Role of FIA in Combating Human Smuggling at Pak-Afghan Border, Torkham

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Abstract

This study examines the role of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in addressing human smuggling at the Pak–Afghan border, specifically at the Torkham crossing, and investigates how their operational performance is influenced by levels of operational awareness, legal literacy, adequacy of training, and socio-political factors. A mixed-methods design was adopted, combining structured questionnaires and field-based observations, with data collected from 30 FIA officers stationed at Torkham. The findings indicate that while awareness of the general concept of human smuggling is high (86.7%), significant gaps exist in differentiating between smuggling and trafficking (53.3% unable) and in knowledge of the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants (SOM) Act, 2018 (only 43.3% aware). Training coverage was minimal, with more than half of respondents reporting no prior training in anti-smuggling measures. Operational realities revealed that most cases involved mixed victim groups, with local smuggling networks—particularly from the Shinwari Tribe—playing a dominant role, and Afghan nationals being the most frequent illegal entrants. Key drivers of irregular entry included Pakistan's stringent visa policies and political instability in Afghanistan, while combined factors such as employment, medical treatment, and onward migration presented enforcement challenges. The study concludes that improving legal literacy, expanding training programs, enhancing inter-agency coordination, and fostering bilateral cooperation are critical to addressing the operational and structural challenges of human smuggling at Torkham.

Introduction

Human smuggling is noted as among the most urgent transnational crimes that may cause considerable difficulties to the sovereignty of the state, protecting its borders, and human rights (UNODC, 2020). It is defined as a violation of the regulations against allowing illegal immigration of a person who is not his or her country and most often involves financial or material gain that cannot be confused with human trafficking due to the aspect of consent on the part of the smuggled individual (Gallagher & David, 2014). In the world, an intermingling of political instabilities, as well as economic depriations and deterring immigration regime, has emanated a human smuggling action (Achilli & Tinti, 2019). The United Nations Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by land, Sea and Air offers a broad, legal language that states should adhere to in order to prevent, monitor, and prosecute smuggling without infringing the rights of smuggled migrants (UNODC, 2018). Pakistan is both a country of origin, transit, and destination of smuggled migrants in South Asia (Shah, 2021). There have been porous border issues in the Pak-Afghan border largely due to tribal connections, the migration of refugees, as well as historical socio-economic relations across the Durand Line especially at Torkham (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) (Yousaf & Zaidi, 2018). Before the introduction of a visa system in 2015, the Afghans were permitted to enter Pakistan under the ancient rights of easement however, the new legal regime made cross-border movements without permission to be a criminal offense (FIA, 2022). This move has required greater involvement on the part of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) of Pakistan in controlling the immigration process and stemming out the smuggling operations (Hussain, 2020). The push and pull factors that operate in human smuggling at Torkham are. Push factors in Afghanistan are the political instability, lack of employment, insecurity, and poor governance, and pull factors in Pakistan are more favorable economic future, access to healthcare, and family ties (IOM, 2021). Smugglers working in the region are usually locals who come out of local tribes like the Shinwari and take advantage of cultural understanding and transnational family relationships combined with an understanding of local landscapes in order to make an illegal crossing (Khan, 2022). Modus

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operandi, in turn, includes forging travel documents, the use of forged Afghan Citizen Cards, as well as taking undocumented persons across the pedestrian route and cargo routes (Shinwari, 2019). FIA is a central authority in the fight against human smuggling as it has the Anti-Human Smuggling (AHS) Directorate and the Anti-Human Trafficking Circles (AHTCs). The units help to interdict, apprehend, and convict the smugglers, maintain the records of the immigration, and reach out to other and foreign stakeholders (FIA, 2021). There is implementation of Integrated Border Management Systems (IBMS) coupled with Identity Verification and Alert Systems (IVAS) that are used to fortify document verification and interception of forged /expired credentials (UNODC, 2019). Nevertheless, due to limited capacity, the absence of specialized training, and difficulties in collaboration on intelligence with the Afghan partners, there is a frequent inclination to sectionally reduce operational efficiency (Malik, 2020). Border security in the South Asian region has been extensively studied without pointing at the in-depth realities in the micro-sphere concerning the movement of the boundary of specific crossings like Torkham (Jamal, 2021). Although the global literature has indicated the smuggling of people on macroeconomic and geopolitical ground (Salt and Stein, 1997; Kyle and Dale, 2011), this study has omitted the manner in which the agencies such as the FIA in Australia adjust to local smuggling dynamics. Moreover, not many empirical inquiries look into the state of awareness, gaps, and capacity demands of frontline FIA officials operating at stressful border posts (Ahmad, 2022). This paper tries to bridge that gap by looking into how FIA works in countering human smuggling at Pak-Afghan border which in this case is at Torkham. Precisely, it looks into issues like the reasons why people in the region are going into human smuggling, the mode of operations used by the smugglers, the type of victims, and challenges that FIA officials are experiencing during their operations. A combination of field-based and an overview on the current state of legal and institutional frameworks will not only allow this research to propose actionable steps going forward, but to present recommendations to enhance FIA counter-smuggling capabilities in both a national legal and international best practice framework.

Literature Review

Conceptualizing Human Smuggling

The phenomenon of human smuggling can be described as an independent but related component of the overall phenomenon of irregular migration. It is a mutual accommodation of

the uncontrolled crossing of the border in the pursuit of a financial or material reward (David & Bouchard, 2019). In comparison to human trafficking, where the exploitation factor plays a crucial role, smuggling is mostly a service transaction of transportation nature (Zhang, 2016). The practice is characterized in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and its Supplementary Protocol on the Smuggling of Migrants as transnational organized crime that dilutes migration governance and national security (Obokata, 2020). Internationally, this operation is made possible by versatile networks which can be swift to comply with enforcement actions (Campana, 2018).

Global Trends and Routes of Human Smuggling

The aspect of human smuggling is not restricted to particular region but it is unrestricted to several geographic corridors. Studies indicate that Mediterranean, Central American, and Southeast Asia routes are prominent through which smugglers make use of porous borders and poor governance (Triandafyllidou & Maroukis, 2012). The lucativeness of smuggling has made it a multibillion dollar industry globally and routes keep on changing frequently to avoid detection (Achilli, 2015). European and North American case studies point out that the enforcement in one avenue has the tendency of pushing the smuggling activities to other avenues otherwise referred to as the balloon effect (Koser, 2011).

Human Smuggling in the South and Central Asian Context

South and Central Asia region has complicated factors of smuggling, which include long conflicts, economic imbalance, and cross-border connections in culture (Icduygu & Toktas, 2002). The strategic location of Pakistan along Afghanistan, Iran, China, and India, renders the nation as a hub in transnational smuggling organizations (Grare, 2018). Pak-Afghan border (especially Torkham in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) has long been known as an area of informal cross-border traffic justified by tribal traditions and kinship (Noor, 2017). The establishment of official visa systems and improved security have broken down these old trends, and there has since been more undocumented crossings (Saifullah, 2021).

Push and Pull Factors Influencing Smuggling

Push factors that make people engage in smuggling in Afghanistan are their environmental challenges, insecurity, unemployment and political instability in Afghanistan (Schmeidl, 2009). The pull factors in Pakistan include good job opportunities, access to healthcare and existing

Afghan diasporas (Monsutti, 2010). The combination of these drivers causes a consistent demand in smuggling services regardless of threats of being caught, deported, and financially abused (Soren, 2013).

Modus Operandi of Smuggling Networks

The work of smuggling groups is organized, and their actors can be divided into recruiters, transporters, forgers of documents, facilitators, who can be a part of the local communities (Campana & Varese, 2016). Smuggling through Torkham can utilize forged Afghan Citizen Cards, or forged Pakistani visas or even secretive pedestrian crossings by means of informal tracks (Yusof, 2020). The networks take advantage of the poor setup of border controls infrastructure and sometimes enjoy corruption of the border officials (Andreas, 2009).

Legal and Institutional Frameworks Against Smuggling

The legislative system of Pakistan has become developed due to the requirements of the international obligations, and the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act (2018) is the key to its change (Khan & Khan, 2019). Agencies are also empowered to prosecute smugglers by complementary laws i.e. Passport Act Act (1974) and Foreigners Act (1946). On international grounds, Pakistan is a signatory to UNTOC and this opens the country to cooperate with other states in counteracting smuggling (UNHCR, 2016). These law tools have to be operationalized into competent institutions and specialized enforcement units.

Role of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA)

FIA is the main border controlling and investigation organ of Pakistan that is aimed at impeding the process of irregular migration, which aims to charge the smugglers, and in order to protect the national borderlines (Ali, 2015). It has an Anti-Human Smuggling (AHS) Wing and Anti-Human Trafficking Circles (AHTCs) that deal with intelligence gathering activities, operational raids, and prosecutions (Rizvi, 2020). Researchers state that, in addition to being a coordinating agency, the FIA serves as a law enforcement agency that cooperates with domestic law enforcement and international agencies (Shahzad, 2018).

Challenges in Enforcement

Unmet operational demands in Torkham are dense flow of passengers, language barrier, the insufficient forensic document examination capacity, and the reduced training on the staff

(Usman, 2019). The anti-terrorist cross-border coordination with Afghan authorities has been uneven because of political instability and gaps in governance compounded by the situation on the Afghanistan side (Bensahel, 2003). Furthermore, enforcement activities may be complicated by the resistance of the local community to it (sometimes caused by tribal allegiances) (Khalid, 2021).

Technological Interventions in Border Management

The integrated border management system (IBMS) and the identity verification, and alert system (IVAS) are examples of technology that have empowered FIA to operate in a real-time audit of their data (Rauf, 2018). Global best practices indicate that biometric computer styles provide massive interference with smuggling rings, especially when employed with the intelligence-led policing (Wee, 2017). The role of sustainability however dictates that the continual funding, training and facilities are a compulsory factor of sustaining such systems (Walsh, 2020).

Gaps in Existing Literature

Although there is a lot of literature on irregular migration and smuggling in general, there still is limited research on Torkham specifically. The majority of the works are on a macro-level omitting regional dynamics and operational realities of the enforcement personnel (Reyes, 2019). Such a gap is reflective of the fact that micro-level empirical work should be conducted to evaluate the abilities, consciousness, and procedural difficulties of frontline FIA officials to combat smuggling at this vulnerable crossing.

Methodology

Research Design

The quantitative research design was used in this study to examine the role played by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in fighting the human smuggling at the Pak-Afghan border, Torkham in particular. Quantitative methods were selected because there is an opportunity to measure them objectively, statistically analyze the results, and generalize them according to numerical indicators (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study identified the possibility of capturing the measurable feature of the FIA officials awareness, operations practices and challenges hence, providing empirical information that would guide policy and practice. The structure of its design was such that it obtained the data only through the closest people to the

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border control and anti-smuggling efforts, the mentioned people thus making the results relevant and realistic.

Population and Sampling

The group of interest was FIA officials at the Torkham Border Crossing Point (BCP) and members of the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle (AHTC) in Peshawar. The officials have been chosen based on the fact that they work directly in detecting, stopping, and also prosecuting human smuggling activities at one of the most sensitive borders of the Pakistani territory. The non-probability convenience sampling method was applied to determine and select the respondents. Such methodology was deemed to be a suitable one due to the nature of the operational requirements, security implications, and timeframes associated with conducting research on active law enforcement officers (Etikan et al., 2016). There were 30 participants involved, a balance of ranks and roles in the FIA, thus a balance of views was achieved despite staying within a homogenous working environment.

Data Collection Instruments

The structured, close-ended questionnaire that was custom-made to the study was used in the collection of primary data. The questionnaire was comprised of 30 questions (arranged in thematic clusters) covering awareness of concept of human smuggling, knowledge of any applicable law, familiarity with patterns of modi operandi of the smugglers, the procedures of their operation, and perceived challenges. The format of the responses was made standard by setting the three alternatives: yes, no, and to some extent to ease the process of coding and the statistical aspect of the study. The instrument was created using English because this is the working language of FIA operations and it was piloted before its use with a small sample of the FIA officials. It was also a pre-testing phase which aided to make the tool valid and reliable to the targeted group because it assisted in refining the clarity, relevance, and order of questions.

Data Collection Procedure

Data sampling was done face to face as the questionnaires were directly given to the respondents and removed directly during their duty time in Torkham BCP and AHTC Peshawar. The aim of the study was identified to the respondents and the opinion was sought verbally prior to the administration of the questionnaire. By the nature of law enforcement work being sensitive and due to the security concerns that could arise by disclosure of operational information, it was

established that the respondents would not be compelled to participate and that there will be no consequences in case of withdrawal at any point. The FIA affiliation of the researcher helped to gain access to the target population and to establish trust of the participants to the data collector hence limiting non-response bias.

Data Analysis

The given data was entered into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to analyze the data. To provide a characterization of the responses and determine the trends in awareness, training and operational practice involved, as well as challenges, descriptive statistics were applied in terms of frequencies and percentages. The results provided were both tabular and graphical, i.e. could be interpreted visually as well as in the statistical results. This type of the analysis allowed to trace that patterns might be identified and compared in various variables, which allowed to have a comprehensive view on the operational realities the FIA officials are pursuing at Torkham.

Ethical Considerations

All phases of the research were conducted based on ethical principles. The number of participants was completely voluntary and the anonymity of respondents was guaranteed by not asking personal data like names, employee code, or duty plans. There were data security and used within the limits of this study. The study also complied with the internal confidentiality procedures at the FIA and none of the operationally sensitive information got to be exposed in a fashion that may have jeopardized the security of the borders. Also, the scholar made sure that the questions asked did not refer to classified intelligence and continued case information, and thus, both ethical research principles and institutional regulations were followed (Bryman, 2016).

Limitations of the Methodology

On the one hand, the methodology proved to be valuable as it resulted in providing valuable insights, yet on the other hand, there are several limitations that must be noted. Self-reported data might be problematic since there can arise the element of response bias due to the possibility of attaining socially acceptable solutions instead of honest responses. The findings lack validity in all FIA officials especially the ones at other border points with unique operation environments as the convenience sampling used restricts applicability of the findings to the full FIA officials. In addition, the cross-sectional design only illustrates perceptions and the practices at one particular

moment in time, failing to consider the seasonal or policy-induced variations in the nature of the smuggling.

Results

Awareness of Human Smuggling Concept

Table 1 stipulates that out of 30 respondents, 86.7 percent are acutely aware of the concept of human smuggling, 6.7 percent claimed no knowledge, and 6.7 percent indicated partial knowledge. Based on Figure 1, most of the respondents are very aware of the concept, with percentages being 86.7 (in dark green, right in the center), and only 6.7 did not indicate knowledge whereas, another 6.7 percent showed only a partial understanding. Such awareness screen demonstrates that the problem has unfolded before the FIA in the day to day challenge during its operations in Torkham. Nevertheless, the prevalence of partiality and non awareness in a small number of personnel implies internal sensitivity and induction has not had a blanket coverage of all personnel. Operational-wise, even small knowledge deficits can spell potential disaster as at the frontline the first line of defence against any cross-border smuggling bid is the frontline officers.

Table 1 Awareness of Human Smuggling Concept

| Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	86.7%
No	2	6.7%
Up to some extent	2	6.7%
Total	30	30%

Figure 1 Awareness of Human Smuggling
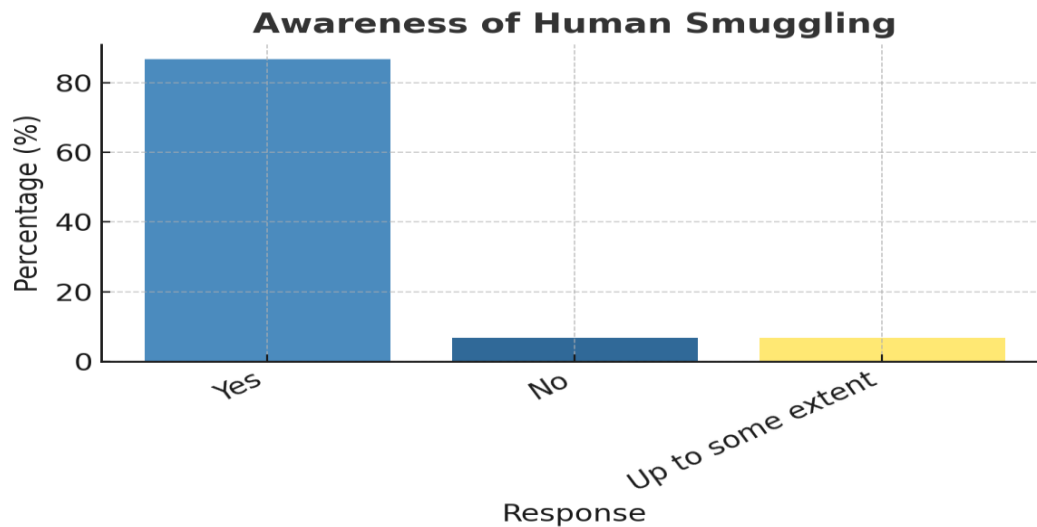
Training on Human Smuggling

Table 2 and Figure 2 states that only a quarter of the respondents were formally trained with regards to human smuggling (43.3 per cent), although a larger percentage (56.7 per cent) had not received any form of structured capacity-building program. The data also indicate that the trained officers were slightly older in terms of years worked (5.2 years on average) compared to those who are not trained (4.7 years). This was perhaps an indication that training was imparted to the more experienced officers. Such absence of mass formal training is a severe operational weakness. In the absence of current investigation methods, the familiarity with legal systems, and procedures involving handling of victims, the officers might be ineffective towards disruption of smuggling networks.

Table 2 Training on Human Smuggling

Training Status	Frequency	Percentage	Average Years of Service
Received Training	13	43.3%	5.2
No Training	17	56.7%	4.7
Total	30	30%	—

*Figure 2 Training on Human Smuggling*
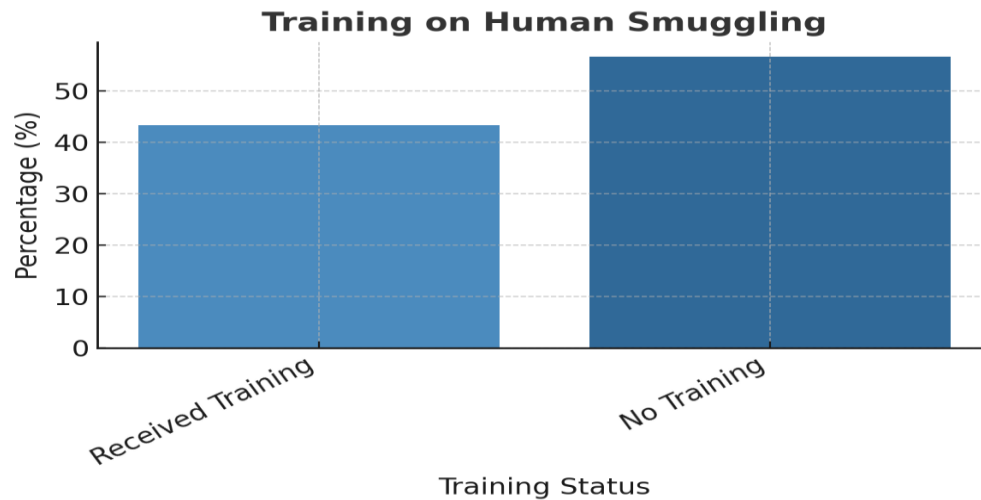
Ability to Differentiate Human Smuggling from Human Trafficking

Table 3 and Figure 3 indicate that not all the respondents were able to correctly distinguish human smuggling and human trafficking since only 46.7 percent of the respondents got it right, as compared to 53.3 percent who had no idea. In addition, legal knowledge was better in the individuals that were able to differentiate (43.3%) as compared to their counterparts who were not able to do so (21.0%). It is a major operational concern since confusing these two different crimes may result in wrong legal accusations, poor evidence procedures, and weaker prosecution process results. There should be there conceptual clearness so that the offenders can be charged according to appropriate sections of the law.

Table 3 Ability to Differentiate Smuggling from Trafficking

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Associated Legal Knowledge (%)
Can Differentiate	14	46.7%	43.3%
Cannot Differentiate	16	53.3%	21.0%
Total	30	30%	—

*Figure 3 Differentiation between Smuggling and Trafficking*
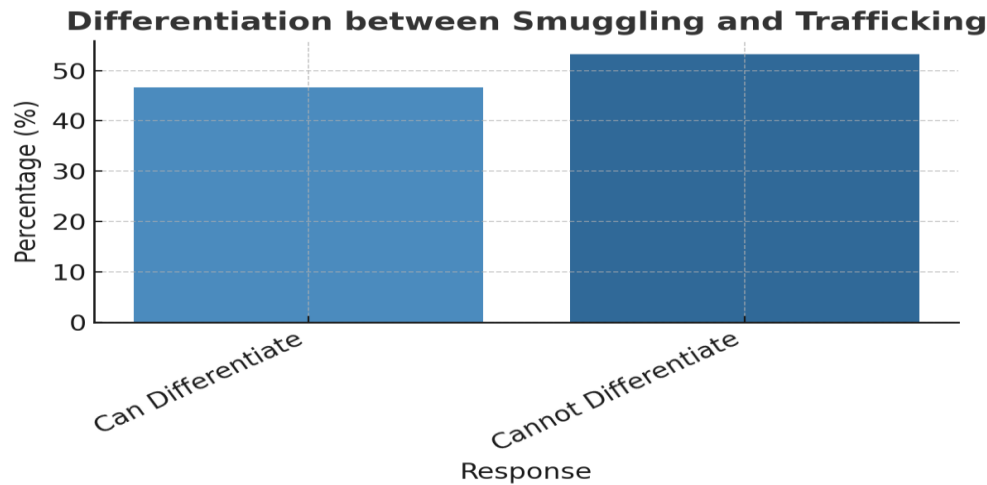
Awareness of the SOM Act, 2018 and Associated Punishments

The awareness level of the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants Act, 2018 was only 43.3 per cent among the respondents as seen in Table 4 and visualised in Figure 4 and the same proportion reported of knowing about punishment prescribed in the Act. It implies that over a half of FIA staff at Torkham remain unaware of the major source of legal regulation of their activities. Without the knowledge, the efforts of the operations can be compromised through the faultful process or inefficient Constructing of the case.

Table 4 Awareness of SOM Act, 2018 and Punishments

Aspect	Yes (Freq)	No (Freq)	% Yes	% No
Awareness of SOM Act, 2018	13	17	43.3%	56.7%
Awareness of Punishments in SOM Act	13	17	43.3%	56.7%

*Figure 4 Awareness of SOM Act and Punishments*
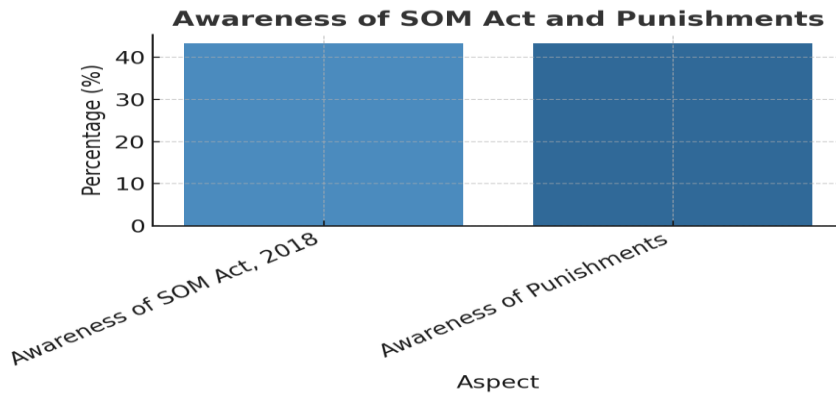
Victim Categories Encountered at Torkham

The table and figure 5 summarise the distribution of victim categories, revealing that mixed groups (men, women and minors) constituted 63.3 percent of cases, with the following listing in order of descending percentage of cases: minors (16.7 percent), women (13.3 percent) and labour-class individuals (6.7 percent). Such dissimilarity in the profile of victims captures the non-discriminatory character of the smuggling systems since they exploit populations weak to opportunity rather than their demographic conditions. The large proportion of underage and females as one of the cases implies that there must be age and gender-specific victim support procedures.

Table 5 Victim Categories at Torkham

| Victim Category	Frequency	Percentage
Labour Class	2	6.7%
Minors	5	16.7%
Women	4	13.3%
Mixed Groups	19	63.3%
Total	30	30%

Figure 5 Victim Categories at Torkham
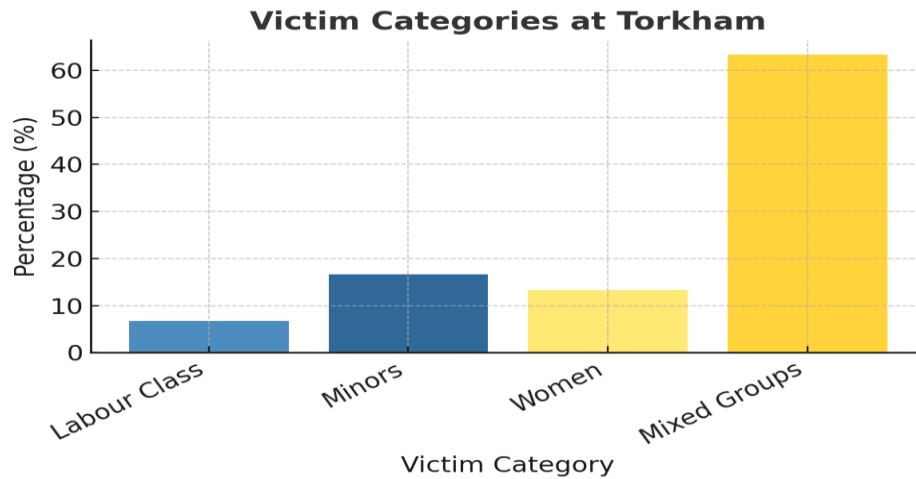
Nationality of Smugglers and Illegal Entrants

As tabulated in Table 6 and the figures in Figure 6 show, 93.3 percent of the smugglers were the Local Shinwari Tribe of Torkham compared to an equally large percentage (93.3 percent) of Afghan nationals as the illegal entrants. These facts highlight how smuggling operations are localized around the area with tribal and community networks coming in as key factors to encouraging cross-border activities. They also point to the persistence problem of handling the Afghanistan Pakistan migration patterns with the scenery of porous borders and shared ethnical affiliation.

Table 6 Nationality of Smugglers and Illegal Entrants

Group Type	Primary Group	Frequency	Percentage	Other Groups (%)
Nationality of Smugglers	Local Shinwari Tribe of Torkham	28	93.3%	6.7%
Nationality of Illegal Entrants	Afghan Nationals	28	93.3%	6.7%

*Figure 6 Nationality of Smugglers and Entrants*
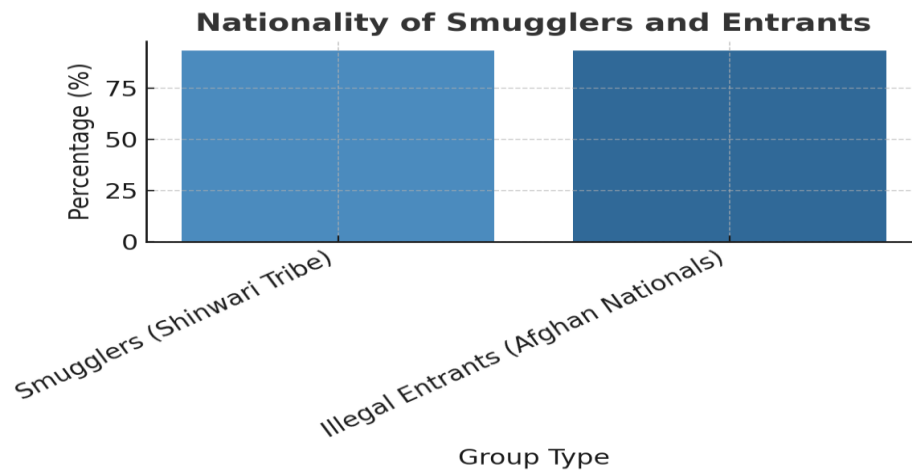
Causes of Illegal Entry into Pakistan

As illustrated in Table 7 and Figure 7, the major factors that encouraged illegal entry included the strict process of acquisition of visas to Pakistan (56.7%), Afghanistan passports not being issued (36.7%), and being able to hide identity in Afghanistan (6.7%). This proves the fact that the relationship between the elements of bureaucracy, politics, and personal reasons causes the cross-border movements based on non-legal framework. Some of these causes are attributed to Pakistani approach to immigration, whereas the other ones are related to the matters of governance on the Afghan side.

Table 7 Causes of Illegal Entry

| Cause	Frequency	Percentage	Rank (1 = Most Reported)
Non-issuance of Afghan Passports	11	36.7%	2
Strict Pakistani Visa Issuance	17	56.7%	1
Concealing Identity in Afghanistan	2	6.7%	3
Total	30	30%	—

Figure 7 Causes of Illegal Entry
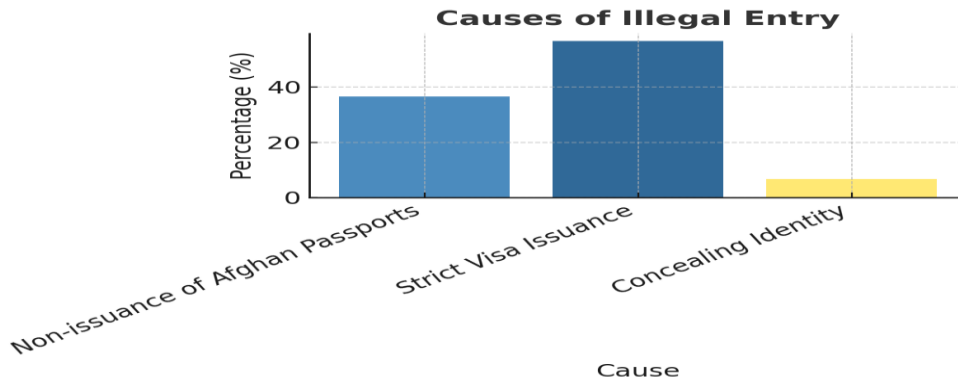
Purpose of Entry into Pakistan

Lastly, Table 8 and Figure 8 reveal the indication that 93.3 percent of respondents reflected that Afghan entrants entered the Middle East with many other reasons, such as those of work or business, seeking medical treatment and traveling to third countries. A relatively small percentage (6.7) is one that entered only to work/gain business. Mixed-purpose entry is so prevalent that there is a need to control illegal migration through a multi-pronged approach that targets both economic source of flow and humanitarian attraction of such migration.

Table 8 Purpose of Entry into Pakistan

Purpose	Frequency	Percentage
Work/Business	2	6.7%
Medical Treatment	0	0.0%
Further Travel to Third Countries	0	0.0%
All Above	28	93.3%
Total	30	30%

Figure 8 Purpose of Entry into Pakistan
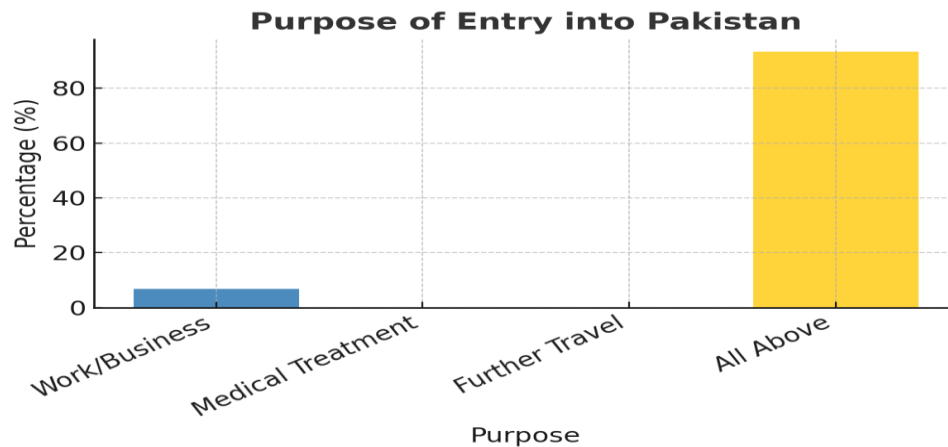
Comprehensively, the findings show that there is good awareness in terms of operation of human smuggling by FIA officials at Torkham, yet there are also a lot of gaps in the aspects of training, legal literacy and clarity of concepts. The prevalence of local tribal networks and Afghan nationals in the smuggling business, and the roots of illegal entry in policy factors, require capacity building of the FIA as well as a diplomatic approach to the Afghan authorities. Besides, the variety of victim profiles make it necessary to identify and assist victims more comprehensively.

Discussion

Results of this study portray an array of multi-dimensional associations of operational awareness with legal literacy and training gaps and socio-political determinants of human smuggling at the Pak-Afghan border. Even though most of the FIA officials in Torkham had a significant level of awareness on the concept of human smuggling, it has been noteworthy to find that some still exhibited a lower level of awareness namely zero or partial understanding. Other literature examining similar situations in different crossings or borders reveals that even slight gaps in knowledge of the frontline officers can lead to overlooked opportunities of detection and realms of procedures (I%cduygu and Aksel, 2014; Achilli, 2018). In a volatile border environment, like Torkham border, where smuggling networks use every weakness in operation, it is important to have universal conceptual clarity. The absence of systematic training in over half of the respondents can be considered as one of the most disturbing findings. It goes in line with past international evaluations, which have observed that insufficient training of law enforcers to

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perform well in the fight against smuggling is one of the issues that have eroded the efforts to fight smuggling in the developing world (McAuliffe & Laczko, 2016; Triandafyllidou & Ricard-Guay, 2019). The absence of routine, situationally appropriate capacity-building can leave officials without the skills in investigative methods of smug killing networks, sharing intelligence, and administrative procedures dealing with victims needed to derail the networks (Baird, 2017). Having slightly more experience among the trained officials, studied in this research, implies that the training chances are biased in the favor of older employees with less fresh recruits being undertrained, which also applies to anti-trafficking units in West Africa (Andersson, 2016). Failure by more than half of the respondents to distinguish between human smuggling and human trafficking has far reaching operational impacts. According to Gallagher and David (2014), conflating the two offences may result in incorrect use of the law, poor prosecution and in some settings criminalisation of the victims. In South and Central Asia, the issue of a vague delineation is especially significant where smuggling paths and trafficking networks tend to collide, and the juridical repercussions of the former are fundamentally different in scope and extent than those of the latter (Farrell & Kane, 2019). The conclusion here strengthens the necessity of specific legal literacy outlines referring to the theoretical and practical differences among the crimes. It is also of extreme importance that few people are aware of the Prevention of Smuggling of Migrants (SOM) Act, 2018 and penalties of the same. The same case applies to other jurisdictions that have rendered new laws and have not adequately spread to reach operational agencies (FitzGerald, 2010; Latham-Sprinkle, 2021). To perform well in practice, the law enforcement personnel not only should have the knowledge that such a law exists but also should know all about its application and its evidence prerequisites (Goździak & Bump, 2008). Based on the existing knowledge gap, it can be stated that the dissemination of the SOM Act and its training within the organizational structure of FIA need to be reformed on a large scale. The domination of mixed groups, which can comprise men, women, and minors among the intercepted cases of smuggling, speaks in favor of the opportunistic approach of the smuggling networks in the recruitment process. As it has been seen with the smuggling networks across the Mediterranean, these networks are quick to prey upon weaknesses in various strata of the population at once (Cummings et al., 2015; Zaiotti, 2020). The high rate of underage children and female victims confirm the significance of the implementation of the victim identification, protection, and referral systems into the border

operations (UNODC, 2018). In absence of them, such vulnerable people are at risk of being treated as only immigration offenders without being considered as possible victims of exploitation. The findings also reveal that the dominant forces in the business of smuggling as witnessed in Torkham are the youths of the local tribes in their case, the Shinwari Tribe, whereas illegal entrants are mainly Afghan nationals. This trend of ethnically imprinted smuggling patterns can also be traced in the Balkans, West Africa and the Horn of Africa where smugglers are able to find logistical or even a protected network in the form of kinship and community ties that offer certain protection and support to the smug smuggling activities (Maher, 2018; Sanchez, 2015). These results have serious implication on the approaches to enforcing enforcement action that are forced to work within the social cultural sensitivity of operating in tightly knit human communities and yet having to follow through the disruption and destruction of smuggling facilities. The two major causes of illegal entry seen in this research- the Pakistani visa issuance policies and the non-issuing of the Afghan passports- are more of political and governance issues that go beyond the issue of control of the borders. Tightening visa regimes have been found to boost irregular migration flows around the world because the people who cannot access legal migration avenues resort to the use of smugglers (de Haas et al., 2019; Crawley & Skleparis, 2018). The bilateral negotiations, administration reforms, and even humanitarian visa program will be needed to curb the demand of the smuggling services due to these underlying causes. Last, the multifactorial nature of the causes of why the vast majority of illegal entrants come to Pakistan to work, seeking medical care, and further travelling reflects the results of international migration research which dismisses the one-factor models in terms of irregular migration (Castles et al., 2014; Massey et al., 1993). The multi-causality also indicates that counter-smuggling actions must not be confined to actions involving enforcement but should be intertwined with development, health and labour market initiatives. The FIA mandate in its work must therefore be complemented by inter-agency, community and international cooperation. In sum, the findings of this research place the issues that FIA officials face at Torkham into a wider international trend of under-resourced, under-trained, and legally less well informed frontline enforcement officers tackling the multi-dimensional politically sensitive smuggling dynamics. To enhance the response to human smuggling in Pak-Afghan frontier, operational capacity needs to be enhanced, legal literacy improved on the push and pull factors of the policy framework, and the victim protection needs to be embedded within this strategy of border management.

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