(8) Per 100k Pop.	(9) Extensive Margin	(10) Per 100k Pop.	(11) Extensive Margin	(12) Per 100k Pop.
Low Returns as a Share of Population	-0.013	0.958					-0.007	-0.003				
(n = 2955)	(0.016)	(0.573)					(0.006)	(0.008)				
High Returns as a Share of Population	-0.005	-0.114					0.028	0.016				
(n = 1357)	(0.006)	(0.122)					(0.006)	(0.007)				
Low Population Density			0.051	7.464					-0.025	-0.014		
(n = 2189)			(0.108)	(5.239)					(0.030)	(0.060)		
High Population Density			-0.010	-0.153					0.013	0.006		
(n = 2178)			(0.005)	(0.055)					(0.002)	(0.003)		
Low % Returning to Origin					-0.010	-0.315					0.012	0.008
(n = 2189)					(0.006)	(0.099)					(0.001)	(0.003)
High % Returning to Origin					-0.004	0.130					-0.002	0.001
(n = 2189)					(0.010)	(0.350)					(0.007)	(0.008)
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.717	4.955	0.717	4.955	0.717	4.955	0.097	0.047	0.097	0.047	0.097	0.047
Pre-Treatment SD	0.451	11.851	0.451	11.851	0.451	11.851	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.302
Difference: High - Low	0.008	-1.072	-0.061	-7.617	0.006	0.445	0.035	0.019	0.038	0.020	-0.014	-0.007
	(0.017)	(0.586)	(0.108)	(5.239)	(0.012)	(0.364)	(0.008)	(0.011)	(0.030)	(0.060)	(0.007)	(0.009)
PARAMETERS												
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Demographic Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lagged DV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. Estimates show the effect of 2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase in subsamples defined by the respective trait denoted in the row title. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July–December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

S2.24 Communal Violence, Institutions, and Historical Violence

A natural concern is that districts with stronger local institutions are less violent in the first place. To address this concern we re-estimate the local institutions (Table B-10 in the main text) specifications while controlling for levels of violence in a district in 2013 (i.e., total number of SIGACTs). In results omitted for space but available upon request we also verify robustness to controlling for historical levels of counterinsurgent, insurgent, and criminal SIGACTs specifically. The core results are robust in every case.

Table S32: Communal Violence, Local Institutions, and Historical Violence

	Communal Violence							
	Prefer Shura to State Court		Prefer Elders to Gov't Officials		Took Dispute to Shura		Taliban Control	
	(1) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(2) Per 100k Pop.	(3) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(4) Per 100k Pop.	(5) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(6) Per 100k Pop.	(7) Extensive Margin (0/1)	(8) Per 100k Pop.
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase	0.032	0.016	0.056	0.039	0.030	0.021	0.013	0.007
	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.018)	(0.023)	(0.009)	(0.012)	(0.002)	(0.002)
2013 Returnee Share x Grant Increase x Strong, Local Institutions	-0.102	-0.062	-0.162	-0.120	-0.185	-0.159	-0.054	-0.045
	(0.030)	(0.037)	(0.069)	(0.082)	(0.100)	(0.121)	(0.028)	(0.029)
Grant Increase x Strong, Local Institutions	-0.049	-0.121	0.008	0.000	0.024	-0.043	0.008	-0.008
	(0.046)	(0.110)	(0.049)	(0.077)	(0.047)	(0.068)	(0.019)	(0.023)
Observations	3817	3817	3817	3817	3795	3795	4378	4378
Clusters	347	347	347	347	345	345	398	398
Pre-Treatment Mean	0.097	0.047	0.097	0.047	0.097	0.047	0.097	0.047
Pre-Treatment SD	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.302	0.297	0.302
Data Source	ANQAR	ANQAR	ANQAR	ANQAR	ANQAR	ANQAR	ACSOR	ACSOR
PARAMETERS								
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Year-Specific Month FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
UNHCR Area x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pashtun Share x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Development Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agricultural Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reconstruction Controls x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lagged DV	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total SIGACTs x Month	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. 2013 returnee share is each district's standardized share of the sum of assisted refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan in 2013. Grant increase is an indicator for July–December 2016, when the UNHCR offered an increased repatriation grant. Strong, local institutions are: 2013 average reliance on shuras (columns 1-2) or elders (columns 3-4); usage of shuras (columns 5-6); or Taliban governance (columns 7-8). Demographic controls are: Pashtun-speaking share of the population. Development controls are: distance to the border; travel time to the provincial center; ruggedness; provincial unemployment; provincial GINI coefficient; and population-normalized nightlights. Agricultural controls are: the share of land under cultivation; the share of cultivated land that is irrigated; and hectares of opium cultivation and eradication (inverse hyperbolic sine-transformed). Reconstruction controls are: per capita spending on governance, infrastructure, health, conflict stabilization, and refugees projects. All controls are pre-shock measures interacted with year-specific month fixed effects. Estimates are scaled using population weights. The estimation sample includes district-months in 2016.

S2.25 Madrassa Education and Ideological Inculcation

Our research primarily focuses on political economy accounts of conflict given the economic nature of the program we study. However, there remain a range of non-instrumental motivations for conflict participation. We briefly consider whether our results are consistent with an ideological channel. Namely, we examine whether returnees under the cash program we study may have been exposed to insurgent ideology and messaging in Islamic schools (i.e., madrassas) in Pakistan. As described below, we find little evidence to suggest that our findings are explained by ideological inculcation of returnees in madrassas while displaced.

A large literature on religion and conflict in Afghanistan highlights risks of radicalization linked to Pakistani madrassas (Fair, 2007; Qane and Jan, 2019). Indeed, the Taliban movement initially grew from mosques and madrassas created in Pakistan in the 1980s in areas around Afghan refugee camps. These institutions are widely-alleged to have fostered support for jihad and acceptance of violence, including among Afghan refugees in Pakistan (Fair,

Malhotra and Shapiro, 2012). While the links between madrassa education and participation in militancy are debated (Fair, 2008), there is evidence that Taliban forces have recruited fighters from madrassas in Afghan refugee-hosting areas of Pakistan (Human Rights Watch, 2016; Qane and Jan, 2019). It is therefore substantively interesting to consider how refugee returnees' potential experiences with and exposure to Islamist ideology in Pakistan (through madrassas) might shape conflict in the communities to which they repatriate.

Table S33: Returnees Are Not More Exposed to Madrassa Education

	Madrassa Education While Displaced (0/1)			
	Full Sample		**Male-Only Sample**	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Encashment Beneficiary	0.004	0.006	0.000	-0.003
	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.009)
Observations	7281	7281	3886	3886
Clusters	65	65	62	62
Control Group Mean	0.006	0.006	0.007	0.007
Control Group SD	0.077	0.077	0.081	0.081
PARAMETERS				
District FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wave FE	✓	✓	✓	✓
Urbanicity		✓		✓
Gender		✓		✓
Age		✓		✓
Ethnicity		✓		✓
Education		✓		✓
Income		✓		✓
Dwelling		✓		✓
Marital Status		✓		✓
Tazkira		✓		✓
Country of Asylum		✓		✓
Registration Status x Month of Return		✓		✓
Interview Order		✓		✓

Note: Robust, district-clustered standard errors are in parentheses. Encashment beneficiary is an indicator for documented refugee returnees from Pakistan to Afghanistan between July–December 2016. Country of asylum and registration status by month of return fixed effects absorb constituent terms of the interaction that comprises our indicator for likely program recipients. Urbanicity is an indicator for urban (vs. rural) respondents. Gender is an indicator for male (vs. female) respondents. Tazkira is an indicator for respondents with a national identity card. Age, education, and dwelling have five categories. Income has 10 categories. Marital status has four categories. Interview order captures the order of interviews within sampling points. Estimates are scaled using sampling weights.

We marshal multiple pieces of evidence to assess whether encashed returnees were systematically socialized through insurgent-aligned madrassas in Pakistan. First, in Table S33 we offer direct evidence from the Survey of Afghan Returnees, which asked respondents whether they received " Islamic Madras[s]a or other religious education" while displaced abroad. In columns 1-2 we evaluate responses in the full sample, and in columns 3-4 we subset to male respondents. Across all specifications we find no evidence that encashed returnees were more

likely than other refugee returnees in Afghanistan to report receiving any madrassa education while displaced. Moreover, we document very low overall rates of refugee attendance in madrassas—only about 1% of surveyed returnees report accessing Islamic education while displaced. This estimate accords with Fair (2007)'s estimate that only 1-7% of students in Pakistan participate in madrassas. In our setting, free education sponsored by UNHCR in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan is an overwhelmingly more popular choice. This also explains why our balance tables (Tables S19 – S20) show that encashed returnees were better educated on average, but not more likely to have attended madrassas.

Second, in Table S21 we examine whether encashed returnees differentially selected into destination districts controlled by insurgent or government forces. Using information on district-level territorial control, we find no evidence of returnee selection around the program cutoff into destinations controlled by different belligerent parties. This is informative because reporting by Akram (2025) suggests that Afghans recruited into the Taliban or otherwise induced to sympathize with insurgent ideology through Pakistani madrassas overwhelmingly return to insurgent-controlled areas. If encashed returnees systematically adhered to insurgent belief systems—or alternatively favored government forces—we would expect selection into destinations controlled by these respective combatants.

Third, our findings on insurgent tactics and communal violence are broadly inconsistent with qualitative reports about the violent preferences of madrassa-educated individuals. Consider our evidence on communal violence first. We find that returnees under the encashment program report systematically worse relations with their non-migrant neighbors. This conclusion is at odds with behavioral economic evidence from Delavande and Zafar (2015), who show that madrassa students are consistently more trusting, other-regarding, cooperative, and risk-averse. Given these traits, we'd expect madrassa-educated returnees to be associated with less communal conflict.

Next, consider our findings on insurgent violence. We show that encashed returns caused a reduction in insurgent violence overall, and that this effect was heterogeneous across tactics. While labor-intensive direct and indirect fires declined and became less lethal, explosive violence increased and became more lethal. These patterns are hard to reconcile with accounts of madrassa-based recruitment and radicalization. For one, work by Riaz (2008) and Fair, Malhotra and Shapiro (2012) suggests many madrassa students favor militant violence in the

name of jihad. If encashed returnees were systematically radicalized in Pakistani madrassas, then, we would anticipate increasing participation in violence in returnee-receiving communities. Tactical heterogeneity in violence is also inconsistent with qualitative accounts of madrassa-based recruitment and radicalization. Research by Human Rights Watch (2016) and Qane and Jan (2019) suggests that Taliban recruiters often enlisted Pakistani madrassa graduates as insurgent fighters and employed them in combat roles during major offensives. In our setting, if encashed returnees were mainly madrassa-educated insurgent sympathizers, we would expect this pool of recruits to be particularly useful for perpetrating labor-intensive attacks like direct fires. In contrast, we find that labor-intensive insurgent attacks declined during the cash program.

Increasing explosive violence in returnee-receiving communities is similarly inconsistent with the madrassa channel. In particular, Taliban leadership had imposed an injunction against the use of pressure-plate and victim-detonated IEDs since 1998, denouncing these weapons as "un-Islamic" because of their high propensity for causing civilian casualties. While military exigencies led Taliban fighters to frequently ignore this prohibition, after the NATO combat transition in 2014 Taliban commanders took new steps to reduce explosive use in the interest of protecting civilians (Samim, 2022). At the time of the cash program in 2016, Hibatullah Akhundzada, the Taliban's paramount leader, was "strongly lobbying to stop using pressure-plate IEDs" because of their civilian toll. Our military records do not include information on trigger mechanisms that would allow us to assess specific shifts in use of pressure-plate and victim-detonated IEDs. Still, we would expect madrassa students to be most sensitive to insurgent leaders' religiously motivated injunctions against explosive violence in general. Hence, if encashed returnees were chiefly madrassa-educated ideologues, we would expect their repatriation to be associated with less, rather than more, explosive violence.

S3 Data Appendix

S3.1 Conflict

Our data on conflict come from official, government channels. These data are unclassified, but subject to access restrictions meaning they cannot be publicly shared. None of the data contain any potentially identifying information. The authors established access through a data

agreement with the organization that maintains the data, NATO's Communications and Information Agency. Interested researchers can contact Blair (chris.blair@princeton.edu) or Wright (austinlw@uchicago.edu) for more information about the authorization process.

S3.1.1 Insurgent Violence

Military combat records come from the International Distributed Unified Reporting Environment (INDURE), an unclassified but restricted-access platform maintained by the US Defense Department. Events described in INDURE are sourced from the US military's classified Combined Information Data Network Exchange. The INDURE files cover 2015–2017, and correspond with the Significant Activities (SIGACTs) database publicly available for earlier years in Afghanistan. These data were jointly collected by Afghanistan's military and police forces and multinational forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). These records include information on combat activity as described in the manuscript. Additional information about the SIGACTs data is provided in Berman, Shapiro and Felter (2011); Shaver and Wright (2017); Condra et al. (2018); Fetzer et al. (2021); Blair (2025). Although these data do not include any identifying information about individuals, the data have not been formally released for public use.

S3.2 Communal Violence

We take multiple strategies to measure social conflict in Afghanistan. Our data come from a survey of returnees and a government-sponsored conflict event tracker.

S3.2.1 Survey of Returnees

Our main analyses study returnees' communal relations using individual-level data from a survey of Afghan refugee returnees. These data come from the Asia Foundation's Survey of the Afghan Returnees, fielded in 2018–2019. This survey also offers data we use in a variety of supplemental tests (e.g., Tables A-2 – A-6 in the main text). More details about survey administration are discussed in Section S4.1. The data are available at this link: https://bit.ly/36lW3yh.

S3.2.2 Event Data

We complement our survey-based data with supplemental records of conflict events. Specifically, to measure social conflict we undertake an original coding process using data from

a US Government and NATO-sponsored conflict tracker, which collates information from the Afghan National Police Command Center (NPCC), risk-reporting agencies contracted by the US State Department and Western embassies in Kabul, and open-source media. The data were secured through a legal agreement between the authors and NATO's Communications and Information Agency. Following Sexton (2016), we use a supervised text analysis method based on a keyword-search algorithm available in Stata through the regular expressions command `regexm`. The tracker we use provides a categorical descriptor and an event narrative with 1-3 sentences describing the event. Using categorical descriptors, we filter out events pertaining to insurgent or counterinsurgent operations. To identify instances of social conflict, we code these filtered events using standard keywords in the event narratives, like LN ("local nationals"). An example code snippet is included below to illustrate:

```
keep if category=="Other"

gen communalviolence=(regexm(narrative, "conflict") & regexm(narrative, "tribes")
| regexm(narrative, "conflict") & regexm(narrative, "personal enmity") |
regexm(narrative, "conflict") & regexm(narrative, "nomad") | regexm(narrative,
"conflict") & regexm(narrative, "land issues") | regexm(narrative, "conflict")
& regexm(narrative, "grazing") | regexm(narrative, "conflict") & regexm(
narrative, "water") | regexm(narrative, "LN") & regexm(narrative, "dispute") |
regexm(narrative, "LN") & regexm(narrative, "clash") | regexm(narrative,
"conflict") & regexm(narrative, "irresponsible armed")
```

S3.3 Migration

Our data on refugee return come from UNHCR and IOM.

S3.3.1 Assisted Refugee Returns

We use two sources for data on assisted (i.e., documented) refugee returns. In Figures S7, we study the time-series of refugee stocks and returns for select countries. These records cover several decades, but entail limitations (see Fearon and Shaver, 2020). The data come from the `UNHCR PopStats` database available here: `https://bit.ly/3hNBCzx`. See Zakirova and Buzurukov (2021) for more discussion and applications of the data.

Our granular measures of refugee return used in the main analyses come from the UNHCR-Afghanistan office, and describe the complete record of documented returns to Afghanistan for the period from 2013–2014 and 2016–2017. More details about these records are provided in the manuscript. The data are available through the Humanitarian Data Exchange and the UNHCR Microdata Library. We do not observe monthly inflows of returnees to Afghanistan for 2015, but reconstruct these using information contained in UNHCR field reports and the UNHCR's Population Movement Bulletin.

S3.3.2 Spontaneous Refugee Returns

To reconstruct monthly inflows of spontaneous returnees reflected in Figure 1 in the main text, we draw on Flow Monitoring Reports filed by IOM officials of the Cross Border Return and Reintegration, Protection, Humanitarian Assistance, and Reintegration and Development (RADA) program. These data contain no information on the destination district of returnees and are collapsed into a time series of return.

S3.3.3 Internally Displaced People

In Tables S28 – S29 we exploit data on internally displaced people (IDPs). To track IDPs, we use data from the IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), which uses representative field surveys to provide retrospective estimates of displacement at the district level. We specifically draw on the product known as `Afghanistan - Baseline Assessment District Round 11`. These data are available at this link: `https://bit.ly/3xmwGIx`.

S3.4 Administrative Boundaries and Geodata

Data on administrative boundaries (district and province) were retrieved from Empirical Studies of Conflict (ESOC) research group and are available at this link: `https://bit.ly/39oJrre`. These administrative boundaries are used for synchronizing combat event data and other geodata.

S3.4.1 Population

We rely on data provided by WorldPop, a project housed at the University of Southampton, to measure population. We specifically use the product known as `Unconstrained individual countries 2000--2020 (100 m)`, which provides global population estimates at a resolution of 100 square meter grid cells. Following Stevens et al. (2015), WorldPop uses an un-

constrained, top-down, dasymetric modeling approach incorporating geospatial census and ancillary data in a flexible, random forest estimation. Using an annual time-series raster, we calculate population per district in 2013.

S3.4.2 Ethnicity

We use spatial data on the location of population settlements to measure the share of Pashto speakers (Pashtun) in a given district. The location of village settlements was compiled by the Afghanistan Information Management Service, Central Statistics Office, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and Yale University. Information on each settlement's share of Pashto speakers was collected during the USAID-funded Measuring Impact of Stabilization Initiatives (MISTI) project. Our measures of ethnic fractionalization and polarization are also drawn from a USAID data repository on MISTI. For details on MISTI, see Egel and Glick (2016).

S3.4.3 Terrain

We rely on data provided by the US Geological Survey's Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Center to calculate terrain ruggedness. Raster data from the Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) provide a global record of elevation. We use the product known as `SRTM 1 Arc-Second Global`, which captures void-filled data at a resolution of 1 arc-second. We calculate ruggedness as the standard deviation of elevation as in Nunn and Puga (2012).

S3.4.4 Nightlights

We calculate variation in nighttime lights using the VIIRS: Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite. These data are compiled by the Earth Observation Group at the Colorado School of Mines using the Suomi National Polar-orbiting Partnership satellite. Following Li et al. (2020), we use the product known as `VIIRS Cloud Mask (vcm)`, which captures the detected radiance of city lights around the spectrum of 505–890 nanometers at a spatial resolution of 15 arc-seconds across the latitudinal zone of 65°S-75°N. This measure excludes observations affected by stray light, and corrects effects caused by biogeophysical processes (e.g. snow) using the bidirectional reflectance distribution function. Using an annual time-series raster, we calculate nightlights per district in 2013.

S3.5 Development Aid

We incorporate information from the `Development Assistance Database (DAD)`, maintained by Afghanistan Information Management Services (AIMS) and AidData. The data cover all external assistance projects in Afghanistan's DAD, tracking more than $16 billion in aid commitments for 1,561 projects across 7,168 locations between 2001 and 2014. We sum aid by category and district in 2013.

S3.6 Economic Performance

We measure labor market and income-related covariates using data from the `Afghan Living Conditions Survey (ALCS)`. ALCS, previously known as the National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (NRVA), is a representative survey fielded by the Central Statistical Organization of Afghanistan, and used to assess development outcomes. We study provincial unemployment and the provincial GINI coefficient using the 2013–2014 ALCS wave, which covered 20,786 households and 157,262 people. These data are available at this link: `https://bit.ly/2V88yLp`, and described in greater detail by Child (2019).

S3.7 Travel Time and Land Quality

We measure travel time to the provincial center and agricultural land quality using data from the World Bank's Afghanistan Spatial Database, and specifically, the `District Dashboard`. This source compiles information from Afghan censuses, reports of the Central Statistical Organization of Afghanistan, and proprietary World Bank sources. These data are available at this link: `https://bit.ly/2Van3yi`.

S3.8 Opium Cultivation and Eradication

We measure cultivation and eradication of opium poppy using data from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and specifically from the `Opium Survey 2013`. The UNODC-Afghanistan office estimates poppy production using ground-validated remote sensing techniques to track changes in vegetation during the spring harvest. After randomly spatially sampling potential agricultural zones within provinces, UNODC officials acquire pre- and post-harvest imagery, and examine them for changes in vegetative signatures consistent with the volatile wetness of opium plants after lancing. From this sampling technique, officers estimate the spatial risk of opium production, calculate gridded estimates, and then

compile them as the annual amount of opium production in hectares for each district. To measure eradication, UNODC collects official reports of Governor-led opium poppy eradication, and deploys enumerators to verify eradication campaigns. These data are available at this link: https://bit.ly/3qRBinq, and described in greater detail by Sonin and Wright (2024).

S3.9 Local Institutions

S3.9.1 Shuras/Jirgas

We capture local reliance on informal institutions for dispute resolution using survey data from the Afghanistan Nationwide Quarterly Assessment Research (ANQAR) platform. ANQAR is a NATO-funded effort, which tracks civilian attitudes on a host of pertinent outcomes. We offer a more detailed description of the enumeration process in Table B-9 in the main text. Survey responses are collected on a quarterly basis by local contractors. Before administering each wave, elders are contacted to secure permission for enumerators to enter villages. When enumerators cannot access sampled villages, intercept interviews are used to collect information from residents traveling in neighboring areas. See Condra and Wright (2019) for a more comprehensive discussion of the data.

The individual-level ANQAR data are restricted-access only. The authors established access through a data agreement with the organization that maintains the data, NATO's Communications and Information Agency. Interested researchers can contact Blair (chris.blair@princeton.edu) or Wright (austinlw@uchicago.edu) for more information about the authorization process.

S4 Ethical Appendix

In social science research there is a longstanding formal requirement, as well as a moral imperative, to protect human subjects. This section documents the steps the authors took to identify and mitigate risks associated with the research.

No institutional review board (IRB) approval was required by the authors' institutions because this project does not meet the standards for "human subjects" research under existing federal guidelines (45 CFR 46.102(f)(1)(2)). This was confirmed to the authors in con-

versations with IRB administrators from two universities with which the authors are/were affiliated (Princeton University and the University of Pennsylvania). Under federal regulations, "human subjects" are defined as "living individual[s] about whom an investigator conducting research obtains (1) information or biospecimens through intervention or interaction with the individual and uses, studies, or analyzes the information or biospecimens; or (2) obtains, uses, studies, analyzes, or generates identifiable private information or identifiable biospecimen[s]." As we clarify below, this study is exempt on both points: the authors never contacted or interacted with the research subjects (e.g., survey respondents), and none of the data we use contain personally identifiable or private information.

No interactions between the authors and the research subjects ever occurred because the data used throughout this project were collected by external partners (e.g., NATO, UNHCR, the Asia Foundation) and shared with the authors post collection. The authors had no role in the design, implementation, or collection of any surveys or administrative microdata we use. Additionally, none of the records we use contain personally identifiable or private information. In particular, all survey respondents across the various surveys we employ consented to sharing their opinions and were informed that their responses could be shared with researchers. Apart from the surveys we use, administrative records on repatriation shared by UNHCR are also potentially sensitive, since these contain detailed information on household location, size and gender composition. Before sharing these records, UNHCR staff deidentified the records, aggregating locational information to the district-level (a large administrative unit) and removing additional information that could be used in combination with the shared information (e.g., on location and household size) to identify individual returnees or households. Finally, as a condition of access to the survey and repatriation microdata used in the study, the authors signed data access agreements in which we affirmed we would not attempt to identify or recontact any study subjects.

Although this research was deemed exempt from IRB protocols, the authors took a number of steps to ensure the ethical appropriateness of the research. Above all, we worked to ensure the research was guided by the principle of "do no harm" (Wood, 2006). To this end, we held multiple conversations with administrators and staff at the UNHCR, the Asia Foundation, NATO, and other organizations that played a role in collecting data used in this study. The goal of these conversations was to ensure that the organizations' data collection procedures were aligned with contemporary ethical standards, and that our own use of the

data complied with the terms of access agreements we signed with the relevant data providers.

Survey data we use in this study were initially collected by the Asia Foundation, which contracted with a local Afghan firm, the Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR), for implementation. We describe the ethical and data quality procedures the Asia Foundation and ACSOR followed in section S4.1 below. Two points are particularly relevant for our conclusion that the Survey of Afghan Returnees was fielded in an ethical manner. First, as discussed in more detail below, the survey was implemented by a local survey firm working with local enumerators versed in local dialects and knowledgeable of local customs. This raises our confidence that survey implementation was culturally-sensitive and attentive to local norms and safety standards. Second, the Survey of Afghan Returnees underwent comprehensive ethical review by the Asia Foundation's in-house Safeguarding team prior to fielding. This team leads ethical training sessions for humanitarian and development partners, and administers an ombudsmen's hotline where relevant stakeholders, including survey respondents, can report misconduct or other concerns. The Australian government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade endorses the Asia Foundation's Safeguarding team as an industry leader in ethical fieldwork (Jackson, Denney and Illingworth, 2021). To the best of our knowledge, no allegations of misconduct or other concerns were ever raised about the Survey of Afghan Returnees. After fielding, the Asia Foundation's Safeguarding team also worked to back-check fieldwork to ensure data integrity and compliance with the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) Code of Professional Ethics and Practices.

Apart from the survey data, microdata on repatriation shared by the UNHCR are also potentially sensitive. The data were de-identified by UNHCR staff prior to their public release, but given the sensitive nature of refugee return and the unique protection needs of displaced people, we also worked to continuously verify that our use of the data accorded with UNHCR standards on data protection. First, we spoke with UNHCR representatives from the Afghanistan country office about the collection methodology. These staff informed us that all repatriates represented in the data consented verbally to sharing information with UNHCR staff during the repatriation process, and were further informed that their anonymized data could be shared with researchers. Second, these UNHCR staff also informed us that the data collection effort was supervised by field staff trained on UNHCR's guiding principles for ethical data collection. Third, we confirmed that the repatriation mi-

crodata shared with us were compiled and disseminated in accordance with the UNHCR's General Policy on Personal Data Protection and Privacy, meaning, among other things, that the data were assessed prior to release by the UNHCR's Personal Data Protection Review Committee and Chief Data Protection and Privacy Officer.

The third set of microdata we use in this study are incident reports filed by Afghan government and NATO forces deployed in Afghanistan. We describe the data collection procedures NATO followed in section S4.2 below. As with the UNHCR microdata, these conflict records were de-identified by NATO staff prior to their release to us under a data sharing agreement negotiated in 2019. One condition of the agreement governing our access to these data is that the conflict records can only be released in an aggregated fashion (e.g., district-level maps documenting violence across districts over long temporal periods like months.). This condition is explicitly intended to mitigate risks of identification of victims of violence, and to reduce risks of Taliban retaliation against suspected government collaborators.

Finally, in addition to verifying that potentially sensitive data we use were collected in a manner consistent with contemporary ethical standards, we also carefully weighed the potential ethical benefits and costs of our study. We ultimately concluded that the potential ethical benefits of our research were significant, and outweighed any potential costs. In particular, we believe that insights from our study are important for tailoring humanitarian protection, facilitating safe and dignified repatriation, and improving repatriation policymaking—key priorities for development practitioners and international policymakers. To this end, we also take care in the manuscript to highlight the many ethical pitfalls of incentivized repatriation schemes.

S4.1 Survey of the Afghan Returnees

We supplement analyses of administrative records with analyses of 8,000+ individual-level survey responses from the representative Survey of the Afghan Returnees. We specifically study data from two waves fielded in 2018–2019. Survey data were gathered by the Afghan Center for Socio-Economic and Opinion Research (ACSOR), an Afghan subsidiary of the international research firm D3 Systems, which the Asia Foundation contracted to design and field various atmospherics surveys. ACSOR was contracted in part because the Asia Foundation viewed it as a high-fidelity implementing partner: it was led by survey methodologists, and its chairman held a social science Ph.D. The Asia Foundation's determination that AC-

SOR was the most reliable implementing partner in Afghanistan was informed by a similar assessment made by NATO, which also contracted with ACSOR to administer surveys.

The survey was conducted in the provinces of Kabul, Balkh, Kandahar, Nangarhar, and Herat. For sampling, a frame of settlements from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) was used. The settlement was the primary sampling unit in the Survey of the Afghan Returnees, and settlements were selected via a probability-proportional-to-size systematic sampling approach. Findings can be taken as representative of returnees and host communities in the provinces where the survey was fielded. However, because of the nature of the sample, the findings are not projectable onto the national returnee or host community populations. In total, a sample of 8,044 Afghan citizens were surveyed face-to-face across the five provinces included in the study. All households were selected by random walk, and respondents were selected through a combination of screener questions and Kish grid among eligible household members. Respondents were 18 years and older; returnees had to have returned to Afghanistan within the past five years; and host community respondents had to know at least one returnee personally. Sampled respondents were gender-matched to enumerators, in keeping with local gender norms. Where weather-induced transportation issues (e.g., flooding) or threats to enumerator safety meant ACSOR could not conduct random selection interviewing, accessible replacement settlements were sampled.

To better understand how the survey was administered, we held several conversations with current or former employees of the contracting agency (the Asia Foundation), the implementing partner (ACSOR/D3 Systems), and NATO, an organization that also commissioned ACSOR surveys. All individuals we spoke with had direct knowledge of the survey from time working on the project or similar surveys. Conversation partners included a chairman at ACSOR, a managing director at ACSOR, a project manager at ACSOR, and an operational analyst at NATO's Afghanistan Assessment Group. In all of these conversations, survey staffers highlighted several best-practices they used in survey administration:

- ACSOR teams hired and trained enumerators in every sampled province of Afghanistan. Training covered household and respondent selection, how to correctly record responses, culturally-sensitive interview methods, and secure storage of contact information. Once trained by provincial-level teams from ACSOR, enumerators were assigned to enumerate districts in their province of origin. Consequently, all enumerators spoke local languages in local dialects, and were knowledgeable of important local customs.

- After the sampling set was identified and before fielding each wave, ACSOR entered negotiations with elders in selected settlements to secure permission for enumerators to operate. This locally-sensitive approach enabled enumerators to safely conduct fieldwork in areas of weak state reach.

- Under no circumstances were ACSOR enumeration teams accompanied by counterinsurgent or government personnel, including members of NATO, the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), or other security agencies.

- Field supervisors made note of political, social, or other newsworthy events that occurred during fielding and may have affected the survey. Where interviews may have been impacted, supervisors back-checked responses for quality assurance.

- After fielding, data were screened for keypunching errors. ACSOR randomly selected 10% of survey responses for duplicate entry. Double-punched questionnaires were compared to original questionnaires, and discrepancies were rectified.

- During the data processing phase, D3 examined all responses using a proprietary program called Valkyrie, which was built to search for patterns or anomalies in the data that may indicate an interview was not properly conducted by an interviewer. Valkyrie specifically conducted: (1) equality tests to compare interviews for similarities, grouped by interviewer, within sampling point and/or province; (2) "Don't Know" tests of the percentage of "Don't Know" responses for each enumerator; and (3) duplicate tests comparing cases across all interviewers and respondents to check for similarity rates. Across waves, fewer than 1.6% of all responses were removed by Valkyrie.

On behalf of the Asia Foundation, ACSOR tracked rates of response, cooperation, and refusal for all waves. Using these data, we conduct diagnostic tests. Encouragingly, the rate of response is high (mean = 74.57% across waves), the rate of cooperation is high (mean = 89.12% across waves), and the rate of refusal is low (mean = 7.10% across waves). These rates of non-contact, cooperation, and refusal are comparable to rates from well-known surveys like the General Social Survey (GSS) fielded in the US, as well as to rates from other surveys fielded by ACSOR for NATO in Afghanistan (Condra and Wright, 2019; Blair, 2025).

S4.2 Significant Activities (SIGACTs)

Administrative records in the main analyses come from the International Distributed Unified Reporting Environment (INDURE), an unclassified but restricted-access platform main-

tained by the US Defense Department. Events described in INDURE are sourced from the US military's classified Combined Information Data Network Exchange. The INDURE files cover 2015–2020, and represent a successor dataset to the declassified Significant Activities (SIGACTs) record, which covers the period from 2008–2014. Together, the INDURE and SIGACTS data form the most comprehensive account of insurgent and counterinsurgent operations during the War in Afghanistan (Shaver and Wright, 2017), totaling more than 580,000 individual events. The data draw from a secure, classified platform populated using highly-detailed combat reports logged by NATO and Afghan troops and police. Equipped with satellite-linked GPS equipment in the field, these forces recorded the geolocation of every reported event at a highly-granular level, and the time-stamp of every reported event down to the minute. Because records were gathered by soldiers in the field, data collection was not subject to access constraints like insurgent territorial control, which plague survey- and media-based event trackers (Weidmann, 2016). While most extant work studies a subset of the SIGACTs data covering insurgent engagements against counterinsurgent forces (e.g. Fetzer et al., 2021; Blair, 2024), the rich INDURE and SIGACTs reports also cover a range of counterinsurgent-initiated operations, police actions, and other notable community events (e.g. Sonin and Wright, 2024; Blair, 2025).

All records were anonymized and scrubbed of potentially personally-identifiable information by NATO staff prior to release to us under the terms of a legal data-sharing agreement. In addition, to reduce the risk of harm to civilian collaborators of Afghan and NATO forces, NATO staff scrubbed the data of one especially sensitive category of SIGACTs—tips from civilians about insurgent operations. To further prevent risks of harm from our use of these detailed data, NATO also mandated that any release of information from the dataset would have to be aggregated to a sufficiently high level to prevent possible reidentification of victims. For instance, we must aggregate counts of violence to at least the district-month level in maps.

Although these records do not suffer reporting bias inherent in media-based conflict event data, they do have several relevant weaknesses (Berman, Shapiro and Felter, 2011, p. 790, 808-809). First, incidents are only detected when NATO or Afghan forces are present, and so undercount the total volume of events other than insurgent attacks against counterinsurgent forces. Second, counterinsurgent units may differ in their propensity for reporting any given event. The second concern raises the risk that changes in unit-level

counterinsurgent leadership lead to shifts in reporting policies. We are sanguine because (Berman, Shapiro and Felter, 2011, p. 790) investigate this concern in the Iraqi context and find no evidence that errors from unit-level differences in reporting thresholds are nonrandom with respect to the variables of interest. Moreover, documentary evidence from Afghanistan suggests NATO advisory teams pushed Afghan security forces to standardize information and reporting guidelines, reducing concern about heterogeneous reporting standards.

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