

PROTECTION MONITORING ASSESSMENT ON SRI LANKAN REFUGEE RETURNEES FROM INDIA IN 2022

Findings from the Household Visit Protection Monitoring Interviews



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This publication was made possible through support provided by UNHCR, under the terms of LKA01/2023/0000000250/000. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM/UNHCR.

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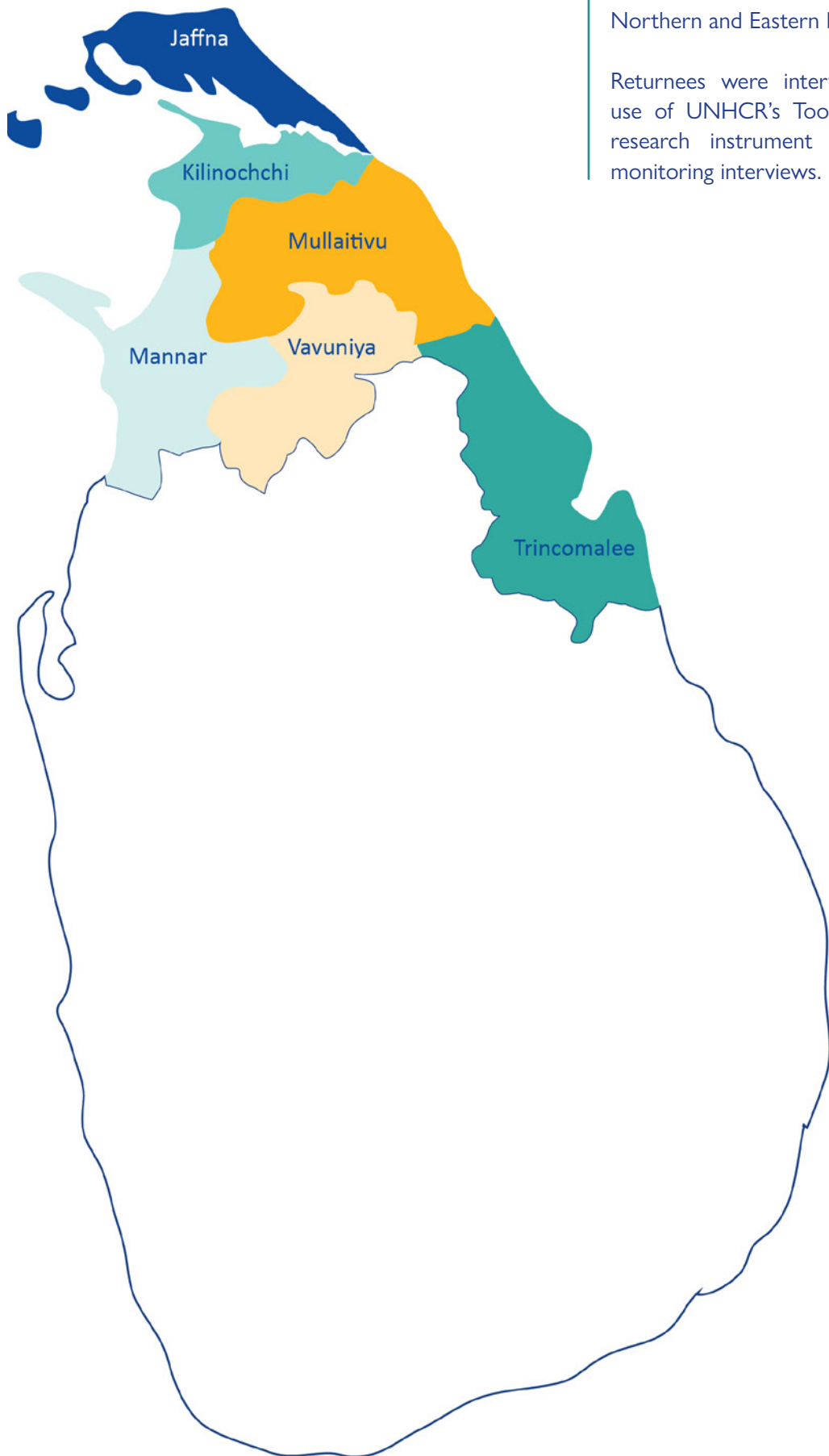
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Almost all the 2022 Refugee Returnees are settled in these six districts in the Northern and Eastern Provinces.

Returnees were interviewed via the use of UNHCR's Tool 2 quantitative research instrument for protection monitoring interviews.



INTRODUCTION

Background

Since the end of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka in May 2009, increasing numbers of Sri Lankan refugees and asylum-seekers outside the country have been considering the possibility of voluntary repatriation. Responsive to this demand, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sri Lanka in cooperation with UNHCR offices in countries of asylum, particularly in Tamil Nadu, India, have continued to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees.

This programme for the reintegration of Sri Lankan Refugee returnees from India in 2023 was implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Sri Lanka, with funding from and in coordination with UNHCR Sri Lanka. IOM's overall project objective is to facilitate sustainable reintegration of Sri Lankan refugees returning from Tamil Nadu in 2023. The protection monitoring of refugees who returned in 2022 was also conducted under the above project.

In order to gain a realistic understanding of refugee returnees' reintegration experiences, opinions and the challenges that they face, IOM undertook a 'protection monitoring survey' in June and July 2023, using UNHCR's tool 2 survey instrument, which was administered among refugee returnees who had returned to Sri Lanka with UNHCR support in 2022. IOM undertook this survey with support from UNHCR under the project "Sustainable Reintegration of the Sri Lankan Refugees from India". A total of 139 families returned with UNHCR support in 2022 and an attempt was made to interview all the Heads of Household (HoHs) or another responsible adult in these families. As outlined subsequently, a total of 115 HoHs or other responsible adults were interviewed, with most of the rest being uncontactable, having moved overseas or elsewhere in Sri Lanka.

This report assists UN staff in countries of asylum to better counsel refugees and asylum-seekers considering 'return' on the challenges and potential risks linked to voluntary repatriation so as to ensure that any decision to repatriate is an informed one. This document would also be a key advocacy tool to be shared with donors and government entities to highlight gaps which could be addressed by donor driven and government assistance programmes.

This household survey posed questions on different aspects of refugees returnees' conditions such as source of livelihood, skills, ownership of properties, disabilities and the difficulties faced in reintegration in their community and provides credible factual data regarding the return and reintegration experience of those who have already returned.

Supportive actions for returnees are outlined below, and information on returnees' experiences with these aspects are also collected in the research.

- For facilitated voluntary repatriation, UNHCR staff in the country of asylum counsel prospective returnees and verify the voluntary nature of their decision, and then provide air transport for refugees who wish to return. UNHCR Sri Lanka is in contact with each of the facilitated returnees on arrival at the airport and provide protection counselling and social advice to the returnee.
- UNHCR also assists returnees with reintegration and non-food item (NFI) cash grants and a modest transportation allowance for onward transportation to their village of origin.
- On arrival in the village of origin, the UNHCR Field Office registers the facilitated returnees who visit the office or one of the district offices of the Social Services Department for post return protection monitoring and follow-up advocacy and interventions.
- Returnees also receive counselling on reintegration support, including procedures to obtain essential civil documentation, such as birth certificates and National Identity Cards. Referrals are made to government authorities and specialised NGOs / agencies to obtain further assistance.
- Some refugees return spontaneously. Although spontaneous returnees are not eligible for UNHCR cash grants or NFI assistance, UNHCR have encouraged them to approach UNHCR for protection monitoring purposes, and provides referrals to specialised NGOs / agencies that can support their reintegration process.

METHODOLOGY

Responses were recorded by IOM staff and hired enumerators via pen and paper interviews. Individual household visits were made to administer the survey. Confidentiality of the individuals/respondents was duly maintained. Questionnaires were scrutinized and keyed into a Microsoft Excel data base and data analysis was carried out using a combination of Microsoft Excel and SPSS.

In the attempted census of 139 households, 115 successful interviews were undertaken with the balance 24 families not being contactable due to the following reasons (Table 1).

Table 1: Reasons for not interviewing respondents

Reasons	Count
Returned, but since moved to India	16
Returned, but since moved elsewhere outside of Sri Lanka	4
Returned, but since moved elsewhere in Sri Lanka	1
Passed away	3
Total	24

The residential district breakdown of the 115 sample is shown in table 2 below. Six families had moved to other districts.

Table 2: Sample size and composition by district

Current district	Count
Jaffna	36
Vavuniya	15
Kilinochchi	11
Mullaitivu	8
Mannar	18
Trincomalee	21
Other (Colombo, Gampaha, Puttalam, Batticaloa)	6
Total	115

Since the sample is almost a census, covering 83 per cent of the universe of 139 returnees, the sample is representative of the population and therefore responses from small bases can be looked at.

ABBREVIATIONS

BC	Birth Certificate
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CRPO	Child Rights Promotion Officer
DS	Divisional Secretary
GN	Grama Niladhari
HH	Household
HoH	Head of Household
HRCSL	Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka
HSZ	High Security Zone
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
LDO	Land Development Ordinance
MOH	Medical Officer of Health
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NFI	Non-Food Item
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIC	National Identity Card
PWSN	Person with Specific Needs
SL	Sri Lanka
TID	Terrorist Investigation Division
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
WDO	Women Development Officer

Points to be kept in mind in reading this report

Refugee returnees, not IDP returnees

This report reflects the experiences and views of 2022 refugee returnees and it should not be assumed that the findings reflect experiences and views of IDP returnees. Throughout this document, the term 'returnee' only refers to refugee returnees. Although each group was forcibly displaced, there are significant differences in their displacement situations, including the duration they were away from the area of origin, educational and work opportunities while in displacement, documentation needs (e.g., birth certificates), as well as programme assistance during the period of return and reintegration.

Reporting on 2020 and 2019 returnees

In addition to reporting on the 2022 returnees by the total sample and by district, this report also provides a comparison of responses from these 2022 returnees (based on the tool 2 survey conducted in 2023) with those from the 2020 and 2019 returnees (based on the tool 2 surveys conducted between December 2021 and March 2022). Therefore, while noting that the survey periods were different, it should also be kept in mind that the 2020 and 2019 returnees were administered the survey instrument before the impact of the 2022 Sri Lankan economic crisis, whereas the survey among the 2022 returnees was administered shortly after the economic crisis.

Impact of COVID-19 (2020) and Sri Lanka's economic crisis (2022)

2020 was the first full year of COVID-19 and responses should also be looked at in this context.

Data is self-reported

All data is as reported by the refugee returnee respondents. Interviewers did not attempt to verify answers provided by respondents (e.g., independently inspect shelter for damage). Data is therefore accurate only if the respondent was truthful in responding.

Rounding off data

Due to rounding off decimals to the nearest whole number, in some instances totals may not add up exactly to 100 per cent.

Multiple responses

For questions where multiple responses are possible, the sum of responses could exceed 100 per cent.

District wise reporting

District wise reporting is shown only for 2022 returnees.

Kindly note that the data and resultant analysis do not incorporate the return and reintegration experience of sample households who had moved elsewhere. Their experiences may be different, possibly more negative than those who were interviewed and represented below.

The remainder of this report is based on the responses received from the 2022 returnee sample of 115 households and the research findings are compared with those from the two previous tool 2 surveys conducted in 2022 among 2019 and 2020 returnees where the sample sizes were 69 (out of 97 returnee families) and 153 (out of 436 returnee families) respectively.

District wise reporting is presented in the report for the sample of 2022 returnees, excluding district wise responses from the small number of six households in districts other than the six districts of the North and East i.e., in the Colombo, Gampaha, Puttalam and Batticaloa districts. However, in reporting at a total sample level of 115 households, responses from these households are added back.

It should also be noted that the number of returnees in 2020 was lower than in previous years due to restrictions in travel between India and Sri Lanka due to the pandemic.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2022 refugee returnees' demographic profiles differed from those who returned in 2020 and 2019. The former had less children, and consequently smaller household sizes. There were slightly more older adults (60 years or more) among the 2022 returnees and the proportion of females was slightly higher. Perhaps due to these demographic differences, there was a higher percentage of PWSNs (19%) among 2022 returnees compared to the other two groups of returnees (11% in each), with the three most mentioned categories of PWSNs among 2022 returnees being woman at risk, single older person, and single older parent.

While all returnees were registered by UNHCR, some were also registered by other organisations, mainly NGOs, for returnees to obtain their assistance. However, only a third of 2022 returnees (34%) was registered with NGOs, compared to about three fourths of 2020 and 2019 returnees (75% and 73% respectively).

While between a quarter and a third of all family members (27% among 2022 returnees to 33 per cent among 2020 returnees) were born in India, only 0.5 per cent of family members among 2022 returnees, and 3 per cent each among 2020 and 2019 returnees did not have an Indian or Sri Lankan birth certificate. However, in terms of possessing a Sri Lankan National Identity Card (NIC), as many as a tenth of adults (8%, 10% and 6% of adults among 2022, 2020 and 2019 returnees) did not have one, with most of them not having the supporting documents to apply.

A lesser proportion of adults among the 2022 returnees was registered to vote (55%), compared to returnees in 2020 (60%) and 2019 (70%). Among 2022 returnees, the three main reasons for not being registered to vote were that they were awaiting a response from the authorities to their applications, they were unaware how to go about the application process, or that they did not have the relevant supporting documents to apply.

Only about half the 2022 returnee households (49%) owned land, compared to between two thirds (67%) and three quarters (73%) among 2020 and 2019 returnees. This was due to the former hardly having been given land by the government. Furthermore, only two fifths of landless households (42%) had applied for land among 2022 returnees, compared to between half (52%) and two thirds (67%) among the 2020 and 2019 returnees. Among 2022 returnees, the main reasons for not applying were that these returnees thought or were told that it was not possible to get land, or that they did not know how to go about the application process.

Only 19 per cent of 2022 returnees received shelter assistance, compared to twice this proportion among returnees in 2020 (43%) and 2019 (41%). The reason again seems to be the withdrawal of the government in offering this assistance. The type of assistance too had changed, with 2022 returnees receiving only shelter materials, unlike a high proportion of previous returnees who received permanent housing or transitional shelters.

Across all three returnee batches, between 10 per cent to 15 per cent said there was a military presence in the area they were living in. Among those living in the areas with a military presence, the proportions saying there was no problem with this or that it was good to have a military presence had

increased with each returnee batch, from 85 per cent saying so among 2022 returnees, compared with 58 per cent and just 40 per cent among those who returned in 2020 and 2019.

When asked if their movements were restricted, almost all 2022 returnees (99%) in the 2022 returnee batch and all returnees in the other two batches said no. Almost all (99%) also said that they or their family members had not experienced any safety concerns. Almost all (96%, 98% and 96% among 2022, 2020 and 2019 returnees) also said they felt generally or completely safe, and no one said they often felt they were in danger.

Almost half the 2022 returnee households (46%) had sought the services of the police in the last one year, compared to 17 per cent and 14 per cent among the 2020 and 2019 returnees. The high numbers who sought out the police's assistance among the 2022 returnees were due to the majority of those in the Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Mannar districts having done so. Of those who sought police assistance, most (77%, 60% and 54% among 2022, 2020 and 2019 returnees respectively) were highly satisfied with the assistance provided.

19 per cent of 2022 returnee households and 14 per cent and 7 per cent of 2020 and 2019 returnee households did not have a family member earning a livelihood. Not having a livelihood, or remuneration for their work being insufficient, were widely mentioned concerns in all three returnee groups. COVID-19 and the Sri Lankan economic crisis in 2022 would have also contributed to these difficulties among the 2022 returnees.

A higher proportion of 2022 returnees (83%) said they or their family members had a livelihood skill, compared to returnees in 2020 (68%) and 2019 (71%), but work was difficult to obtain, and many depended on income support from relatives or other household members.

The main livelihood skills possessed differed between women and men among 2022 returnees. For half the women (49%), the main skill mentioned was sewing / tailoring, followed by IT / computer skills (10%) and nursing (8%). For men, the most mentioned livelihood skills were painting (33%), fishing (16%), farming (14%) and business / trading (10%). The mostly mentioned impediment to restoring livelihoods (or increasing earnings) was a lack of tools and / or means (material / finance) to undertake an activity, mentioned by 54 per cent of 2022 returnees.

Among 2022 returnees, three quarters of 18 to 35 year olds (72%) who were able to work were without livelihoods, compared to a little over half in the same age group among the other two returnee groups (52% among 2020 and 54% among 2019 returnees). About half the 18 to 35 year olds without livelihoods among 2022 returnees was degree holders (52%), compared to about a quarter among the 2020 and 2019 returnees (24% and 30%). Across returnees in all three years, two thirds of the 18 to 35s without livelihoods was women.

Only a third of 2022 returnees (32%) received livelihood assistance, compared to 67 per cent and 54 per cent among 2020 and 2019 returnees. Livelihood assistance was provided in the form of materials and livestock, mainly fishing nets, sewing machines and cattle. Two thirds of households that received livelihood assistance among 2022 returnees (67%) mentioned UNHCR as the provider of this assistance, higher than the proportions mentioning UNHCR among 2020 and 2019 returnees (37% and 42% respectively). Local NGOs (predominantly OFERR) were the most mentioned providers of livelihood assistance for 2020 and 2019 returnees (stated by 65% and 55% respectively).

Most were satisfied in returning to Sri Lanka but the proportion not satisfied with deciding to return had more than doubled to 18 per cent among 2022 returnees, from 7 per cent among 2019 returnees. Main reasons for dissatisfaction were the lack of livelihood opportunities and the high cost of living in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, just 74 per cent of 2022 returnees said they would advise others to return to Sri Lanka, sharply down from 96 per cent and 100 per cent among 2020 and 2019 returnees.

83 per cent of 2022 returnees were facilitated returnees, compared to 93 per cent in 2019. All 2022 and 2019 facilitated returnees and almost all 2020 facilitated returnees (92%) received UNHCR's NFI cash grant. Almost all 2022 returnees (97%) spent this grant on NFI items. Reintegration assistance other than from UNHCR was received by only 14 per cent of 2022 returnees, compared to 51 per cent and 58 per cent of 2020 and 2019 returnees.

Among all three groups of returnees, sanitation measures and access to drinking water were high. The percentage of households having a toilet in their land had increased to 96 per cent among 2022 returnees from 88 per cent among 2019 returnees, and the proportion with access to water that could be drunk without boiling or purifying was 87 per cent among 2022 returnees, up from 72 per cent among 2019 returnees.

Finally, the adverse impact of the economic crisis in 2022 was substantial. 81 per cent of the 2022 returnees said that essential foods were unaffordable and 52 per cent said their income was declining / had reduced. The unavailability of fuel also impacted their ability to undertake fishing and farming activities. Furthermore, about one in six households that returned in 2022 (17%) did not have three meals a day, compared to 0 per cent and 4 per cent among 2020 and 2019 returnee households at the time they were interviewed. However, the situation may have worsened since then, as poverty levels across Sri Lanka have increased over the last one year.



DASHBOARD OF SELECTED RESEARCH FINDINGS

Year of return		2022	2020	2019
Respondent and household information				
	Facilitated air return	83%	88%	93%
	Average household size	1.9	2.5	2.2
	Households with PWSNs	19%	11%	11%
	Female family members in household	57%	55%	53%
	All adults in household had received COVID-19-19 vaccine	99%	94%	93%
	Grade 11 and below children in school	100%	89%	94%
Registrations and civil documentation				
	Not having any BC	0.5%	3%	3%
	Adults not having SL NIC	8%	10%	6%
	Adults registered to vote	55%	60%	70%
Land, shelter, and sanitation				
	Household has own toilet	96%	91%	88%
	Water can be drunk without boiling or purifying	87%	74%	72%
	Received shelter assistance	19%	43%	41%
	Households owning land	49%	67%	73%
Livelihoods				
	Households with no livelihoods	19%	14%	7%
	Having 3 meals a day	83%	100%	96%
	Received livelihood assistance	32%	67%	54%
	Unemployed 18-35 year olds as a percentage of all 18-35s	75%	60%	58%
Security and justice				
	Feel generally or completely safe	96%	98%	96%

Year of return		2022	2020	2019
	No landmines in area	100%	100%	99%
Returnee sentiments on return				
	Satisfied with return to Sri Lanka	82%	87%	93%
	Returnees would advise others to return to Sri Lanka	74%	96%	100%
	Thinking of going back to India due to SL economic crisis	10%	-	-
Reintegration assistance				
	Facilitated returnees receiving NFI cash grant from UNHCR	100%	92%	100%
	Returnees who were health screened on arrival in Sri Lanka	58%	100%	99%

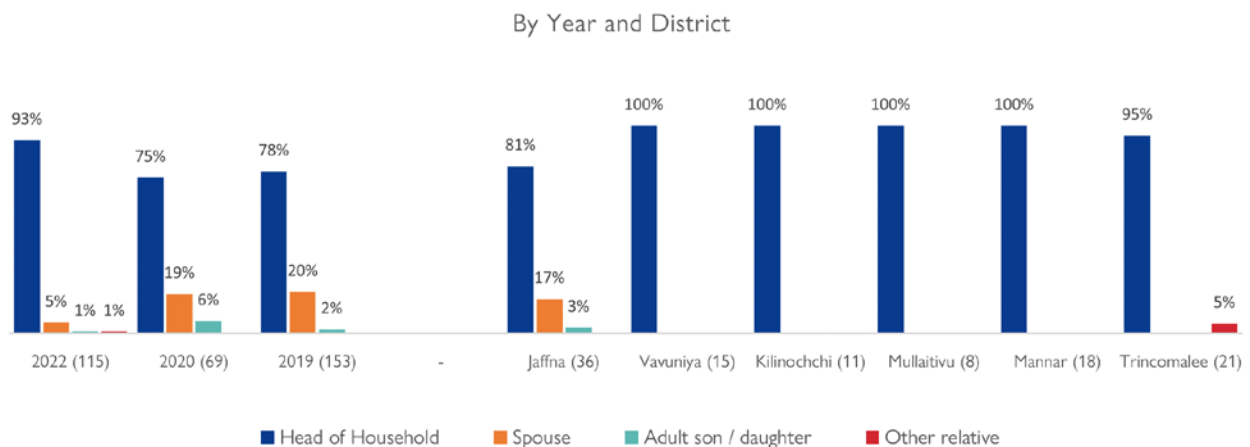
BASIC RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Intent of analysis: To illustrate the profiles of the households and surveyed respondents, which provides a context with which to read into the Tool 2 survey results.

1.1 | Sample profile

- Overall, among 2022 returnees most respondents (93%) were the heads of household (Figure 1). In districts other than Jaffna, 95 per cent or more of respondents were the HoHs.

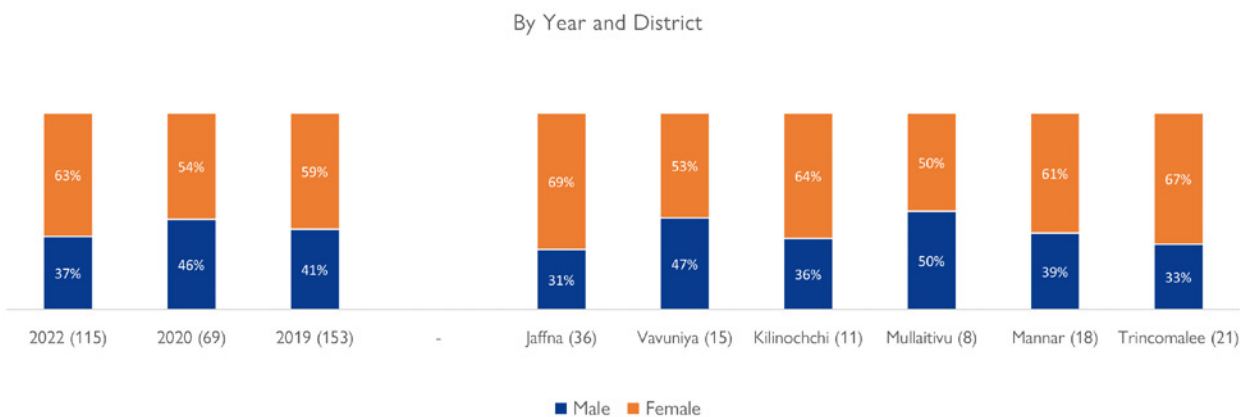
Figure 1: Main survey respondent



Base: All respondents

- Most respondents were female (63%) as shown in figure 2, slightly higher than among the 2020 and 2019 returnees (54% and 59% respectively). Since as many as 93% of the respondents in the 2022 returnee sample were HoHs, as illustrated in figure 1 above, it is evident that a substantial majority of households among 2022 returnees were having female HoHs.

Figure 2: Respondent's sex

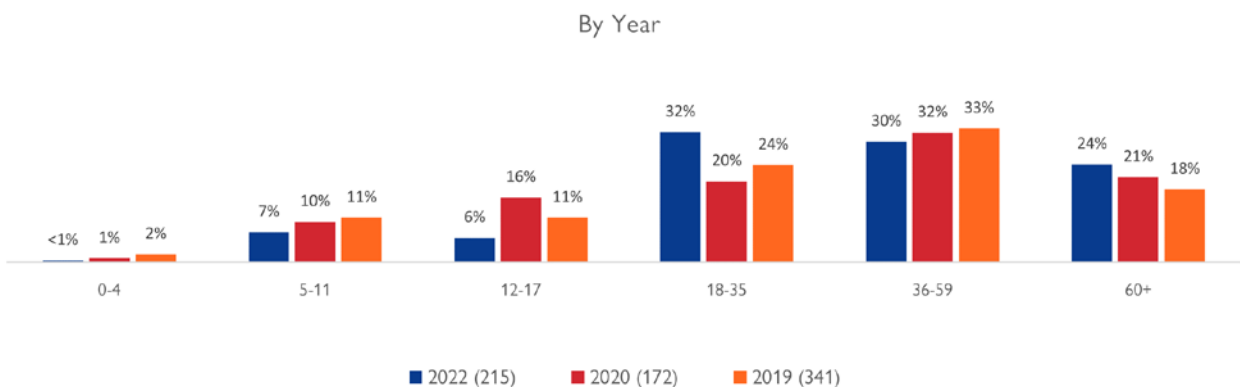


Base: All respondents

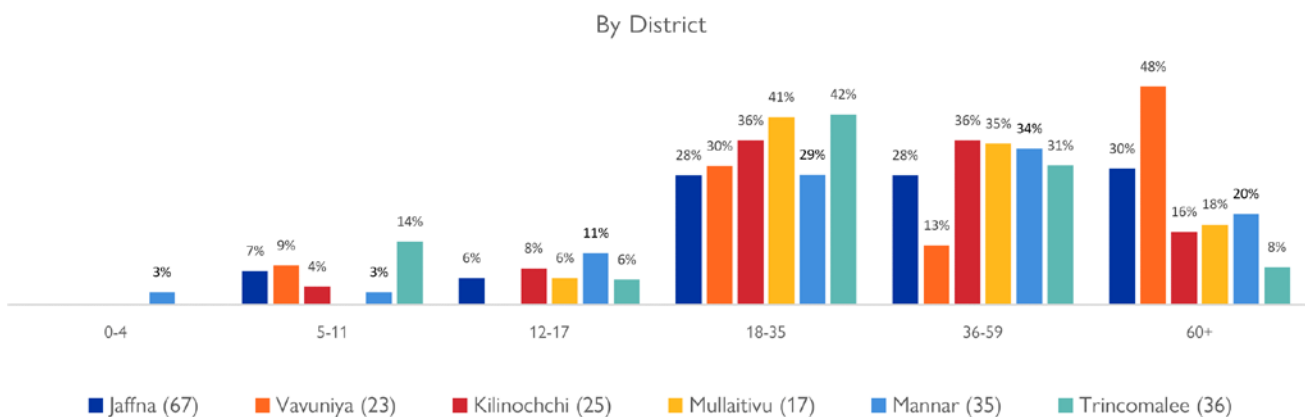
- Among 2022 returnees, there was a higher proportion of young working age adults (aged 18 to 35 years) but a lesser number of children (aged upto 17 years) than among 2020 and 2019 returnees (Figure 3). In all three batches however, the proportions of young children (aged upto 11 years) were low. Among 2022 returnees, the age distribution by males and females did not differ markedly.

The district wise analysis of the 2022 returnees indicates that proportion of adults aged 60+ was highest in the Vavuniya district (48%).

Figure 3: Age distribution of all household family members



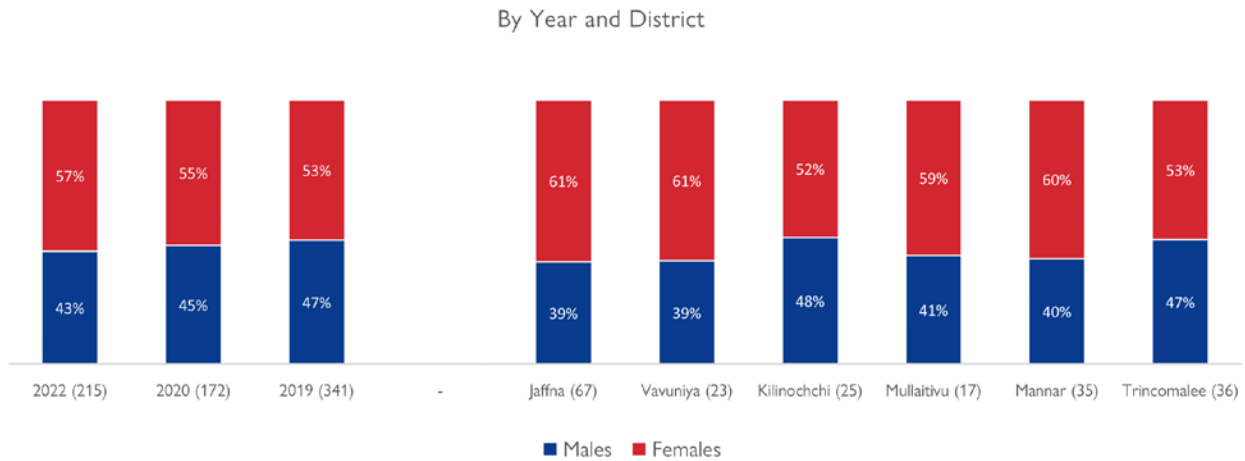
Base: All family members



Base: All family members

- As shown in figure 4, among 2022 returnees there were more female than male family members in all three years of return and in all districts.

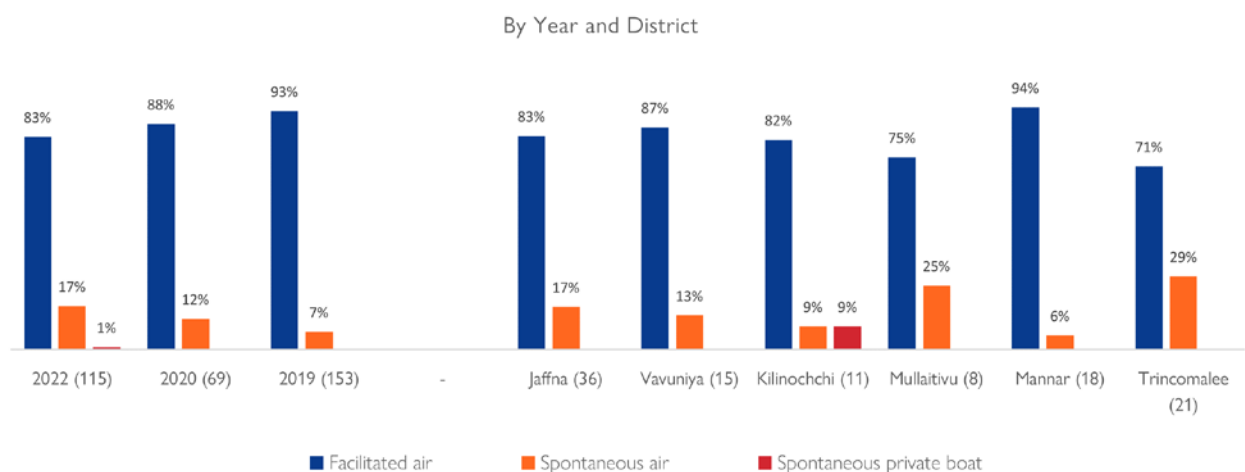
Figure 4: Distribution of family members by sex



Base: All family members

- The most widely used mode of return was the UNHCR facilitated return by air. 83 per cent used this mode of return in 2022 and the balance 17 per cent returned spontaneously, mostly by air (Figure 5). It can also be seen that the percentage returning spontaneously by air had increased annually over the last three periods.

Figure 5: Type of return to Sri Lanka

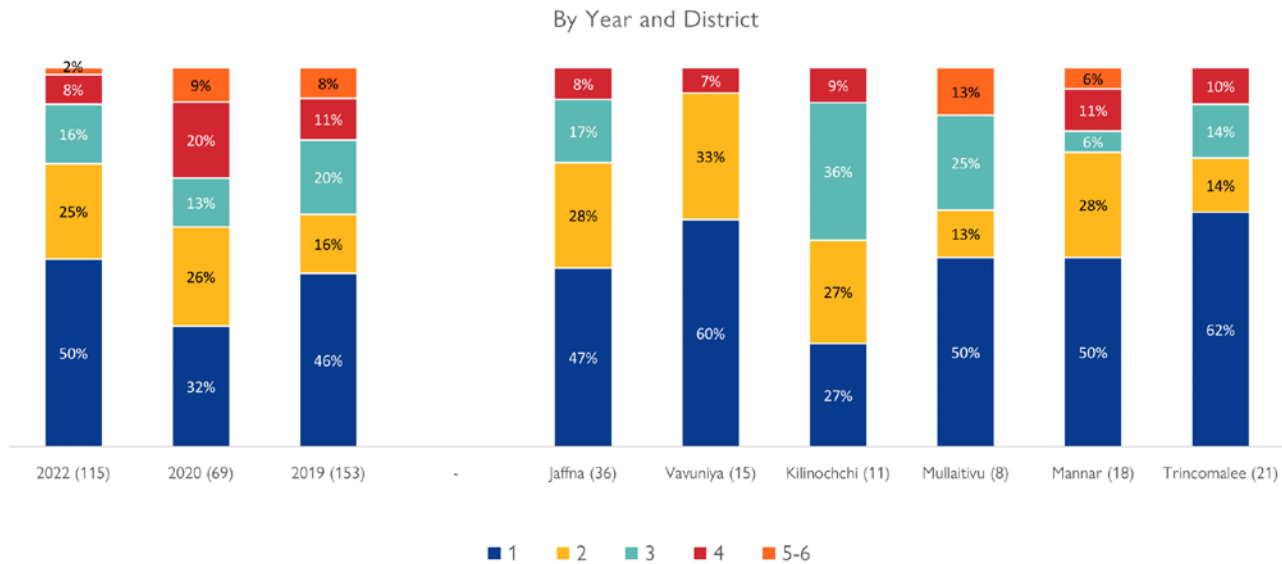


Base: All respondents

1.2 | Vulnerability risk

- Among the 2022 returnees, half the households had one family member (50%) and a quarter (25%) had two, as shown in figure 6¹. In other returnee groups too, there were many single member households.

Figure 6: Number of family members in each household



Base: All respondents

- The 115 respondents in the 2022 returnees sample represented 215 family members, resulting in an average household size of 1.9. Likewise, the average household sizes among 2020 and 2019 returnees were 2.5 and 2.2 respectively. These were all lower than the Sri Lankan national average of 3.8 (Table 3).

As in previous batches of returnees, the average number of working age adults (aged 18-59) in a typical 2022 returnee household (1.2) was well below the national Sri Lankan average of 2.2.

Table 3: Age profile of family members in an average household: Sri Lanka vs Returnees

Age Group	Sri Lanka national average	2022	2020	2019
0-4	0.3	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
5-17	0.8	0.2	0.7	0.6
18-59	2.2	1.2	1.3	1.3
60+	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3
Average household size	3.8	1.9	2.5	2.2
No. of respondents	(5.4 m households)	115	69	153

¹ Respondents were asked about the number of family members living in the home, including the respondent. In many instances there were households with just one family member i.e., the respondent, which, in some instances, could be due to the respondent being the first in the family to return to Sri Lanka with the rest of the family returning later; instead of the whole family returning at once.

- The percentage of family members who are persons with specific needs (PWSNs) was almost one in five (19%) among 2022 returnees, higher than the 11 per cent each among 2020 and 2019 returnees (Table 4). Among 2022 returnees, one in three (31%) of the family members in the Jaffna district and one in four (26%) in the Vavuniya district were PWSNs.

Table 4: Incidence of persons with specific needs (PWSNs) in family

District	2022			2020			2019		
	No. of house-holds	Total no. of family members	% PWSN family members	No. of house-holds	Total no. of family members	% PWSN family members	No. of house-holds	Total no. of family members	% PWSN family members
Jaffna	36	67	31%	20	58	7%	37	69	7%
Vavuniya	15	23	26%	14	28	11%	25	64	9%
Kilinochchi	11	25	4%	8	17	24%	10	15	20%
Mullaitivu	8	17	6%	3	5	0%	12	27	22%
Mannar	18	35	14%	11	26	19%	34	95	13%
Trincomalee	21	36	11%	13	38	8%	35	71	8%
Other	6	12	17%	-	-	-	-	-	-
All districts	115	215	19%	69	172	11%	153	341	11%

- Among 2022 returnees, two thirds of PWSNs (63%) were females, slightly higher than the 57 per cent female share of the overall population of all family members.

Also, among the 2022 returnees, 70 per cent of PWSNs were aged 60 years or above. 10 per cent were 35 to 59 years in age and 5 per cent were aged 18 to 35 years.

- The main categories of PWSNs varied in each of the three groups of returnees. Among 2022 returnees, most PWSNs were women at risk, single older persons and being single parents (Table 5). There were also high mentions of ailments and diseases and physical disability.

Mentions of being a woman at risk were much higher among 2022 returnees than among 2020 and 2019 returnees. Among 2022 returnees, being a woman at risk was more or less equally composed of widowed / divorced women and single female HoH (where of the 13 responses for woman at risk, seven were for widowed / divorced women, five were for female HoHs, and one was a non specific response of woman at risk).

Table 5: No. of PWSNs by category (stated by 2 or more)

No. of mentions	2022	2020	2019
Woman at risk	13	1	2
Single older person	7	3	5
Single parent	7	2	6
Heart ailment	5	1	2
Recovering from surgery	5	-	-
Physical disability	4	4	11
Cancer	4	-	-
Diabetes	-	-	5
Single female head of household	-	3	5
Kidney disease	-	3	-
Mental illness	-	2	2
Widowed / divorced	-	1	3
Old age	-	2	-
Asthma	-	-	2
Base: No. of PWSNs	40	19	38

REGISTRATION AND OTHER VISITS BY AUTHORITIES

Intent of queries: To identify if returnees were able to register as residents in the areas of return, if they in fact do so, and to ascertain if returnees are visited by military or police, for registration or any other purposes, and the frequency of such visits.

There are numerous and persistent anecdotes regarding the close surveillance of civilians in the North and East by security or intelligence personnel, including repeated visits to homes. This is one attempt to gather factual data on the existence and scope of any such activity.

2.1 Registration feedback

- 98 per cent of the 2022 returnee households had been registered with the DS or GN offices, marginally lower than the 100 per cent registrations with the DS / GN among the 2020 and 2019 returnees. Among the 2022 returnees, one respondent in the Jaffna district and another in the Trincomalee district said they had not been registered. When asked why they were not registered the former said they did not realise they had to register while the latter did not state a specific reason.
- When asked if anyone else, other than the DS or GN had visited to register them, as shown in table 6, a third of the respondents (34%) said their household was registered by other organisations. When asked who registered them, most mentioned NGOs (85%), and to a lesser extent the Police and the CID / TID (each being mentioned by 5%).

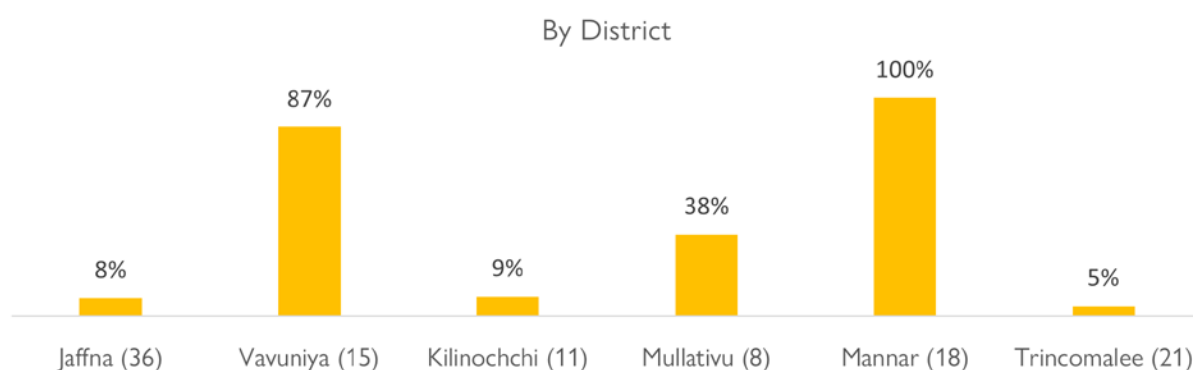
Among 2020 and 2019 returnees, as many as three fourths of the households were registered by other organisations (again mostly NGOs), very much greater than the 34 per cent who said so among 2022 returnees.

Table 6: Extent to which households were registered by other organisations, and by whom

Whether registered by others	2022	2020	2019
Yes	34%	75%	73%
No	66%	25%	77%
Base: All respondents	115	69	153
If registered, by whom	2022	2020	2019
NGOs	85%	100%	95%
CID / TID	5%	2%	4%
Police	5%	2%	5%
Military	-	2%	2%
Others (not specified)	5%	-	-
Base: Households registered by others	39	52	111

Among 2019 returnees these registrations were mainly in the Vavuniya and Mannar districts, and to a lesser extent, Mullaitivu district (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Extent to which households were registered by other organisations, by district



Base: All respondents

2.2 | Other visits

- Respondents were also asked if they had been interviewed by anyone else other than for purposes of registration. 44 per cent said they were visited by others, similar to the 48 per cent each who said so among the 2020 and 2019 returnees (Table 7).

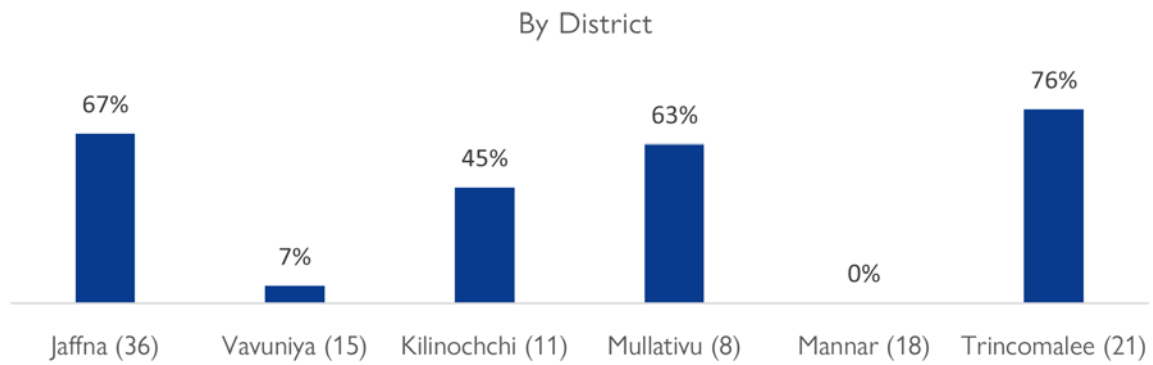
Among 2022 returnees, almost all who were visited for non registration purposes (98%) said these visits were by NGOs. 71 per cent said they were visited once by them, 27 per cent said they were visited twice, and the balance 2 per cent said they were visited three or more times by these NGOs.

Table 7: Extent to which households were interviewed by anyone else, and by whom

Whether interviewed, other than for registration	2022	2020	2019
Yes	44%	48%	48%
No	54%	52%	52%
Base: All respondents	115	69	153
If registered, by whom	2022	2020	2019
NGOs	98%	81%	74%
Government officer	-	17%	17%
Military / TID / CID	-	3%	5%
Police	2%	-	3%
Other	2%	-	-
Base: Households registered by others	51	52	111

As shown in figure 8, the extent of 2022 returnees being visited other than for registration purposes, was high in the Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Trincomalee districts. These districts were mostly those which had the lowest registrations by NGOs and others as illustrated in figure 7.

Figure 8: Extent to which households were interviewed by other organisations, by district



Base: All respondents

CIVIL DOCUMENTATION

Intent of queries: To determine if returnees have essential civil documentation (such as birth certificates and national identity cards) and to determine if there are any constraints to access them. In this section, the enumerators ensured that data was collected for each family member in the household, not merely for the respondent or the head of the household. For birth certificates, the data reflects Sri Lankan vs. non Sri Lankan issued birth certificates. These queries also helped determine the percentage of refugee returnees without essential documents and who may be at risk of statelessness.

3.1 | Birth certificate (BC)

- Only one family member (0.5%) did not have a BC among 2022 returnees, slightly less than low percentages among 2020 and 2019 returnees (Table 8). This family member was born in Sri Lanka (Table 9)

Table 8: Incidence of individuals not having any Birth Certificate

Whether having any BC	2022	2020	2019
Having any BC	99%	97%	97%
Not having any BC	0.5%	3%	3%
No. without any BC	1	6	10
Base: All family members	215	172	341

Table 9: Country of birth of individuals not having any Birth Certificate

Country of birth	2022	2020	2019
Number born in Sri Lanka	1	2	2
Number born in India	-	3	8
Number where country was not mentioned	-	1	-
Total number of family members without any BC	1	6	10

- Among 2022 returnees, there were two family members without a Sri Lankan BC: in addition to the one family member born in Sri Lanka without a BC (as mentioned above), another family member had an Indian BC instead. Both were now adults (18 years or above) living in the Trincomalee district.

3.2 | National Identity Card (NIC)

- As shown in table 10, 8 per cent of adults (14 adult family members) among the 2022 returnees did not have a Sri Lankan NIC: 7 per cent (12 adults) never had one and 1 per cent (2 adults) did have a NIC earlier but no longer.

Table 10: Adult family members' NIC status

NIC category	Year of return			District (2022 returnees)						
	District	2022	2020	2019	Jaffna	Vavuniya	Kilinochchi	Mullaitivu	Mannar	Trincomalee
(a) Total no. of all adult family members (18+)		185	126	257	58	21	22	16	29	29
(b) No. of adult family members (18+) not having NIC		14	12	16	3	-	3	-	3	5
(b) % of adults not having NIC		8%	10%	6%	5%	-	14%	-	10%	17%
(b1) % of adults had NIC but not now		1%	5%	3%	3%	-	-	-	-	-
(b2) % of adults never had NIC		7%	5%	3%	2%	-	14%	-	10%	17%

These 14 adults without a NIC were from 12 households. Nine of the 12 respondents from these households said they did not have the supporting documents to apply for the NICs, while the other three had applied but had still not received them. Table 10 also illustrates that 14 per cent of adult family members in the Kilinochchi district and 17 per cent in Trincomalee district never had a NIC.

3.3 | Absence of essential Sri Lankan identity documents

- Among the 2022 returnees, three of the 215 family members (1%) did not have any Sri Lankan identity documents: a Sri Lankan birth certificate, a Sri Lankan national identity card or a Sri Lankan passport.

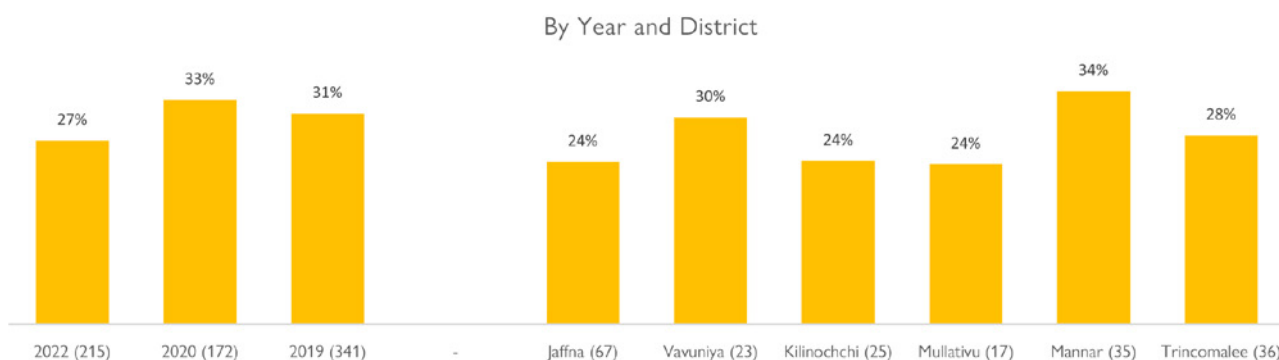
While this 1 per cent of family members from the 2022 returnees did not have any identity document, among 2020 and 2019 returnees the percentages of family members without any identity documents were 3 per cent and 4 per cent respectively.

- In each of the three groups of returnees, about 30 per cent of family members were born in India: 27 per cent among 2022 returnees and 33 per cent and 31 per cent respectively among 2020 and 2019 returnees (Figure 9).

Among 2022 returnees in the sample, 57 family members were born in India to 39 families / households.

² The district wise numbers exclude the numbers in the 'other' districts (Colombo, Gampaha, Puttalam and Batticaloa)

Figure 9: Percentage of family members born in India



Base: All family members

- In all three years of return the number of individuals born in India exceed the current number of children (Table 11) indicating that many of those born in India are now adults.

Table 11: No. born in India versus current number of children

Indian born children	2022	2020	2019
No. born in India	57	57	107
Current no. of children (upto 18 years)	30	46	84

- All 39 respondents in whose households children were born in India, were asked if the children's births were registered in India. All (100%) confirmed that these births were registered in India. Among 2020 and 2019 returnees too, the births of all children born in India were registered in India (Table 12 a).

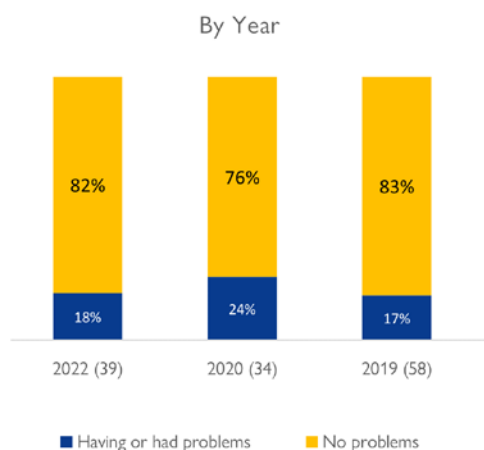
Over 90 per cent had registered the births at the hospital where the child was born, and a similar number had with them the birth registration documents of these children. When those not having the birth registration documents currently (3 respondents) were asked why they did not have them, they did not comment.

Table 12 a: No. of households with children born in India and registration

Registration details	2022	2020	2019
Those who registered births in India	100%	100%	100%
Current no. of children (upto 18 years)	30	46	84
Births were registered at:			
Hospital	92%	94%	91%
Refugee camp	8%	6%	9%
Those having the birth documents registered in India	92%	97%	100%
Base: No. of households with children born in India	39	34	58

- About a fifth (18%) of the 2022 returnees with children born in India (seven respondents) said they had or were having problems in getting Sri Lankan citizenship for these children (Figure 10). The types of problems varied as shown below in table 12, including not knowing how to go about applying.

Figure 10: If there were problems to get SL citizenship for children born in India



Base: No. of households with children born in India

Table 12: Types of problems

Types of problems	No. stating
Not aware of process	2
No money for late registration penalty	1
Insufficient documents	1
Lost reference number	1
Process is ongoing	1
Did not comment	1
Base: HH having / had problems	7

Of these seven respondents who had or were having problems in getting the Sri Lankan citizenship for their children, three had been able to resolve these problems.

3.4 | Families from plantation areas (Hill Country)

- Just two households (2%) were originally from the plantation areas / hill country before they sought refuge in India, slightly less than the 4 per cent of 2020 returnee households and 5 per cent among 2019 returnees.

Of these two 2022 returnee households, one possessed Sri Lankan nationality documents (passport / other nationality documents) and the other did not. In the case of the 2020 and 2019 returnees originally from plantation areas, all had documents to prove their Sri Lankan nationality.

LAND AND SHELTER

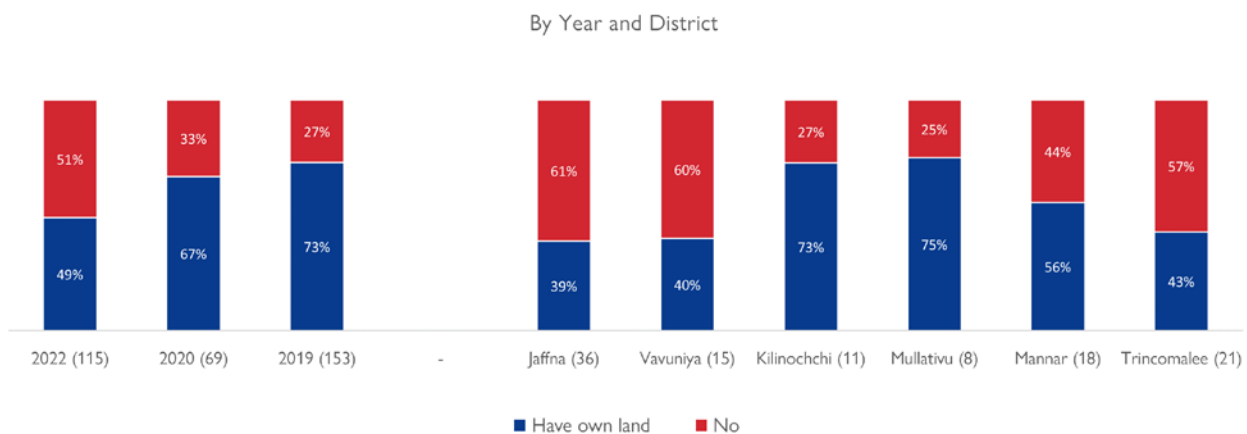
Intent of queries: To identify shelter needs (repair or construction of a new shelter) of refugee returnees, the extent of landlessness, property document procurement and replacement needs, and what mechanisms are used or trusted by returnees to resolve disputes.

4.1 | Land ownership and access to land

- Just under half of the 2022 returnees (49%) owned land (Figure 11). The percentage of returnees not owning land has increased over the years of return with 27 per cent not owning land among 2019 returnees, 33 per cent among 2020 returnees and 51 per cent among 2022 returnees.

Land ownership was lowest in the Jaffna (39%), Vavuniya (40%) and Trincomalee (43%) districts.

Figure 11: Ownership of land

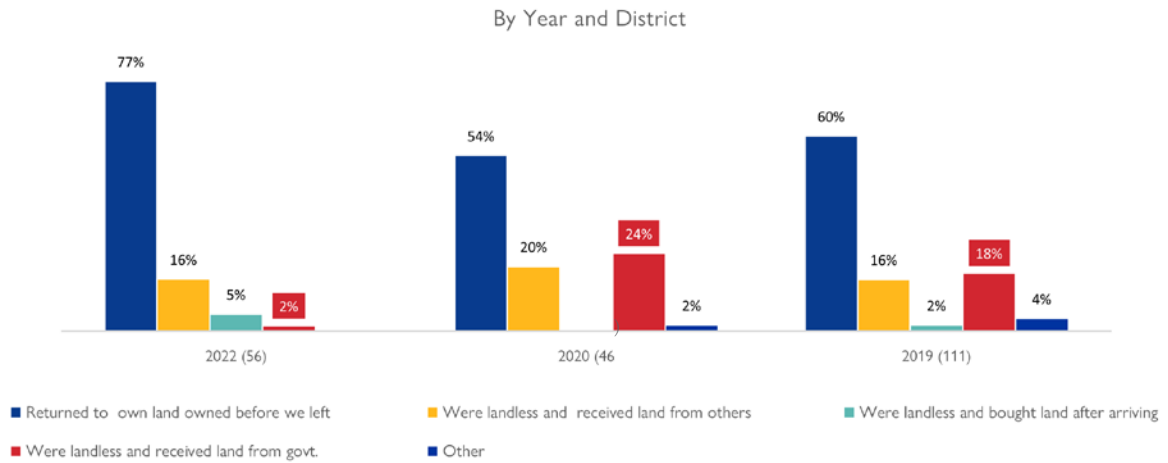


Base: All respondents

- Three fourths of 2022 returnees (77%) who had land, were in the land they owned before they left Sri Lanka, higher than the equivalent percentages of 54 per cent and 60 per cent among 2020 and 2019 returnees (Figure 12). However, only 2 per cent of these 2022 returnees received land from the government, compared to 24 per cent and 18 per cent of 2020 and 2019 returnees.

The reduction in the percentage of 2022 returnees receiving government land compared to returnees in previous years would explain lower land ownership among 2022 returnees (as illustrated in figure 11).

Figure 12: Source of owned land

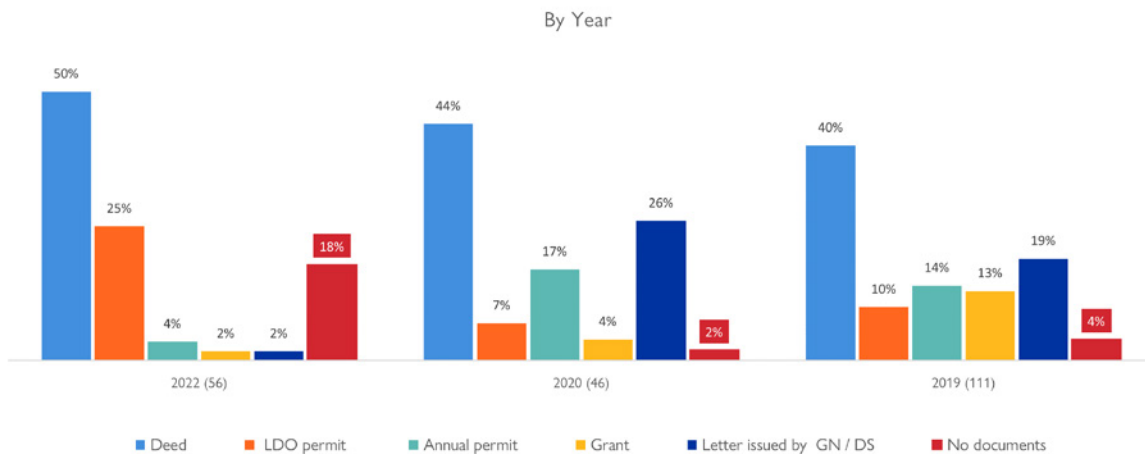


Base: Respondents owning land

- While about half the 2022 returnees owning land had a deed to the land as much as 18 per cent (ten respondents) did not have any ownership documents (Figure 13). Among returnees in other years less than 5 per cent did not have any ownership documents.

Most of those who did not have ownership documents (eight out of ten) said that they had applied for them and were waiting for a response from the authorities.

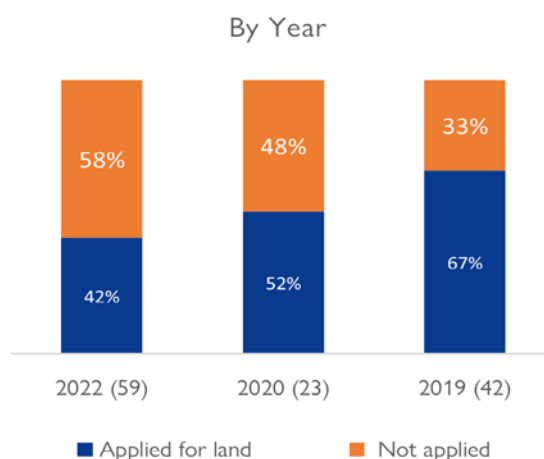
Figure 13: Land ownership documents in possession



Base: Respondents owning land

- Respondents who owned land were asked if they had access to their land. Only one out of 56 respondents (2%) who owned land said they had no access to it, and the reason being that their household had still not cleared the overgrown jungle in order to enter the land.
- When asked if there was a dispute currently regarding ownership of the land, just two of the 56 respondents (4%) who owned land answered in the affirmative. One of these two said the household was trying to resolve the dispute internally / bilaterally with the other party while the second respondent did not comment on whether they were trying to resolve the dispute.
- The 51 per cent of 2022 returnees who did not own land (59 respondents) were asked if they had applied to the authorities for land. As shown in figure 14, only 42 per cent (25 respondents) had done so, and all of them had applied to the GN / DS / Provincial Council.

Figure 14: Extent to which landless returnees had applied for land



Base: Those not owning land

- Table 13 lists out the reasons why these applicants were so far unsuccessful with their application. 44 per cent informed that the process was ongoing while 40 per cent said they do not know the reason for not getting a response. 16 per cent (four respondents said their applications were rejected).

Table 13: Responses from authorities to applications for land

Responses from authorities for land problems	% stating
The process is ongoing	44%
Do not know the reasons for not getting a response	40%
Authorities refused to grant us land / said we were not entitled to land	16%
Base: Landless respondents who applied for land	25

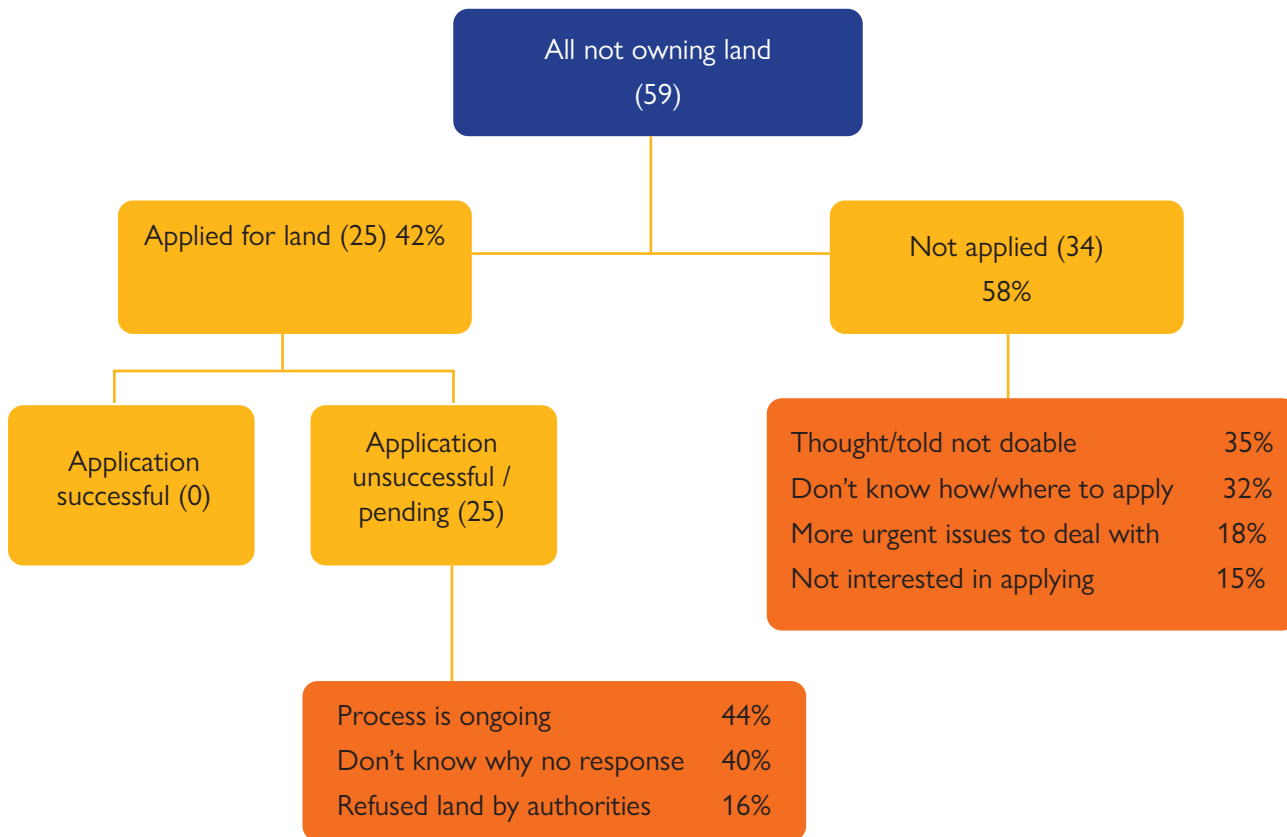
- Table 14 lists out the reasons given by those landless returnees for not applying for land. Most thought / were told that it was not possible to get land, or they did not know the process of applying. Some said that they had more urgent issues to deal with.

Table 14: Why landless returnees had not applied for land

Reasons for not applying for land	% stating
We think / we were told it is not possible	35%
Do not know how to / where to apply	32%
There are more urgent issues to deal with right now	18%
We are not interested in applying	15%
Base: Landless respondents who had not applied for land	34

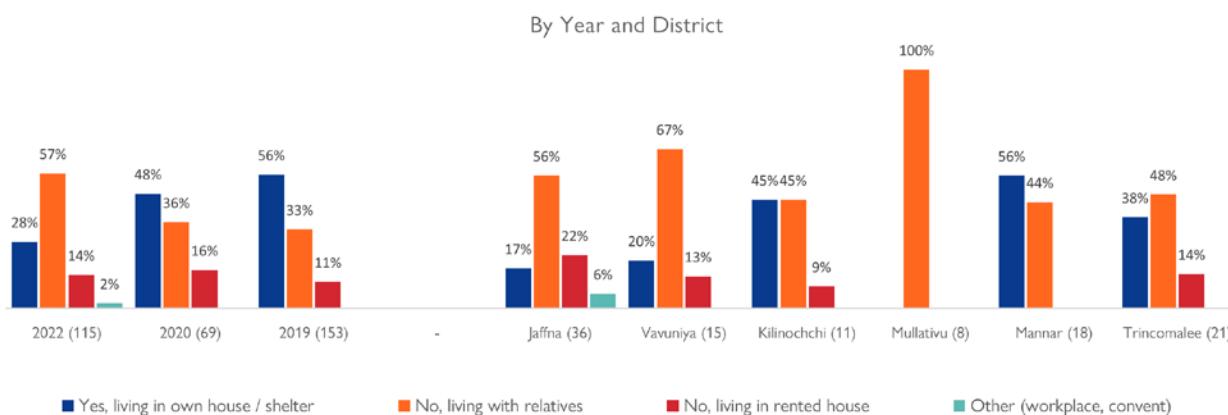
- An overall summary of the non land owners among 2022 returnees is shown in figure 15 below. Many mentioned the lack of information on applying, and there being no information on the status of the applications.

Figure 15: Summary of status of non land owners' applications for land among 2022 returnees



- As illustrated in figure 16, among 2022 returnees, most respondents (57%) were living with relatives, and a quarter (28%) were living in their own house / land and 16 per cent were living in rented accomodation or in other places (workplace, convent). Among 2020 and 2019 returnees, the percentages staying with relatives were in the mid thirties (36% and 33% respectively).

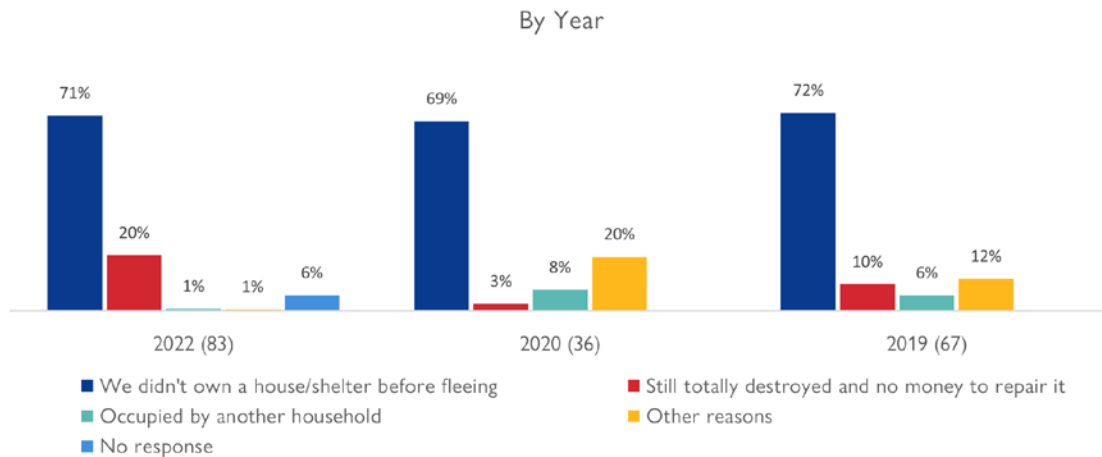
Figure 16: Whether residing in own house or shelter



Base: All respondents

- Most of those not living in their own house or shelter (71%) said this was because they did not have their own house or shelter before having to flee (Figure 17). A fifth (20%) mentioned that their own home was destroyed totally and that they could not afford to rebuild it. Among the previous returnees too, the main mention was that they did not own their own house or shelter previously.

Figure 17: Reasons for not living in own house / shelter

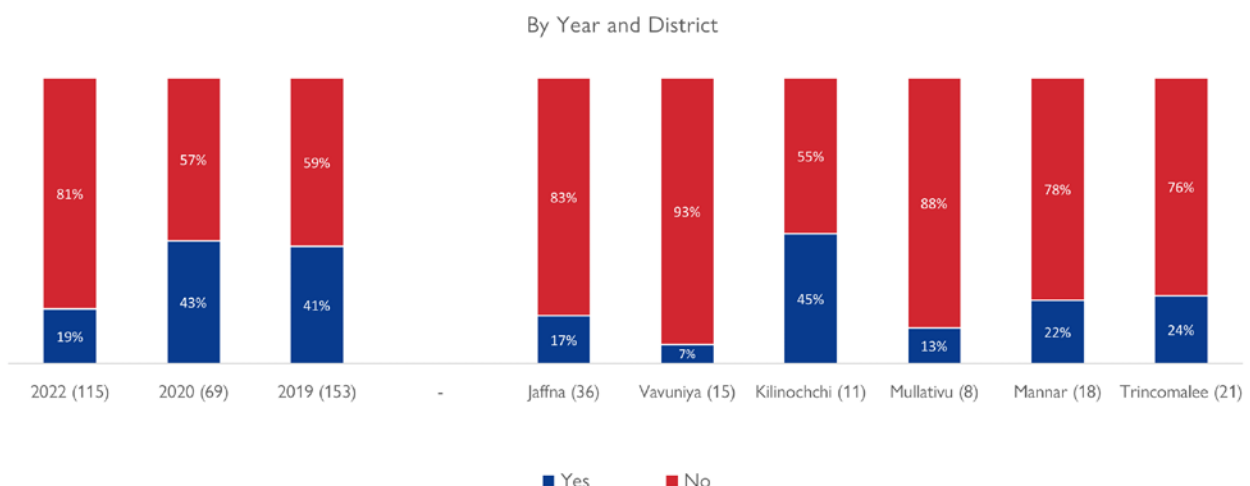


Base: Respondents not living in their own house / shelter

4.2 | Shelter assistance

- Only 19 per cent of 2022 returnees said they received shelter assistance, far less than the 43 per cent and 41 per cent among 2020 and 2019 returnees (Figure 18). The percentage of recipients was lowest in Vavuniya and Mullaitivu.

Figure 18: Extent of receiving shelter assistance



Base: All respondents

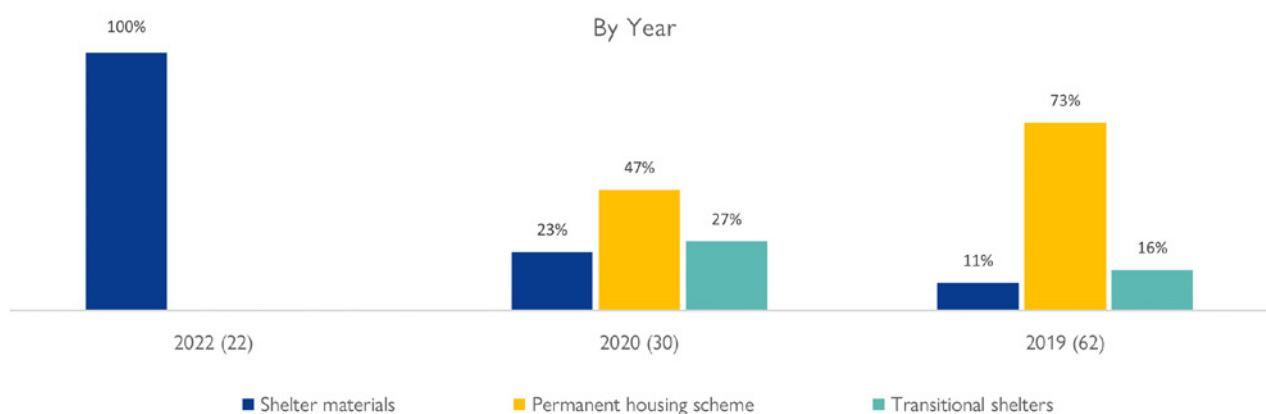
- Unlike among previous batches of returnees, in case of the 2022 returnees, the government had not provided shelter assistance, and OFERR / OFERR Ceylon, was the main provider of this aid (Table 15). The discontinuation of shelter assistance by the government seems to have contributed to the substantial reduction in the proportion of households that received shelter assistance among the 2022 returnees to 19 per cent, down from 43 per cent among the 2020 returnees (Figure 18).

Table 15: Who provided shelter assistance (by year)

Providers of shelter assistance	2022	2020	2019
Government	-	50%	62%
DS office	-	47%	56%
DS Office Indian housing scheme	-	3%	6%
Local NGO	100%	53%	44%
OFFER Ceylon	100%	53%	27%
Valvodayam- Mannar	5%	-	13%
ADRA, Zee Tamil	-	-	4%
Base: those who received shelter assistance	22	30	62

- 2022 returnees received only shelter materials , while previous returnees received permanent housing or transitional shelters (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Type of shelter assistance received



Base: Respondents who received shelter assistance

SECURITY AND JUSTICE

Intent of queries: To identify refugee returnees' personal perceptions of post-return security and military presence in areas of return, to ascertain how returnees reintegrate within their neighbourhoods and home communities, to identify impact of landmines and unexploded ordinance (UXOs) on reintegration, and to know where returnees go if they encounter security concerns.

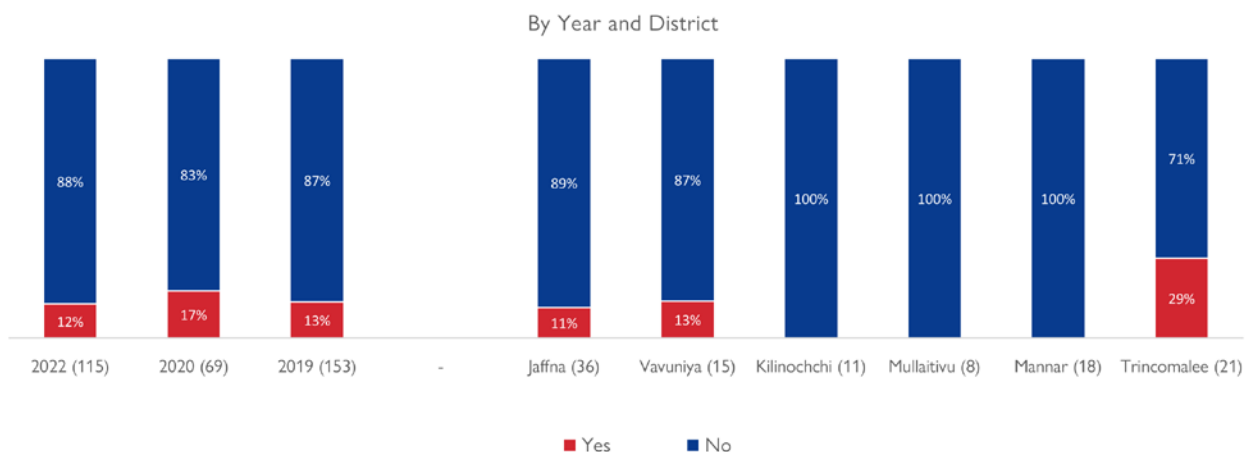
5.1 | Impact of landmines

- When questioned about the presence of landmines in the area, all respondents (100%) said there were no landmines in their area, similar to the responses among 2020 and 2019 returnees.
- No respondents or their other family members had received Mine Risk Education (MRE) among 2022 and 2020 returnees and just 1 per cent had received MRE among 2019 returnees.

5.2 | Relations with the military

- 12 per cent of 2022 returnees said there was a military presence in their area or nearby, like the responses given by 2020 and 2019 returnees (Figure 20). In Trincomalee district however, 29 per cent said there was a military presence (like the 23% of 2020 and 20% of 2019 returnees in Trincomalee who said so in previous surveys).

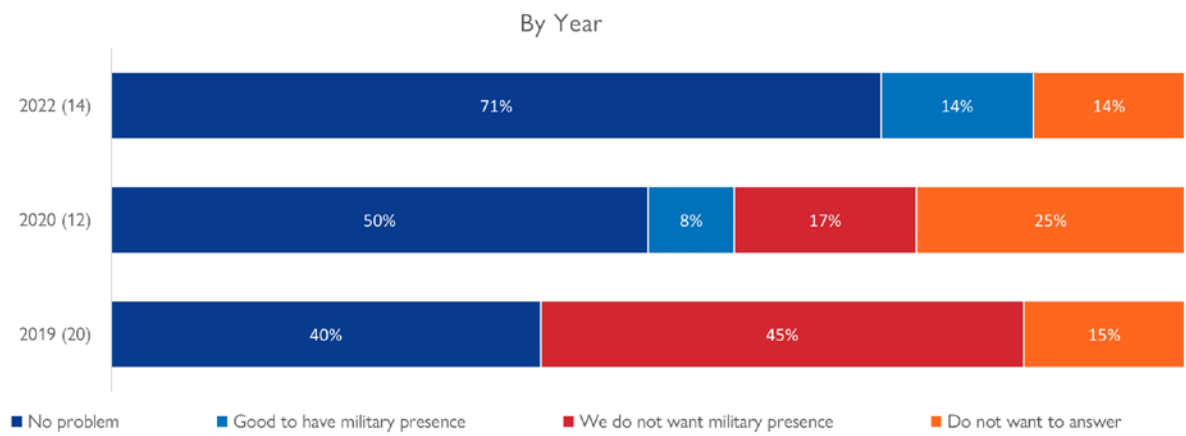
Figure 20: Whether there is military presence in the area or nearby



Base: All respondents

- As shown in figure 21, the acceptance / tolerance of the nearby military presence appears to be higher among 2022 returnees compared to responses from the previous batches of returnees.

Figure 21: Opinion about military presence in the village / local area

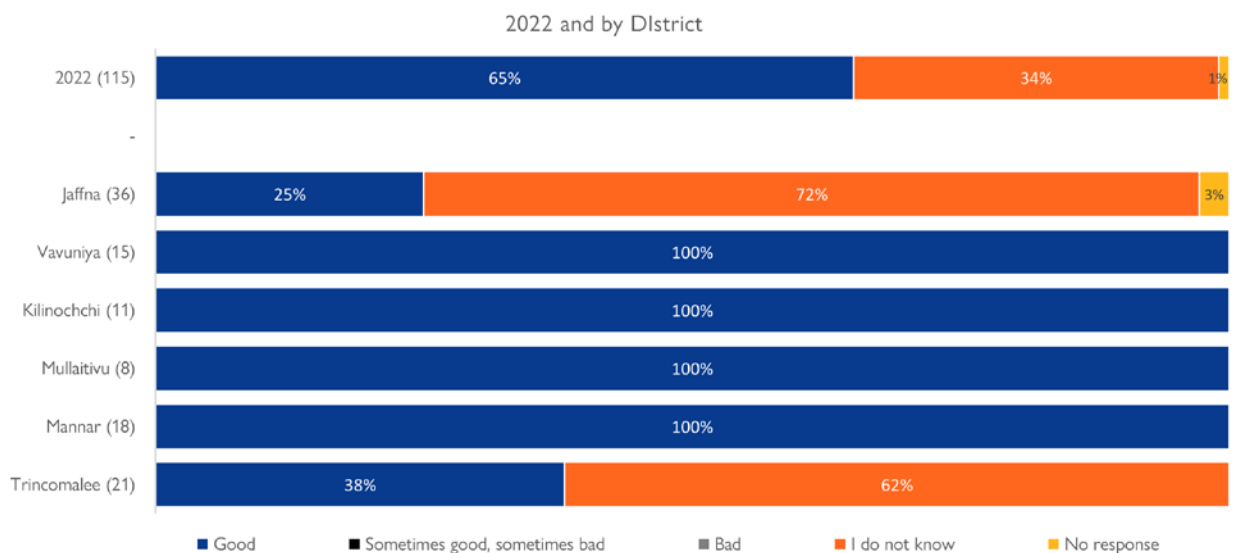


Caution in reading as bases are small

Base: Respondents who had a military presence in their village / area

- Respondents were asked what they thought of the relationship between the community and the military. Responses were positive among 2022 returnees in the Vavuniya, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Mannar districts, but not so among the 2022 returnees in Jaffna and Trincomalee districts (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Opinion on relationship between the military and the community



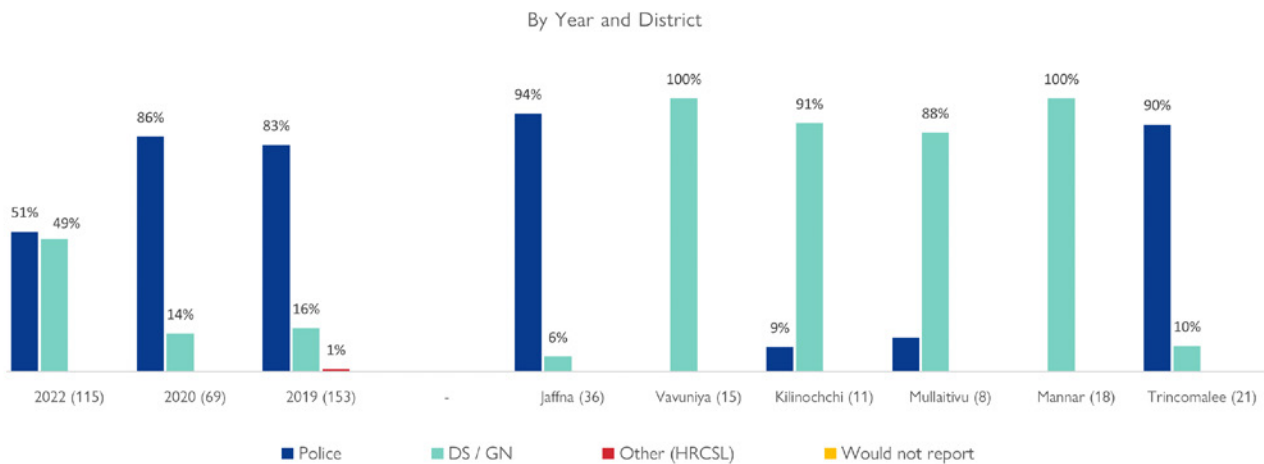
Base: All respondents

5.3 | Physical security

- Respondents were asked to whom they would first report a serious crime against their own family. Half each said the police (51%) or the DS / GS (49%). No one said they would not report such a crime.

District wise opinions were sharply divided. All or most in the Jaffna and Trincomalee districts would first report this to the police and those in the other four districts said they would first report it to the DS / GS.

Figure 23: For a serious crime against own family, to whom would it be first reported

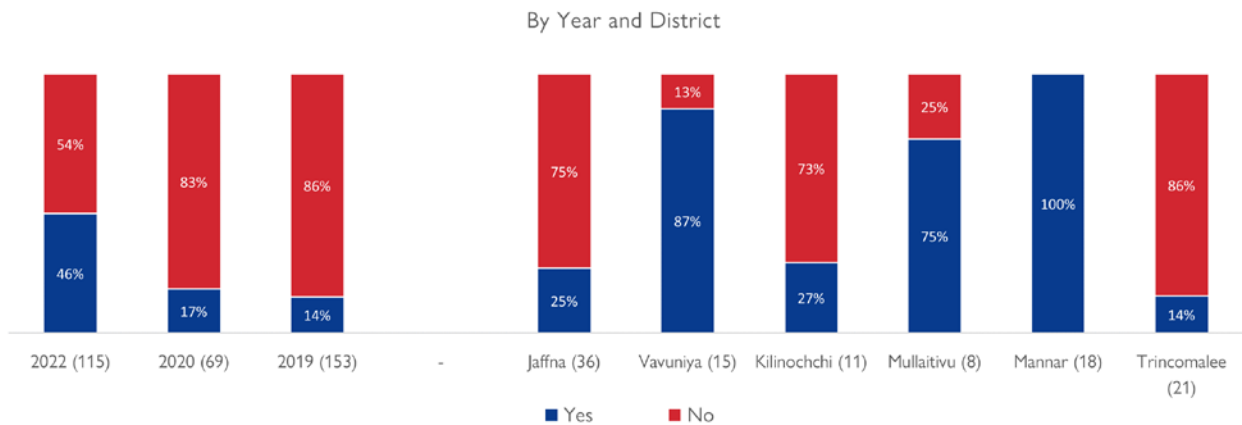


Base: All respondents

5.4 | Access to justice

- Almost half the 2022 returnees had received the services of the police in the past one year, a much higher percentage than in the previous batches of returnees (Figure 24). This high percentage was due to almost all the 2022 returnees in the Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Mannar districts having received the services of the police in the past year.

Figure 24: Extent of having received the services of the police in past one year

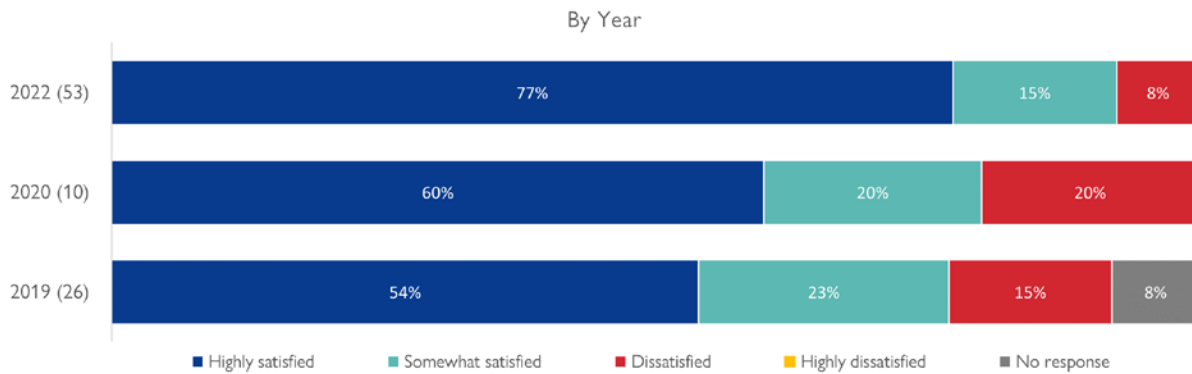


Base: All respondents

The types of services received from the police were not asked in the survey instrument. However, feedback from field enumerators was that the main reasons to go to the police were to (a) report a lost NIC and get a copy of their police report to apply for a new NIC (b) report fraudulent money transfer transactions, such as incorrect foreign currency exchange rates and (c) make complaints about land matters.

- The level of satisfaction with the services of the police was very high among the 2022 returnees with 77 per cent being highly satisfied and a further 15 per cent were somewhat satisfied (Figure 25).

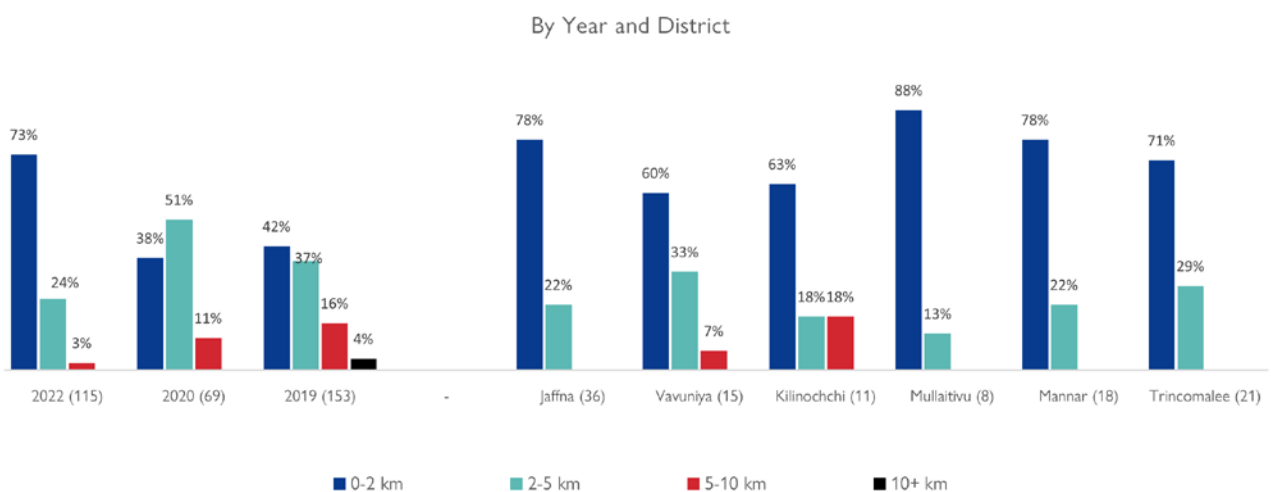
Figure 25: Extent of satisfaction with the services of the police



Base: Those who sought the services of the police

- Almost three fourths of the 2022 returnees (73%) lived within less than two kilometres from the nearest police station. The proportions living 2 or more km away were higher among the 2020 and 2019 returnees than among the 2022 returnees (Figure 26).

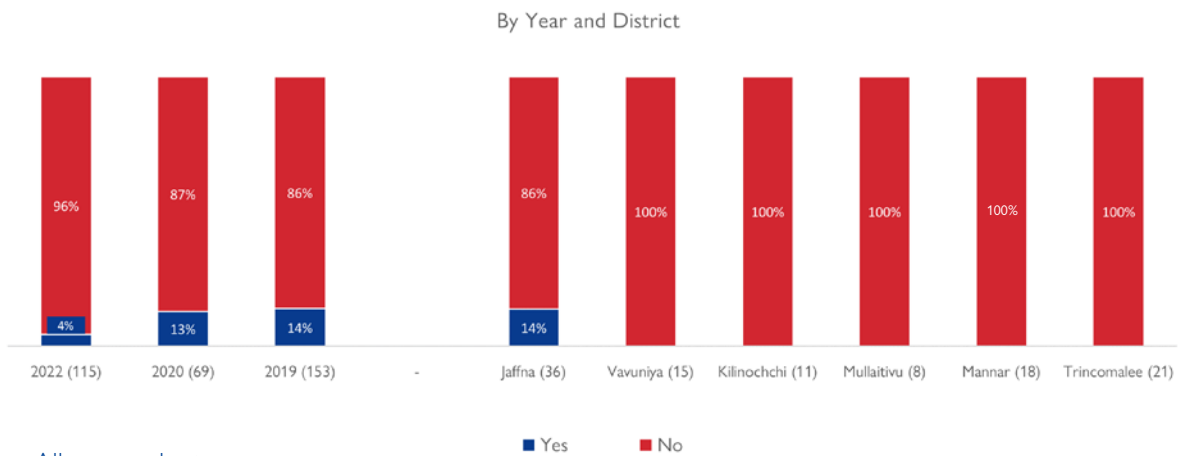
Figure 26: Distance from house to nearest police station



Base: All respondents

- Almost all said they would not go to the courts in case of any disputes (Figure 27). The 4 per cent of 2022 returnees who had gone to the courts had done so regarding land disputes.

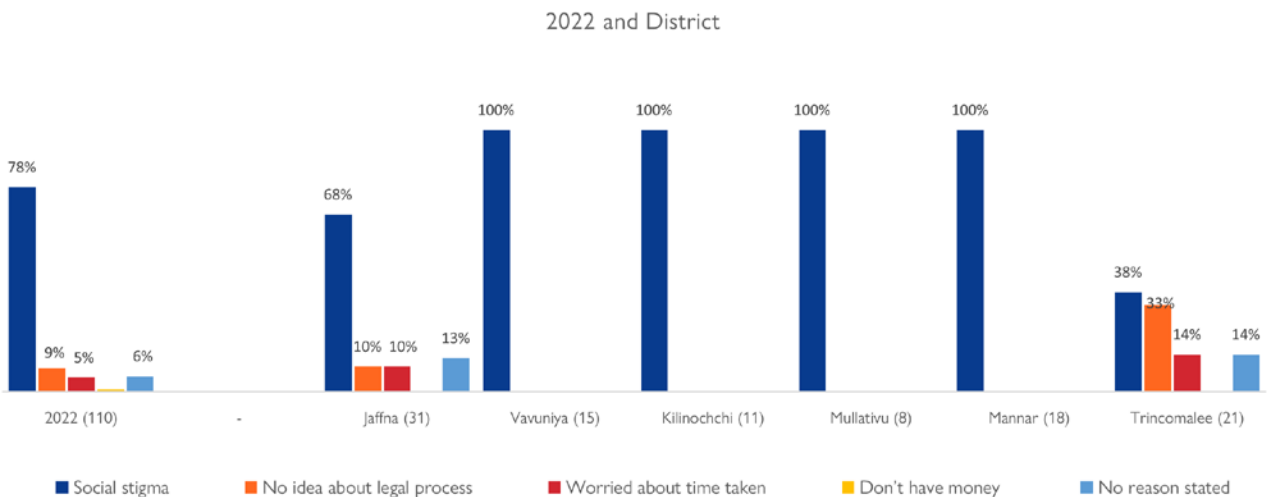
Figure 27: Was or would assistance be sought from the courts in case of a dispute



Base: All respondents

As shown in figure 28, the main reason stated for not wanting to go to courts was that there was a risk of being socially stigmatised in doing so. However, in view of the universal response in the more rural Vavuniya, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Mannar districts, it is possible that this may be a blanket response to a hypothetical question, as many may not have faced a situation to go to the courts.

Figure 28: Reasons for not wanting to seek assistance from the courts

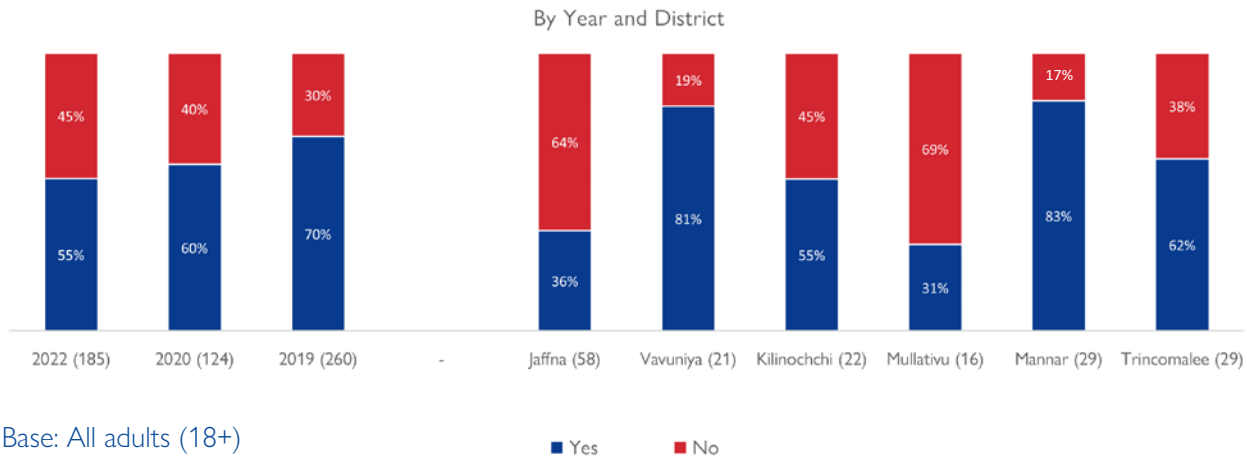


Base: Respondents not wanting to seek assistance from the courts

5.5 | Participation in public affairs without being discriminated

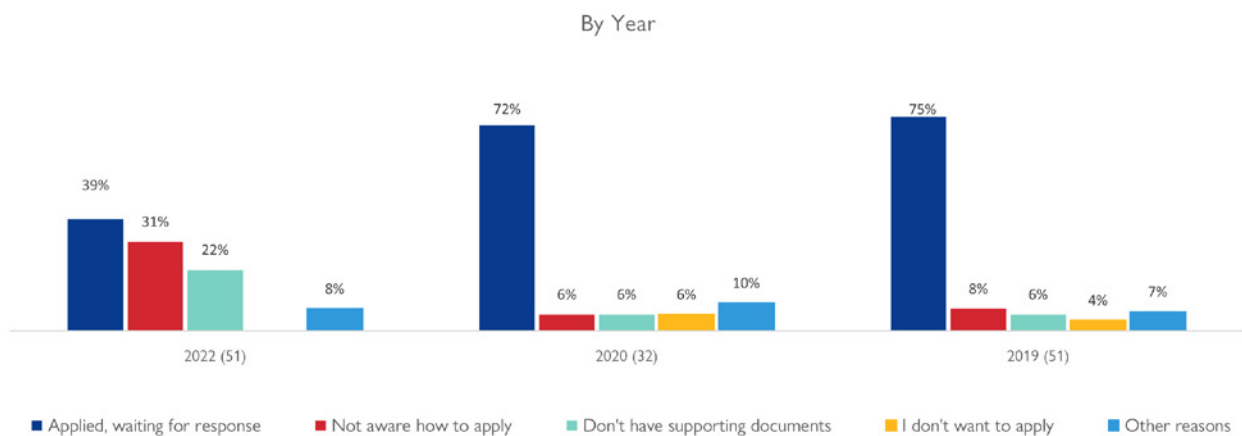
- Among the 2022 returnees, while 55 per cent of adults were registered to vote, this percentage varied substantially by district, from 31 per cent in the Mullaitivu district to 83 per cent in the Mannar district (Figure 29).

Figure 29: Adults registered to vote



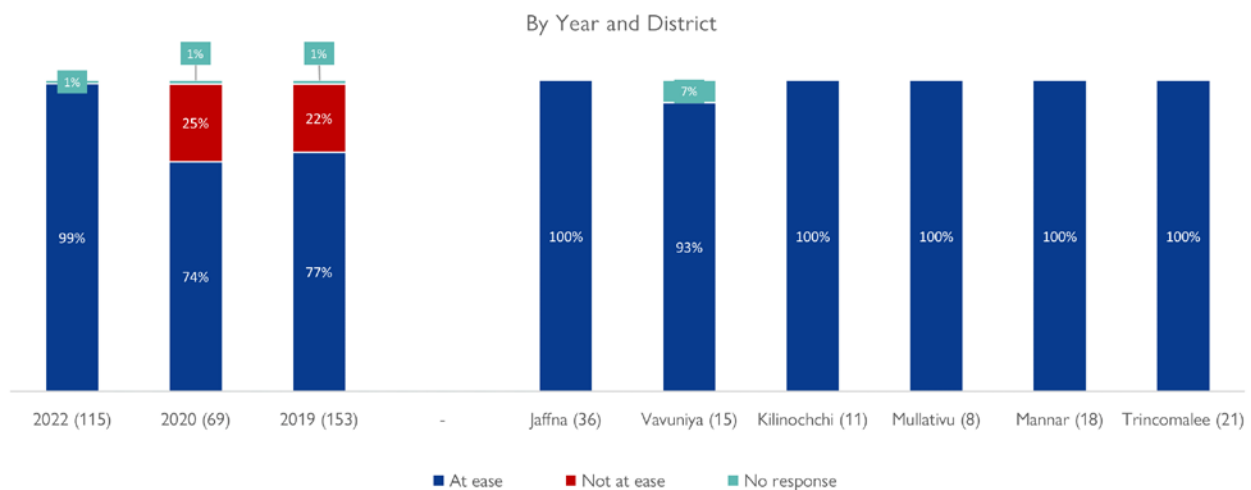
- When asked for the reason for not being registered to vote, the most mentioned reason was that their applications are pending approval from the authorities (Figure 30). Additionally, among 2022 returnees 31 per cent said they were uncertain how to apply for registration, and 22 per cent said they did not have the supporting documents to register.

Figure 30: Reasons for adults not being registered to vote



- Among 2022 returnees almost all (99%) were at ease to discuss their own political views in public, higher than the proportions of 2020 and 2019 returnees saying so (Figure 31).

Figure 31: Whether at ease to discuss own political views in public



Base: All respondents

5.6 | Restrictions in movement

- When respondents were asked whether anyone restricted their movements in and out of the village, 99 per cent said no one restricts their movements and 1 per cent (one respondent) said yes. This respondent, from the Kilinochchi district, said that movements were restricted by the military.

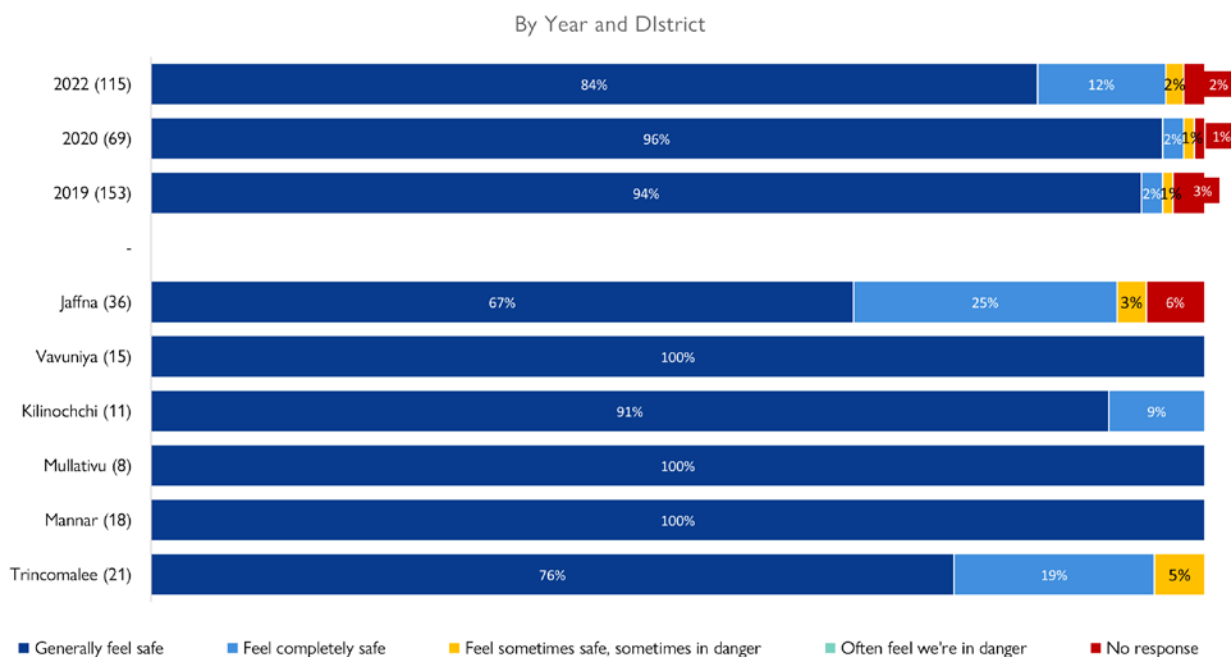
Among 2020 and 2019 returnees, all respondents (100%) said no one restricts their movements.

5.7 | Issues and perceptions impacting peace of mind

- All respondents were asked whether after returning to Sri Lanka, if they or other members of their families faced any of these safety concerns: killed, went missing / disappeared, harassed, or repeatedly interrogated by security forces or the police, arrested, sexually harassed, or abused. Almost all (99%) said they or other family members had not faced any of these safety concerns. One respondent from the Kilinochchi district however said that they faced harassment / repeated interrogation from the security forces.
- Respondents were asked how safe they and their families felt where they lived today (the day of the interview). As shown in figure 32, across all three years of return, about 95 per cent said they felt either generally or completely safe, and 1 per cent to 2 per cent said they sometimes felt safe and sometimes they felt that they were in danger.

Among 2022 returnees, of the two respondents who said they sometimes felt that they were in danger, one respondent (in the Jaffna district) said this was because of crime and violence and the other (in the Trincomalee district) said it was because of the presence of dangerous wildlife.

Figure 32: Extent of feeling safe today

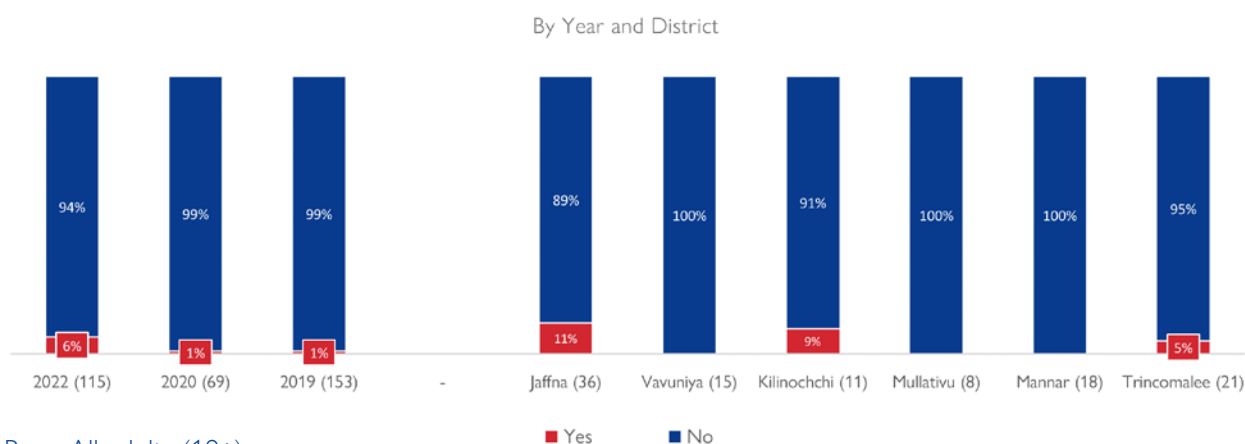


Base: All respondents

5.8 | Relations with the community

- When asked if they were treated differently by the local community as they were refugees, 6 per cent of 2022 returnees said 'yes', slightly more than the 1 per cent who said so among the previous returnee groups (Figure 33). Reasons mentioned by some for this response were as follows:
 - Government authorities do not respect them (One respondent)
 - Treated as being different in the workplace, e.g., being called an Indian (Two respondents)

Figure 33: Whether treated differently by the community for being refugee returnees



Base: All adults (18+)

- When asked where would they go to in case of a family dispute (non criminal) with the community, almost all (97%) among 2022, 2020 and 2019 returnees said it would be the GN / DS. The remaining three 2022 returnees said they would go to the police.

LIVELIHOODS

Intent of queries: To identify if returnees are able to restart their livelihoods or establish new ones following their return, to gather the type of livelihood activities achieved or sought, and to ascertain any constraints to establishing livelihoods.

6.1 | Skills, income sources and support, and extent of receiving livelihood assistance

- Respondents were asked what specific (livelihood) skills they and their family members had. Among the 115 households who returned to Sri Lanka in 2022, 83 per cent (95 households) had at least one family member (including the respondent) with a specific livelihood skill (Table 16). In these 95 households there were 100 family members who had at least one specific skill, an average of just one family member with livelihood skills.

While overall there were 83 per cent of households with at least one family member having a livelihood skill among 2022 returnees, the equivalent percentages for 2020 and 2019 returnees were 68 per cent and 71 per cent respectively.

- The district wise analysis among 2022 returnees (Table 16) shows that in all six districts there was a high proportion of households where at least one family member had a livelihood skill (ranging from 63% of households in the Mullaitivu district to 91% in the Kilinochchi district).

Table 16: Incidence of households with family members having livelihood skills

Percentage of HHs	2022	2020	2019	Jaffna	Vavuniya	Kilinochchi	Mullaitivu	Mannar	Trincomalee
HHs with family members having livelihood skills	83%	68%	71%	89%	80%	91%	63%	83%	71%
Base: All HHs	115	69	153	36	15	11	8	18	21

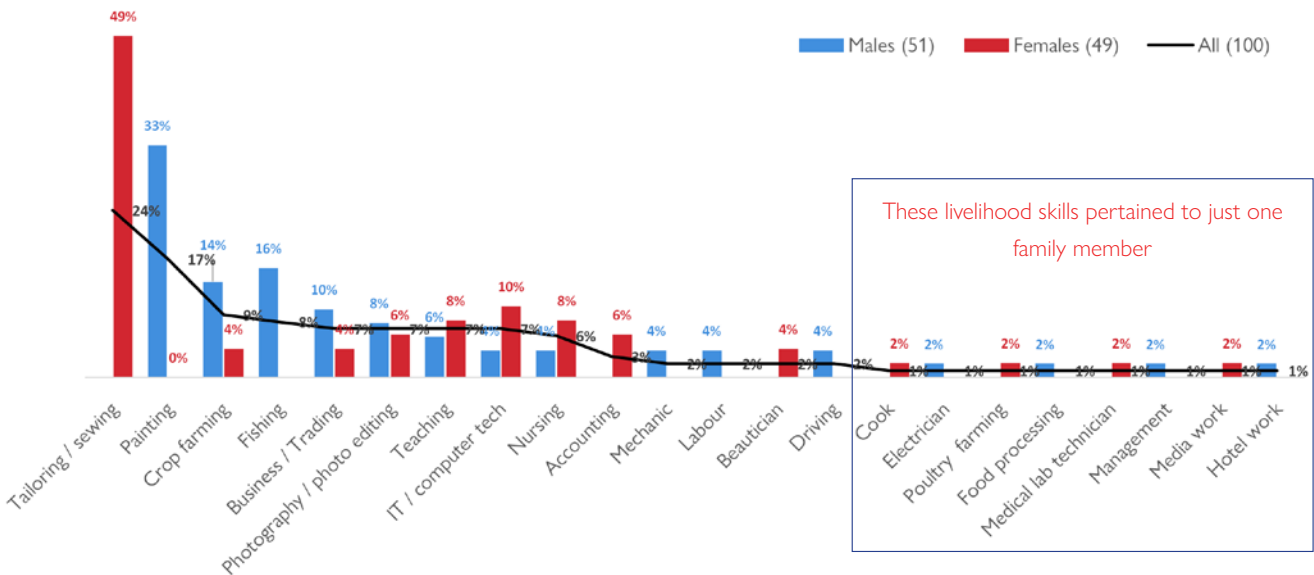
- While there was an equal number of males (51%) and females (49%) who had a specific livelihood skill, as illustrated in table 17, the female proportions have been boosted up by the high share of females with skills in the Jaffna district (62% of those with livelihood skills were female in the Jaffna district).

Table 17: Contribution of HH members with skills, by sex among 2022 returnees

Contribution by sex	2022	Jaffna	Vavuniya	Kilinochchi	Mullaitivu	Mannar	Trincomalee
Males with livelihood skills	51%	38%	50%	82%	60%	50%	50%
Females with livelihood skills	49%	62%	50%	18%	40%	50%	50%
No. of HH members with livelihood skills	100	32	12	11	5	16	18

- As shown in figure 34, the main livelihoods varied by females and males, and a few (14%) had more than one livelihood skill. Almost half the female family members with livelihoods were in the tailoring / sewing occupations (49%), followed by IT / computer tech (10%) and nursing (8%). Males were mostly working in painting work (33%), fishing (16%), crop farming (14%) and business / trading (10%).

Figure 34: Main livelihood skills among family members (2022 returnees)

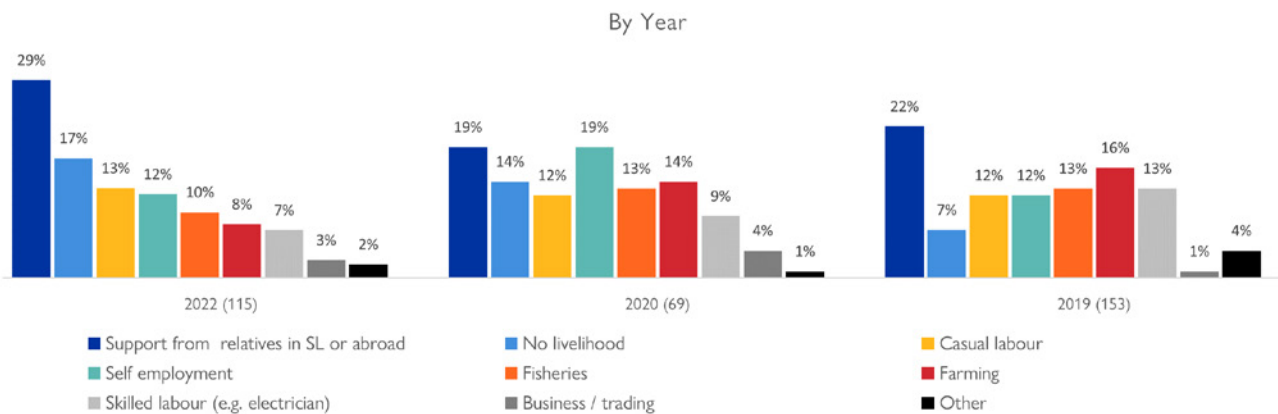


Base: Family members with livelihood skills

- Among 2022 returnees, financial support from relatives (in Sri Lanka or overseas) continued to be the most widely mentioned main source of income (Figure 35), as stated by 29 per cent of 2022 returnees. Only 1 per cent said they had an income earner having salaried employment (included in the chart below after being grouped under 'other' employment).

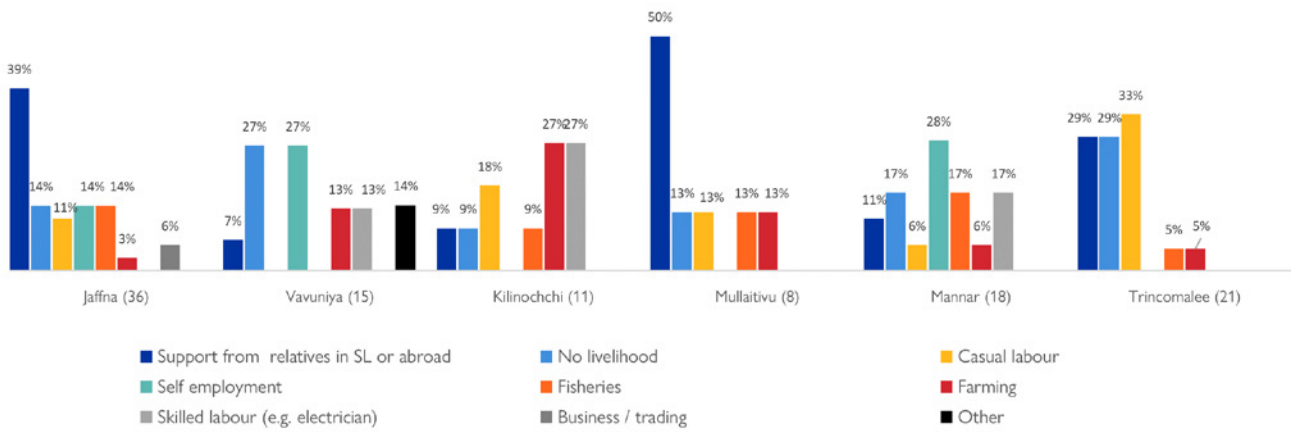
17 per cent said they had no livelihood among 2022 returnees, higher than the 14 per cent and 7 per cent respectively who said they had no livelihood among 2020 and 2019 returnees.

Figure 35: Main source of income in the household



Base: All respondents

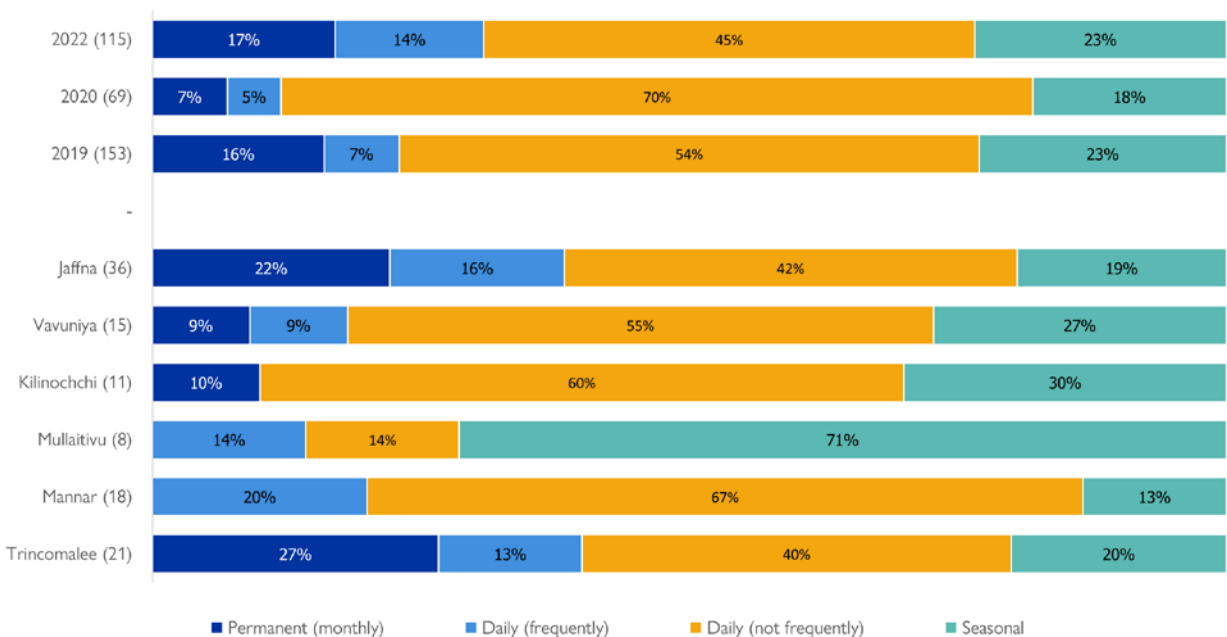
By District



- The main sources of household income varied by district (Figure 35):
 - In the Jaffna and Mullaitivu districts, dependence on support from relatives was very high (Stated by 39% and 50% respectively)
 - in the Vavuniya and Trincomalee districts, the proportions saying they did not have a livelihood were as high as 27 per cent and 29 per cent respectively
 - The Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts had the lowest mentions for 'no livelihood' and most households had incomes other than from remittances sent by relatives
- Those respondents from households where there was a livelihood (i.e., excluding the households where no one had a livelihood as indicated above) were asked how consistently they had a household income.

As shown in figure 36, even among those 2022 returnees who had one or more family members with a livelihood, while a third (31%) had a regular income (either a permanent job or frequent daily paid work), the rest had infrequent or seasonal income. In Vavuniya, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts, the vast majority depended on infrequent daily paid work and on seasonal income.

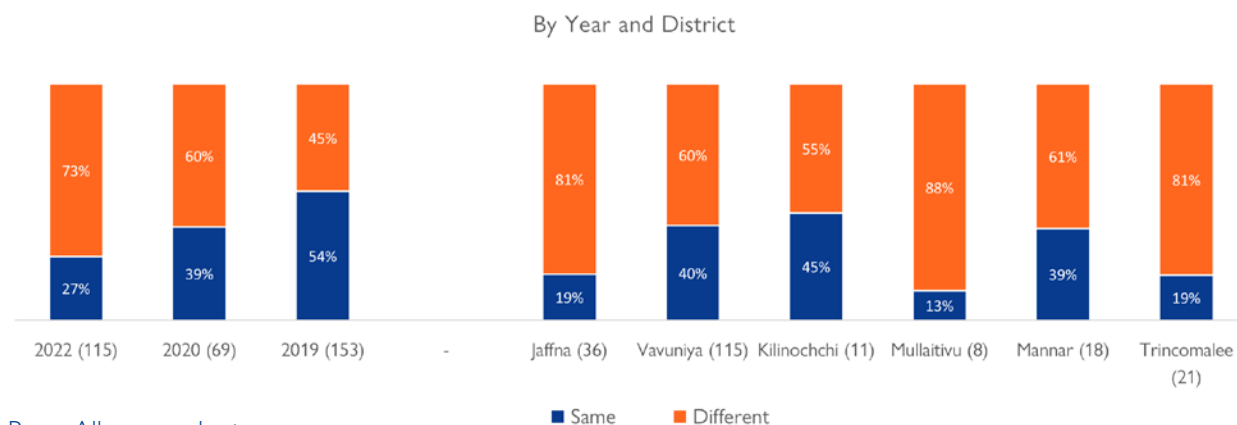
Figure 36: Consistency of Livelihood / Source of income



Base: HHs where family members have a livelihood

- Almost three quarters of 2022 returnees (73%) said their livelihood had changed after returning, higher than the 60 per cent and the 45 per cent of 2020 and 2019 returnees who said so (Figure 37). In all districts, the majority of 2022 returnees came back to a different livelihood.

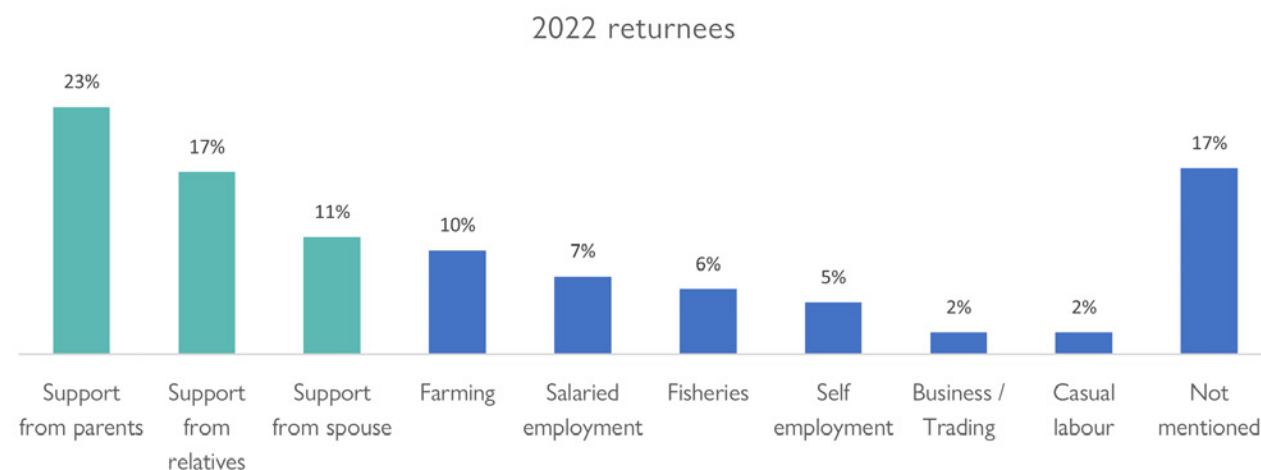
Figure 37: Whether family's livelihood changed after returning to Sri Lanka



Base: All respondents

- Those who said their livelihoods in Sri Lanka were different earlier, were asked what their livelihoods were before they fled the country. Most mentioned support from family and friends as the source of their primary livelihood (Figure 38).

Figure 38: Type of primary livelihood before leaving Sri Lanka



Base: Households whose livelihoods changed after returning to Sri Lanka

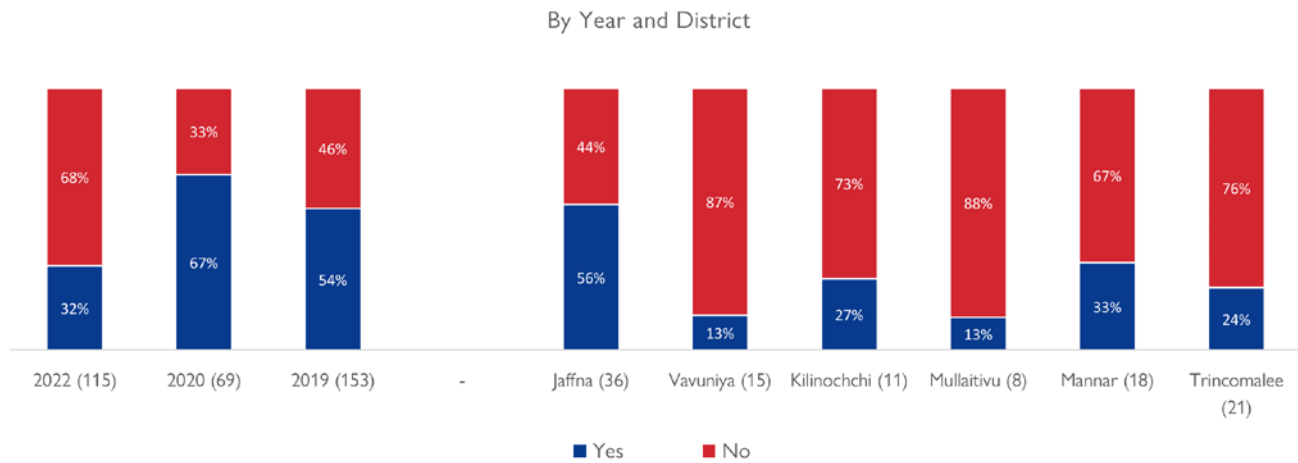
- All respondents were asked what their major impediments or problems if any were to restore their livelihoods. As shown in table 18 expresses the most mentioned impediment / problem was the lack of tools / means to undertake the activity. Responses were largely similar across the three returnee batches.

Table 18: Top 3 impediments / problems to restoring livelihood

Top 3 impediments / problems	2022	2020	2019
Lack of tools / means (material and / or finance) to undertake the activity	54%	68%	69%
I am a person with special needs, and cannot do any job	21%	10%	-
Impossible to find a job here of any type	16%	-	8%
No access to farming land	-	12%	9%
Base: All respondents	115	69	153

- Only a third of 2022 returnees (32%) received livelihood assistance, compared to 67% and 54% of 2020 and -2019 returnees (Figure 39).

Figure 39: Extent of receiving livelihood assistance



Base: All respondents

- As shown in table 19, the most mentioned provider of livelihood assistance for 2022 returnees was UNHCR (with implementation by JSAC), followed by OFERR / OFERR Ceylon.

Table 19: Organizations that provided livelihood assistance

Agency / Government department	2022	2020	2019
UN Agency	67%	37%	42%
UNHCR	67%	37%	40%
UNDP	-	-	2%
Local NGOs	33%	65%	55%
OFFER Ceylon	33%	48%	46%
Valvodayam (Mannar)	-	11%	5%
ADRA	-	2%	4%
ALTRA	-	2%	-
Thellippalai	-	2%	-
Government	-	2%	1%
DS Office	-	2%	1%
Other	-	4%	5%
Base: Those who received livelihood assistance	36	46	83

- All 2022 returnees who received livelihood assistance received materials. Mostly mentioned items were fishing nets, sewing machines and cattle (Table 20).

Table 20: Type of livelihood assistance received

Those who received:	2022	2020	2019
Materials	100%	85%	84%
Cash	-	8%	10%
Services	-	2%	5%
Main items mentioned as materials:			
Fishing net	25%	23%	23%
Sewing machine	17%	11%	11%
Cattle	17%	7%	7%
Furniture for giving tuition / other purposes	9%	-	-
Grocery items / clothes	9%	-	-
Poultry	4%	9%	9%
Water pumps	3%	12%	12%
Goats	3%	9%	9%
PC set for video editing	3%	-	-
Painting equipment	3%	-	-
Musical instrument	3%	-	-
Water pipes	-	4%	4%
Base: Those who received livelihood assistance	36	44	83
Note: In the case of 2022 returnees 3% equates 1 respondent			

6.2 | Youth employment / unemployment

- Of the 115 households that constituted the 2022 returnees, 36 per cent had unemployed 18 to 35 year olds staying at home and who were willing to work, while 14 per cent of households had 18 to 35 year olds who were working and staying at home. Altogether, half the 2022 returnee households (50%) had 18 to 35 year olds, (who were also the head of household in some instances). The percentages of households with 18 to 35s were lower among the 2020 and 2019 returnees at 42 per cent and 39 per cent respectively (Table 21).

Table 21: Households with 18 to 35 year olds who were staying at home

Proportion of households with 18 to 35 year olds	2022	2020	2019
Total no. of households	115	69	153
% of HHs with 18 to 35s, unemployed and staying at home	36%	22%	21%
% of HHs with 18 to 35s, working and staying at home	14%	20%	18%
Total % of HHs with 18 to 35 year olds staying at home	50%	42%	39%

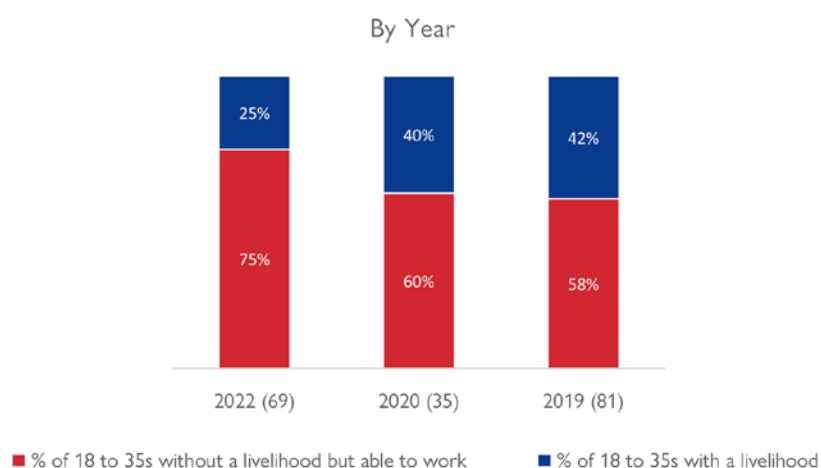
- In terms of the number of family members, 32% of the family members among 2022 returnees were 18 to 35s, higher than the 20 per cent and 24 per cent respectively among the 2020 and 2019 returnees (Table 22).

Table 22: Proportion of 18 to 35 year olds out of all household members

Proportion of 18 to 35 year olds in the total HH population	2022	2020	2019
No. of total family members in all households	215	172	341
Total no. of 18 to 35 year olds	69	35	81
% of 18 to 35 year olds	32%	20%	24%

- Overall, the majority of 18 to 35 year olds were without a livelihood: 75 per cent, 60 per cent and 58 per cent respectively among 2022, 2020 and 2019 returnees (Figure 40).

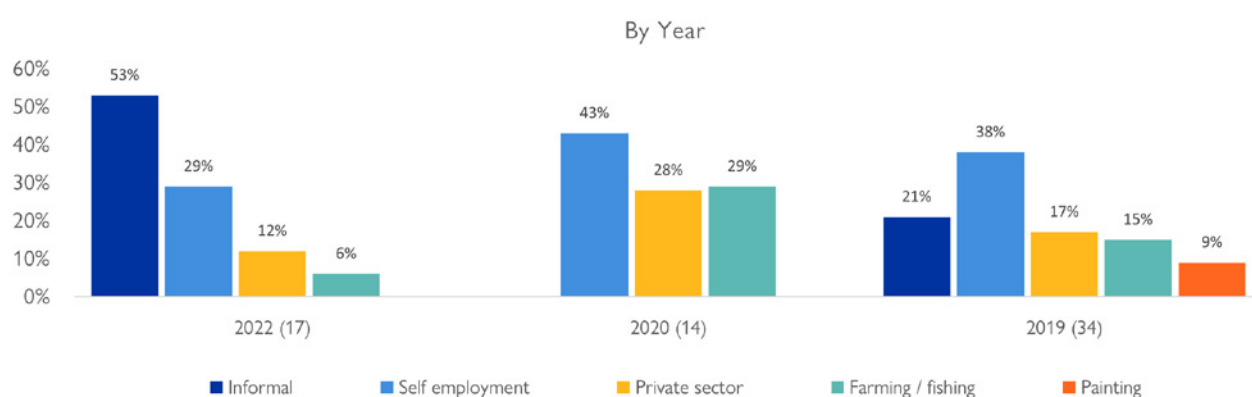
Figure 40: Unemployed to employed 18 to 35 year olds



Base: All 18 to 35 year olds

- Most employed 18 to 35 year olds among the 2022 returnees (53%) were working in the informal sector followed by 29 per cent in self employment (Figure 41).

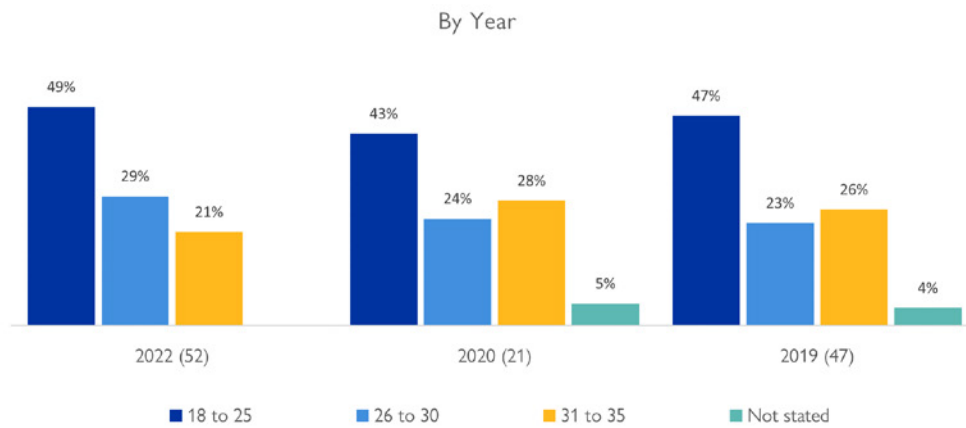
Figure 41: Sectors that employed 18 to 35 year olds were working in



Base: All 18 to 35 year olds

- As shown in figure 42, about half the unemployed 18 to 35 year olds were aged 18 to 25.

Figure 42: Unemployed 18 to 35 year olds by age

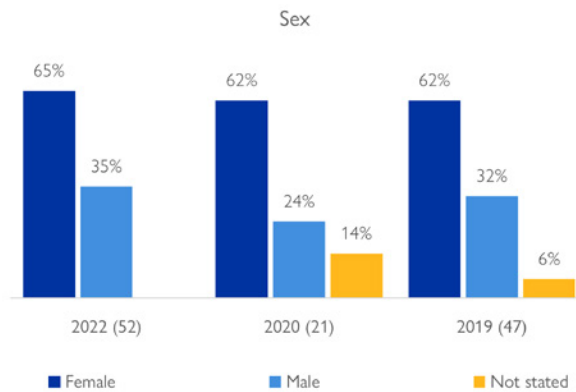


Base: Unemployed 18 to 35 year olds

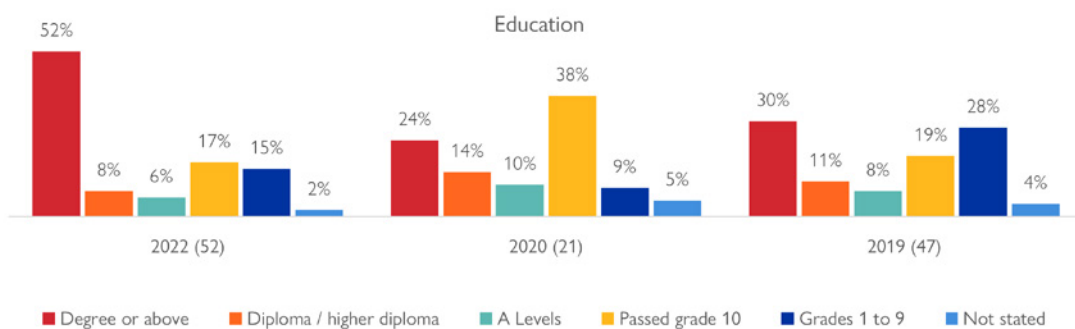
- Among 2022 returnees, two thirds of the unemployed 18 to 35s (65%) were female and about half (52%) had graduate or postgraduate educational qualifications (Figure 43).

While the age profile of the 2020 and 2019 returnees was similar to that of the 2022 returnees, the education profile of these two batches of returnees was different with lesser percentages of 2020 and 2019 returnees having a degree or a higher qualification.

Figure 43: Unemployed 18 to 35 year olds by sex and education

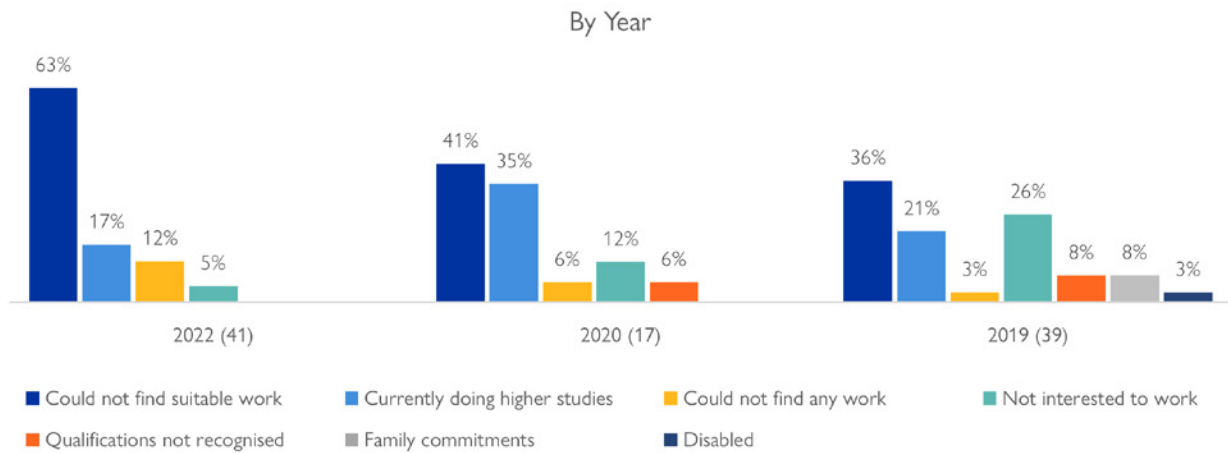


Base: Unemployed 18 to 35 year olds



- As illustrated in figure 44, when asked why these 18 to 35 year olds were not working despite being able to work, the main reason mentioned was the inability to find suitable work (63% among 2022 returnees).

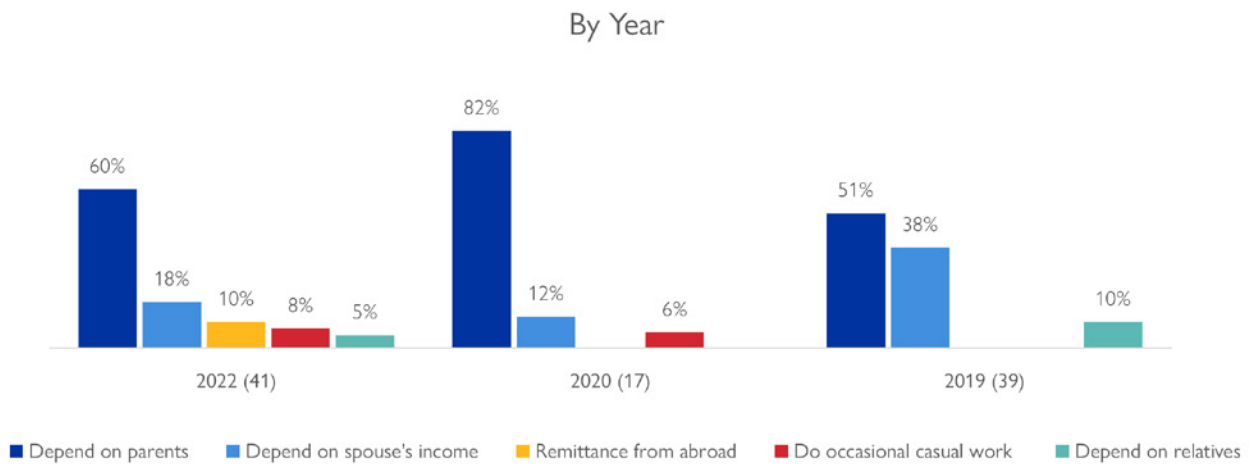
Figure 44: Reasons for 18- to 35-year-olds 18 to 35 year olds who were able to work, not doing so



Base: Respondents in whose households there were unemployed 18 to 35 year olds

- Respondents were asked how these 18 to 35 year old unemployed family members manage financially in the absence of a livelihood. The vast majority said that these family members depended on parental support or spouse's income (Figure 45).

Figure 45: Source(s) of income for unemployed 18-35s who were able to work



Base: Respondents in whose households there were unemployed 18 to 35 year olds

RETURNEE SENTIMENTS ON RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

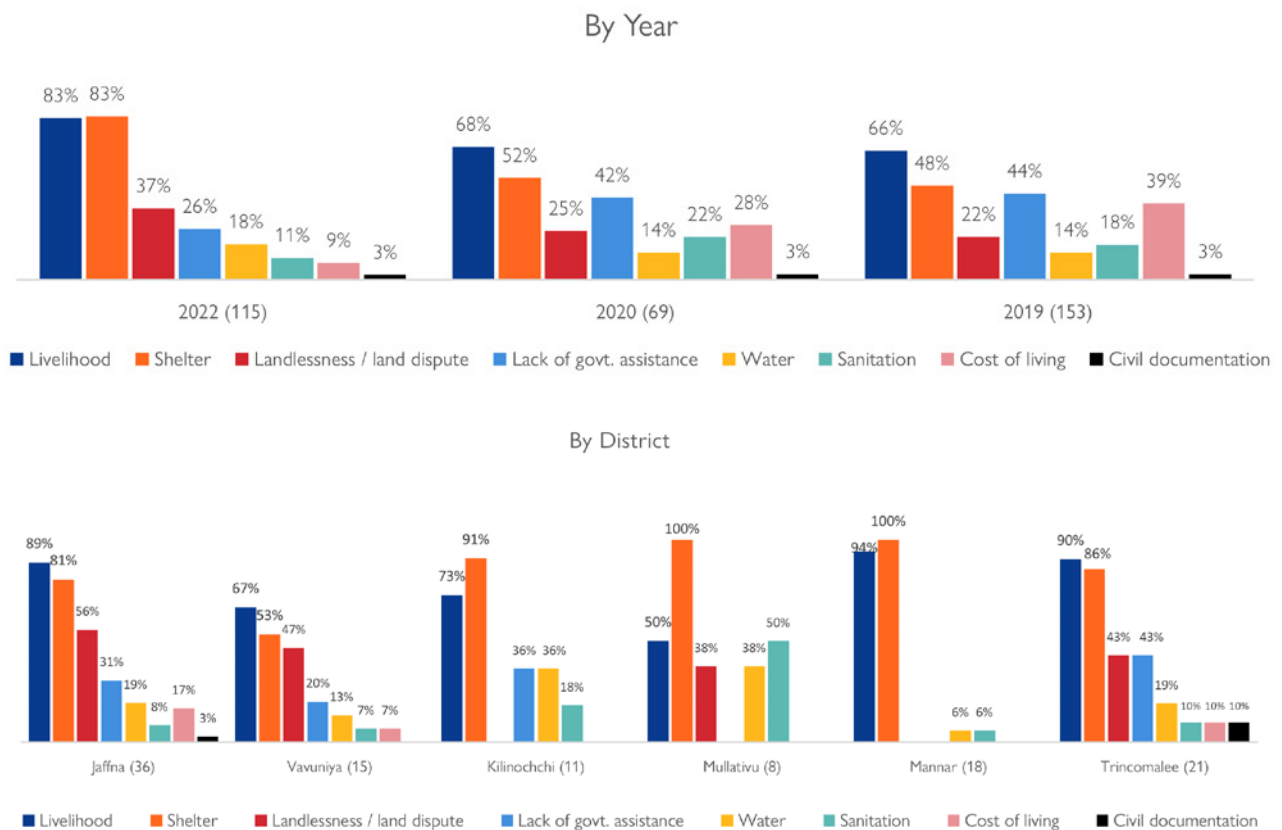
Intent of queries: To collect data regarding the overall satisfaction with return and reintegration, including the intent to remain in the area of return or elsewhere in Sri Lanka, and to assist in providing recommendations to other refugees, still living in countries of asylum.

7.1 | Concerns

- Respondents were asked to state the three main concerns of their family. The most mentioned concerns have continued to be Livelihood and shelter (Figure 46). The third and fourth most mentioned concerns were landlessness / land disputes and the lack of government assistance.

In Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts, availability of water was also among the top four concerns. In Mullaitivu, sanitation concerns were also widely mentioned.

Figure 46: Family's main concerns

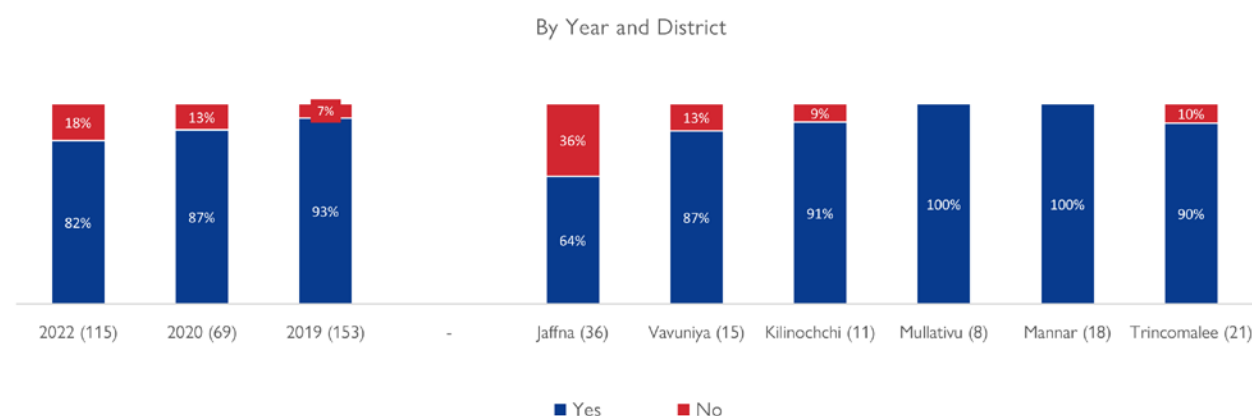


Base: All respondents

7.2 | Whether satisfied with return to Sri Lanka, and intention to stay for good

- While 82 per cent of 2022 returnee respondents said they were happy with their decision to return to Sri Lanka, the percentage saying 'yes' has declined slightly for each successive batch of returnees (Figure 47). The percentage who said they were happy with their decision to return was much lower in the Jaffna district (64%).

Figure 47: Whether satisfied about the decision to return to Sri Lanka



Base: All respondents

- The main reasons for being satisfied with the decision to return were the ability to return to the area where they lived earlier and the ability to be reunified with their family (Table 23).

Table 23: Reasons why satisfied with decision to return to Sri Lanka

Why satisfied with decision to return	2022	2020	2019
Able to return to our place of origin	68%	65%	71%
Reunited with family	60%	48%	48%
Peaceful situation in Sri Lanka	1%	22%	15%
Base: Those satisfied with decision to return	94	60	143

- Livelihood concerns and the high cost of living were the main reasons for not being satisfied with the decision to return to Sri Lanka (Table 24).

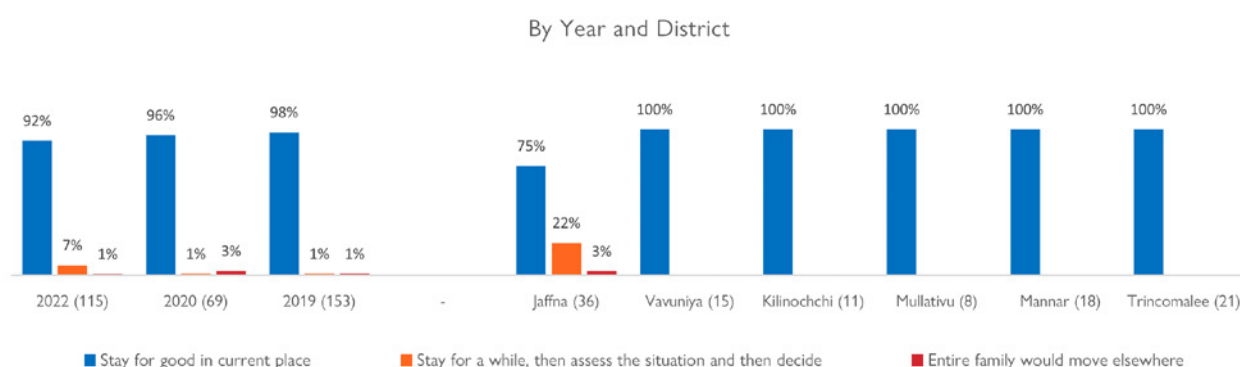
Table 24: Reasons not satisfied with decision to return to Sri Lanka

Why not satisfied with decision to return	2022	2020	2019
No livelihood opportunities	95%	78%	70%
Cost of living in Sri Lanka is high	86%	56%	80%
Lack of assistance from authorities	48%	44%	30%
Base: Those not satisfied with decision to return	21	9	10

- When asked whether the family intends to stay in the current area or to move elsewhere, only 1 per cent of 2022 returnees said they would move elsewhere (Figure 48). 92 per cent said they would stay for good in the current place and a further 7 per cent said they would stay for a while, assess the situation, and then decide. The percentages of 2020 and 2019 returnees who said they would stay for good in the current area were even higher: in the mid and high nineties.

The district wise analysis illustrates that the lowest percentage saying they would stay for good in the area they were, was from the Jaffna district (75%). In other districts, all (100%) intended to remain where they were.

Figure 48: Whether family intends staying in the area or would move elsewhere



Base: All respondents

- The main reason for the 2022 returnees in Jaffna to being unable to commit to staying for good in the current area was the inability to get land / a house there (Table 25). These returnees said that if they decide to move, they would do so to another location in the North or East of Sri Lanka.

Table 25: Reasons why contemplating or deciding to move

Decision to move	2022	2020	2019
Cannot get land and house to live in	5	3	3
Cannot get work / no livelihood opportunities	2	-	-
No response	2	-	-
Base: No. who want to decide later or have decided to move away	9	3	3

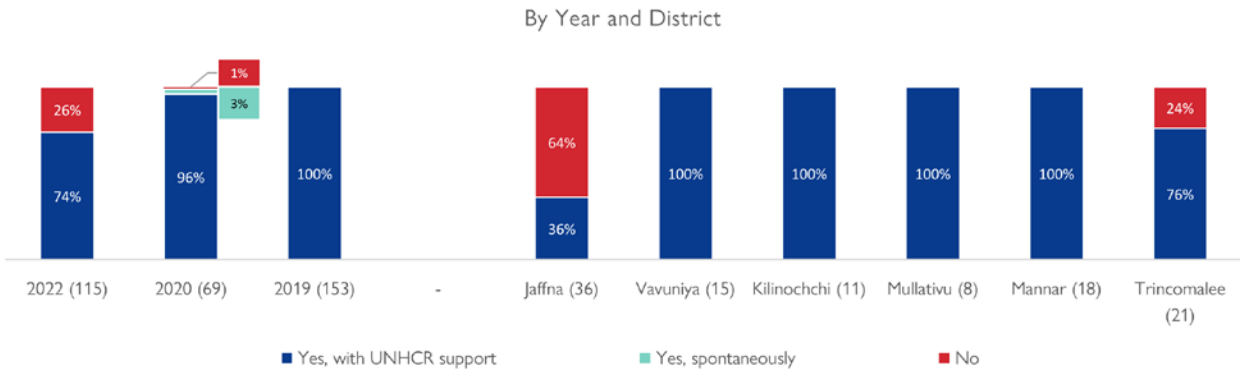
- When respondents were asked what information would be useful to have known before returning to Sri Lanka. Most (70%) mentioned that they would like to know the state of peace in Sri Lanka (Table 26).

Table 26: Information considered useful to know before returning to Sri Lanka

Information requirements	2022	Jaffna	Vavuniya	Kilinochchi	Mullaitivu	Mannar	Trincomalee
Whether there is peace in Sri Lanka	70%	58%	60%	73%	100%	61%	81%
Information on housing situation	10%	31%	-	-	-	-	-
If possible to return to place of origin	10%	-	33%	-	-	39%	-
Information on right to their own land	8%	25%	-	-	-	-	-
Base: All respondents	115	36	15	11	8	18	21

- While almost all 2020 and 2019 returnees said they would recommend other refugees to return to Sri Lanka, through UNHCR support, only 74 per cent of 2022 returnees said they would do so (Figure 49). In the Jaffna district, the majority (64%) said they **would not** recommend returnees to return to Sri Lanka and in the Trincomalee district, 24 per cent said they would not recommend returning.

Figure 49: Whether they would advise other refugees to return to Sri Lanka

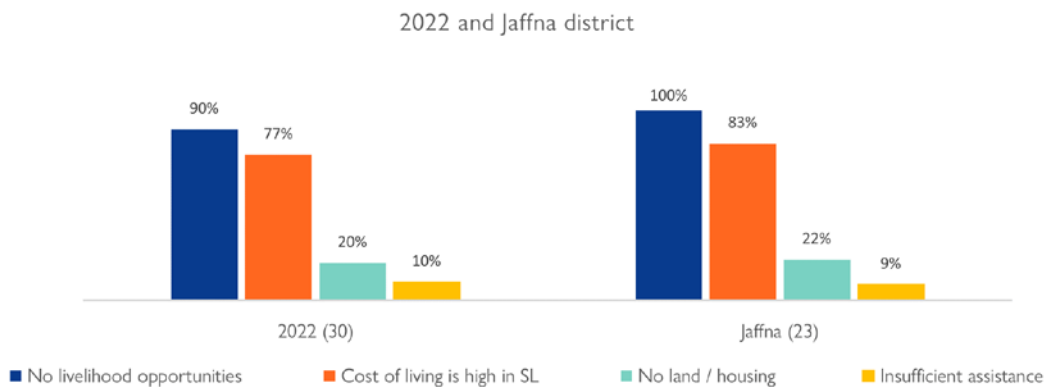


Base: All respondents

- Almost all 2022 returnees who would advocate returning with UNHCR support / facilitation said they would do so because the ability to return safely (100%) and to receive financial assistance (99%).

As shown in figure 50, reasons stated for **not advocating** other refugees to return to Sri Lanka were that there were no livelihood opportunities (90%) and that the cost of living was high in Sri Lanka (77%). Other reasons stated were that there is no land / housing (20%) and a small proportion (10%) mentioned that there was insufficient assistance.

Figure 50: Reasons for not advocating other refugees to return to Sri Lanka



Base: Respondents who would not advocate others to return to Sri Lanka

REINTEGRATION PROGRAMMES OF UNHCR AND OTHERS

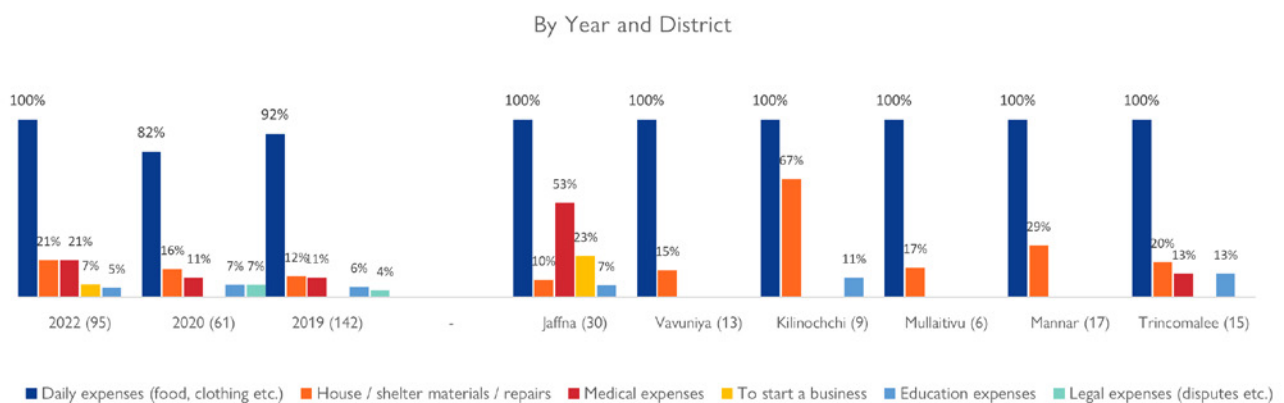
Intent of queries: To identify how returnees used financial and material assistance, to gather information about returnees preferred other items of programme alternatives, and to verify that intended beneficiaries received programme entitlements. This theme of queries is useful to UNHCR (and others) for programme design and monitoring purposes, in addition to the underlying value in protection monitoring.

Note: Data regarding UNHCR assistance is relevant only to those who returned with UNHCR facilitation³.

8.1 | UNHCR assistance for facilitated returnee households

- All 2022 returnee households used the UN reintegration grant for their daily expenses (such as food and clothing), and a fifth each also used it for their home repairs and their medical expenses (Figure 51). Spending on medical expenses was mainly among 2022 returnees in the Jaffna district.

Figure 51: How facilitated returnee households used the UN Reintegration grant

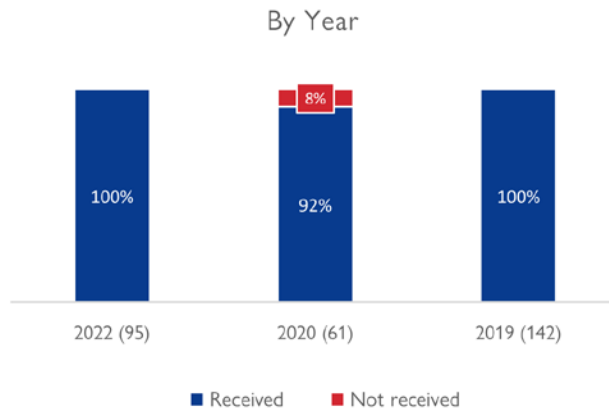


Base: All facilitated returnees

³ In section 1 of this report, it is reported that the percentages of facilitated returnees were 83 per cent, 88 per cent and 93 per cent among 2022, 2020 and 2019 returnees respectively

- All 2022 returnee households received the Non Food Item (NFI) cash grant from UNHCR (Figure 52).

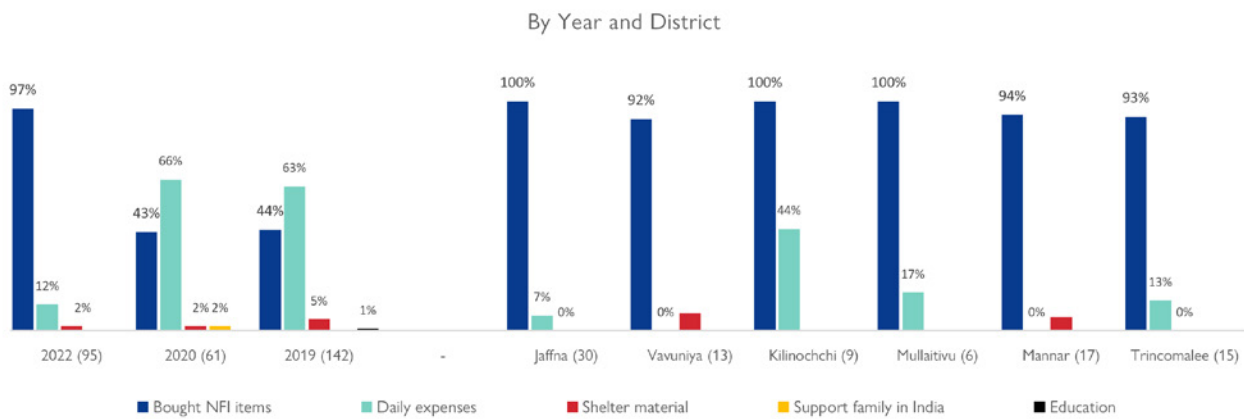
Figure 52: Extent of receiving NFI cash grant



Base: All facilitated returnees

- Almost all 2022 returnees (97%) purchased NFI items with the NFI grant (Figure 53), unlike most previous returnees who spent this cash grant on daily expenses.

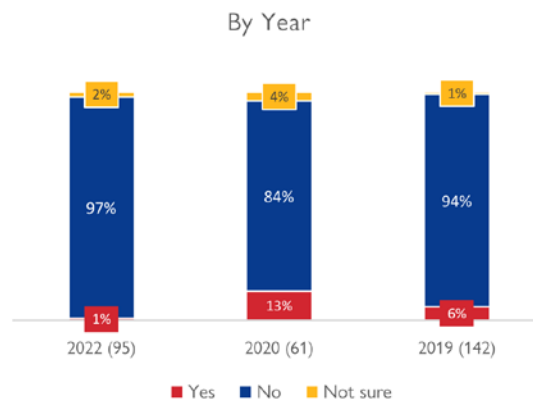
Figure 53: How the NFI cash grant was utilised



Base: Facilitated returnees who received NFI cash grant

- Just 1 per cent of 2022 returnees (one respondent) said they had problems in receiving the NFI grant, less than among the other two returnee groups (Figure 54). This respondent did not provide details of the problem(s).

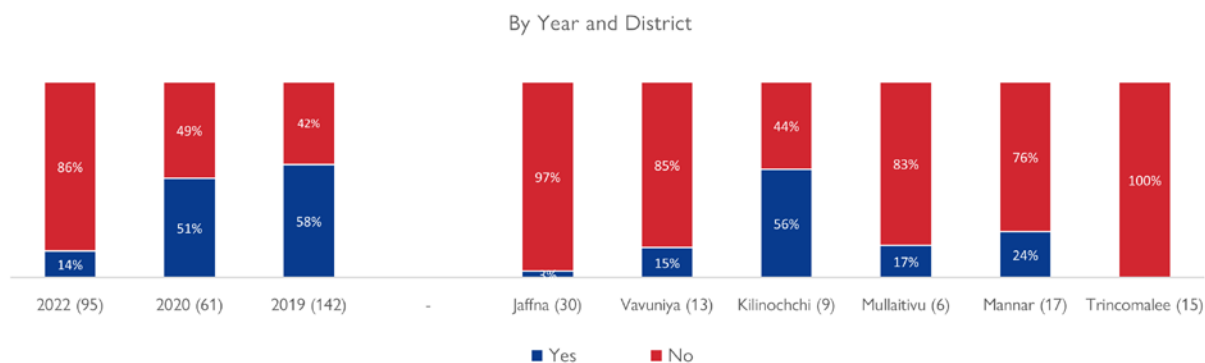
Figure 54: Extent to which there were obstacles in receiving NFI cash grant



Base: All facilitated returnees who received NFI grant

- Among 2022 returnees, only 14 per cent received integration assistance other than from UNHCR, less than the 50 per cent or so of 2020 and 2019 returnees who did so (Figure 55).

Figure 55: Extent of receiving reintegration assistance other than from UNHCR



Base: All facilitated returnees

- The other reintegration assistance was mainly provided by the local NGO, OFERR (Table 27). Almost all received shelter material, and one respondent received Rs. 33,000 cash.

Table 27: From whom other reintegration assistance received

From whom other reintegration assistance received by 2022 returnees	Count
Government	1
DS office	1
Local NGO	12
OFERR / OFERR Ceylon	11
Valvodayam- Mannar	1
Base: No. who received reintegration assistance other than from UNHCR	13

- All 2022 and 2019 returnees and 98 per cent of 2020 returnees (all but one) had approached the UNHCR office. 2022 returnees mainly approached the office to register and to get assistance (Table 28).

Table 28: Whether approached the UNHCR office and why

Approached UNHCR office	2022	2020	2019
Yes	100%	98%	100%
No. of times approached:			
Once	6%	93%	92%
Twice	40%	7%	7%
Thrice	45%	-	-
Four times	8%	-	-
Reason for approaching:			
To register	92%	100%	99%
To receive assistance	89%	3%	2%
To get information	3%	2%	-
Base: All facilitated returnees	95	61	142

- When asked what else UNHCR could do to assist returnees to reintegrate, the main mentions were to increase the baggage allowance and the amount of the grant (Table 29).

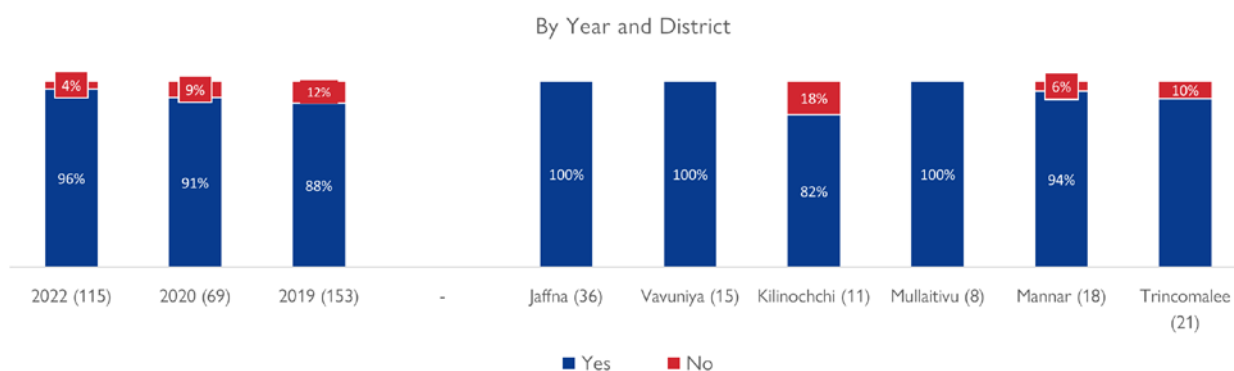
Table 29: Suggestions on what else UNHCR could do help repatriation

Suggestions	2022	2020	2019
Increase baggage allowance	18%	39%	34%
Increase amount of the grant	6%	77%	70%
Reduce processing time in India	2%	21%	27%
Improve travel arrangements	1%	-	3%
UNHCR reception at Colombo airport or Colombo port	1%	-	-
Livelihood opportunities	1%	-	-
Improve quantity / quality of information received in SL	-	26%	23%
Improve quantity / quality of information received in India	-	13%	15%
Improve process to get grant from Bank of Ceylon	-	5%	1%
Nothing mentioned	69%	-	-
Base: All facilitated returnees	95	61	142

8.2 | Sanitation and water

- The vast majority of 2022 returnees (96%) had a toilet in the land where they were residing, more than the percentages mentioned by the 2020 and 2019 returnees (Figure 56).

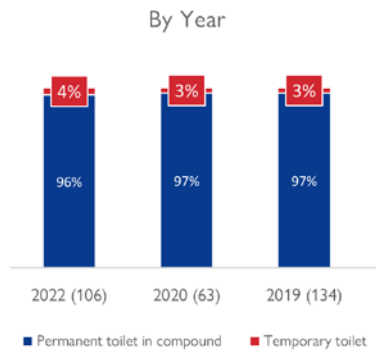
Figure 56: Extent of having toilet in their land



Base: All respondents

- 96 per cent of 2022 returnees who had a toilet, had a permanent toilet, and 4 per cent had a temporary one (Figure 57).
- Five of the 2022 returnee households did not have their own toilet. Most used their neighbour's toilet while one respondent mentioned they go to the bush / open ground (Table 30). Some neighbour's toilets were shared by as many as six to ten individuals (Table 31).

Figure 57: Type of toilet in the land



Base: No. of households with own toilet in the land

Table 30: If no toilet, what is used instead

Number stating a response	2022	2020	2019
Neighbour's toilet	4	4	11
Bush / open ground	1	2	6
Communal toilet	-	-	2
Base: HHs not having own toilet	5	6	19

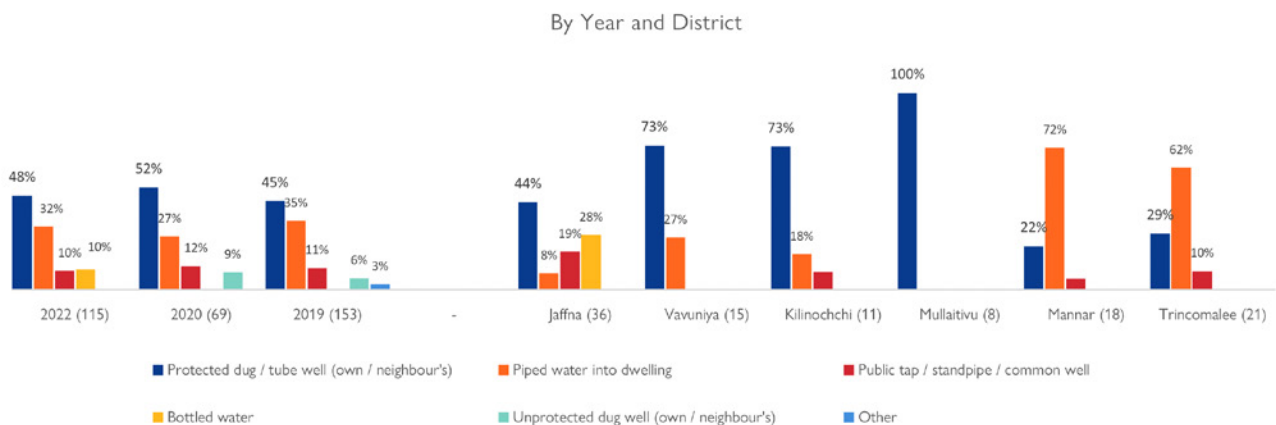
Table 31: How many use the neighbour's toilet

Number stating a response	2022	2020	2019
1-5 individuals	2	2	8
6-10 individuals	2	2	4
Base: HHs using neighbour's toilet	4	4	11

- Across all three groups of returnees, the most mentioned main source of the household's drinking water was from protected dug / tube well followed by piped water into dwelling (Figure 58).

The source of drinking water varied by district among 2022 returnees, with the highest number in the Jaffna, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts saying it was from protected dug / tube wells, while most of those in the Mannar and Trincomalee districts mentioned directly piped water into the home.

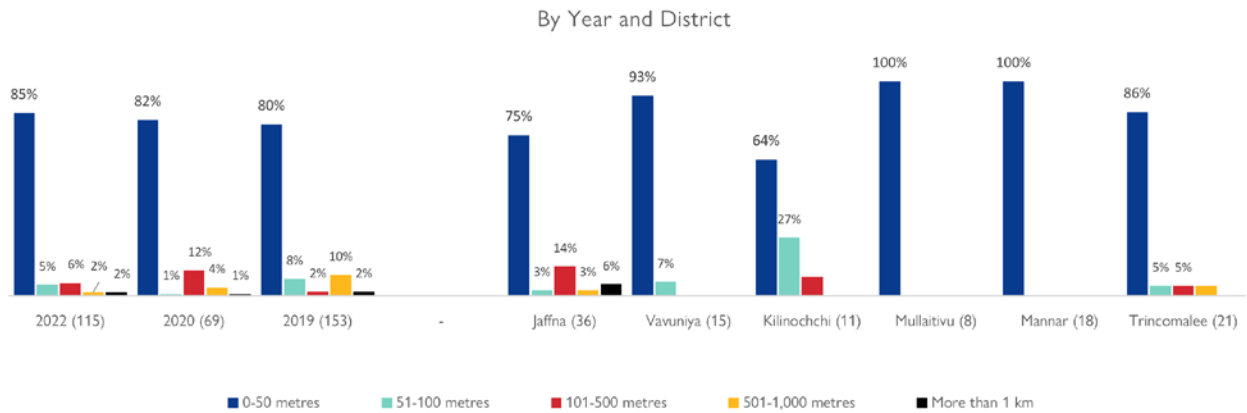
Figure 58: Main source of household's drinking water



Base: All respondents

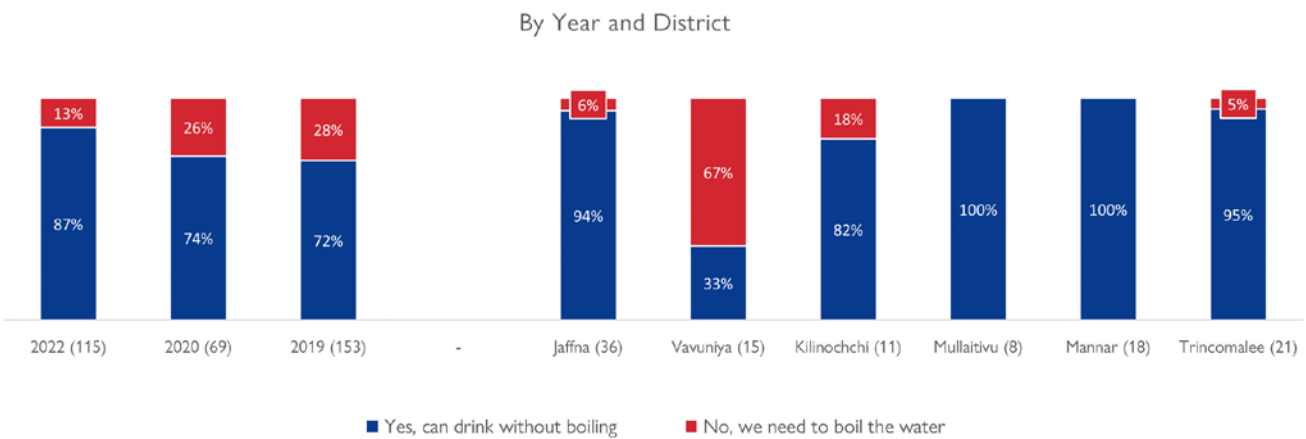
- Over 80 per cent were residing within 50 metres or less from their source of drinking water (Figure 59). However, 4 per cent of 2022 returnees lived more than 500 metres away.

Figure 59: Distance from source of drinking water



- Almost 90 per cent of 2022 returnees (87%) said they could drink the water without boiling, but in Vavuniya district the majority (67%) said that they could not do so, i.e., the water needs to be boiled first (Figure 60).

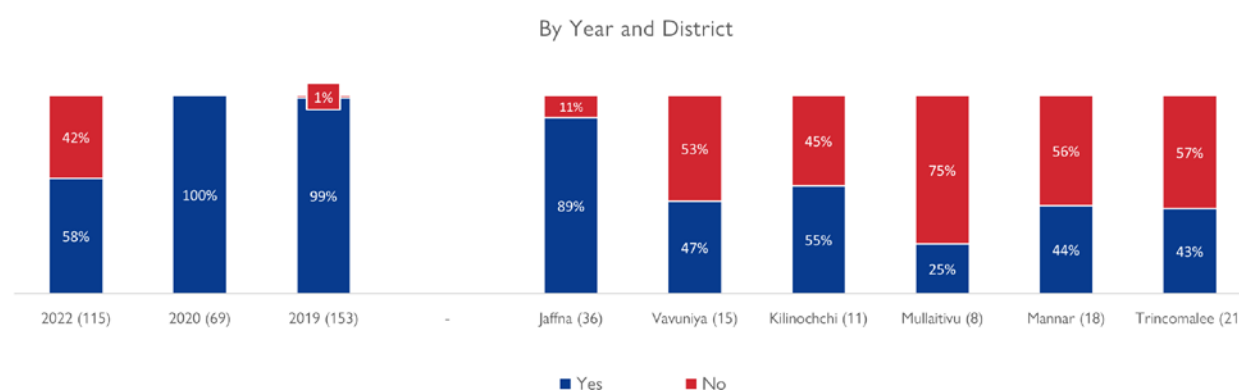
Figure 60: Whether water can be drunk without boiling



8.3 | Health screening or testing

- Unlike 2020 and 2019 returnees, almost all of whom were subjected to health screening / testing, among 2022 returnees, only 58 per cent said they were subject to health screening / testing (Figure 61). Among these 2022 returnees, screening / testing was done for the vast majority in the Jaffna district (89%), but testing levels were very much less in the other five districts.

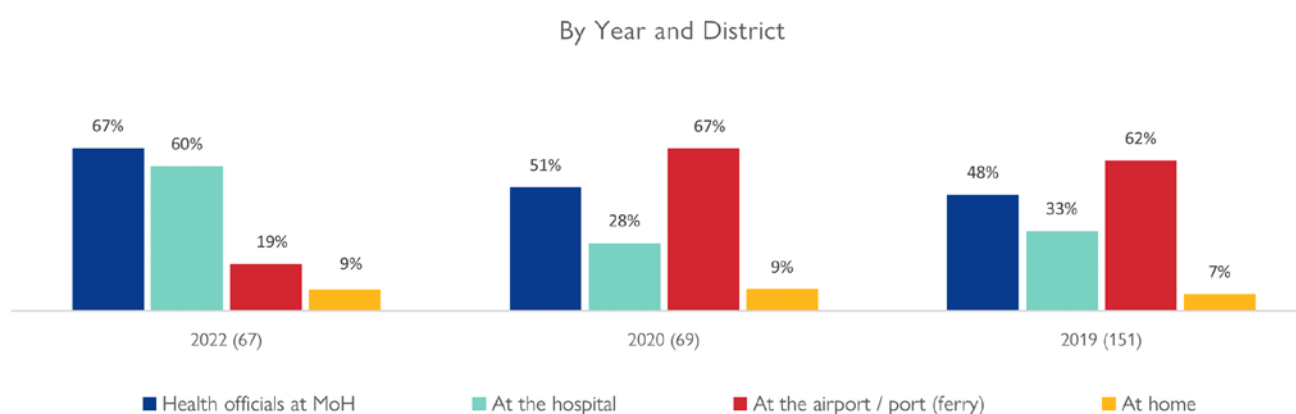
Figure 61: Extent of health screening / testing on arrival in Sri Lanka



Base: All respondents

- Screening / testing at the airport or port in previous years was much less for 2022 returnees (Figure 62). Multiple testing centres were mentioned suggesting that screening / testing locations varied for different household members. This could be due to the entire family not arriving in Sri Lanka at the same time in the case of some households.

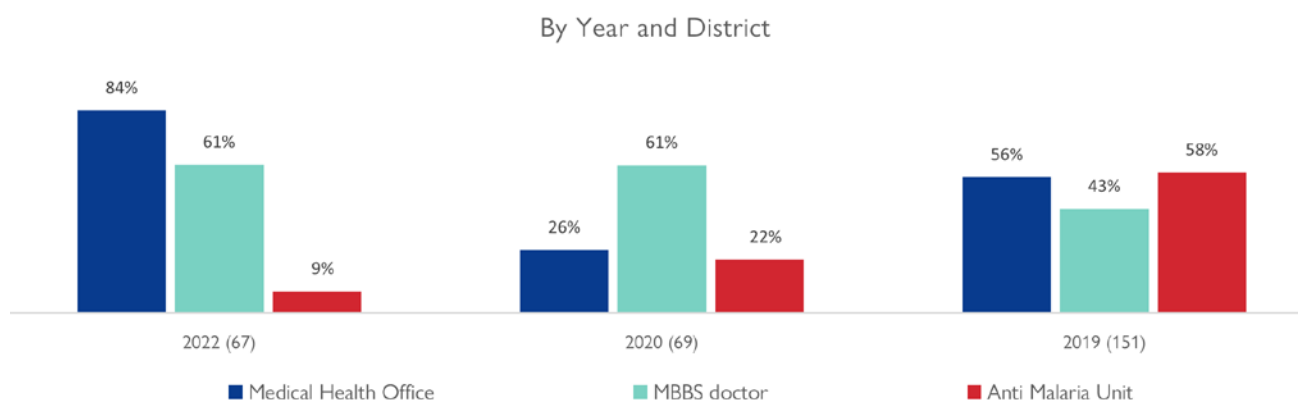
Figure 62: Extent of health screening / testing on arrival in Sri Lanka



Base: Respondents whose household was screened / tested

- Among 2022 returnees, screening / testing was mainly undertaken at the Medical Health Office or by an MBBS doctor (Figure 63). Again, multiple locations or personnel have been mentioned indicating that all household members were not screened / tested together.

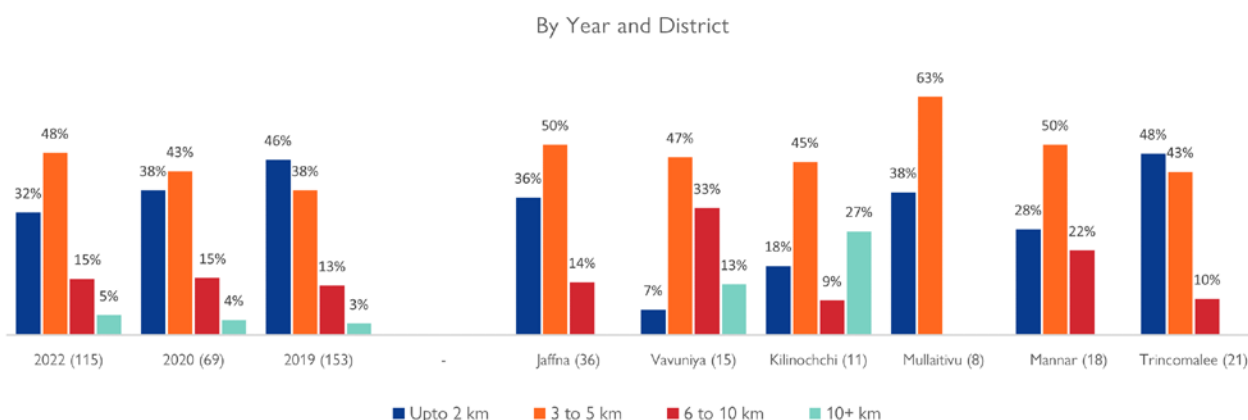
Figure 63: Institutions / personnel who did the testing



Base: Respondents whose household was screened / tested

- Most households were upto 2 km or 3 to 5 km from the nearest hospital (Figure 64).

Figure 64: Institutions / personnel who did the testing



Base: All respondents

8.4 | Education

- Respondents were asked if their children in grade 11 or below were currently not attending school. Among the 2022 returnees, no respondents said their school going children were not attending school (Table 32).

Table 32: Households not sending children to school

School attendance status	2022	2020	2019
Households with children attending school	100%	89%	95%
Households with children not attending school	0%	11%	5%
No. of HHs with children not attending school	-	2	1
Base: Households with children aged 5 to 17	17	18	22

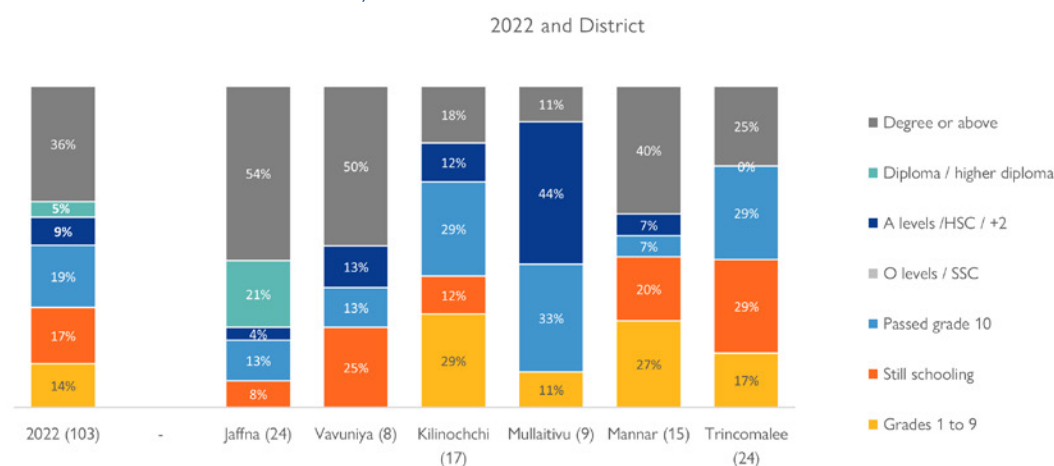
- Respondents were asked about the education of the family in the country of asylum, India. Among 2022 returnees, 71 out of 115 respondents (62%) said they or their household members had been fully or partly been educated in India did not respond (Table 33).

Table 33: Households where family members were fully or partly educated in India

Response	2022	Jaffna	Vavuniya	Kilinochchi	Mullaitivu	Mannar	Trincomalee
HHs with some/all members educated in India	62%	56%	47%	91%	62%	61%	67%
No family members educated in India	38%	44%	53%	9%	38%	39%	33%
Base: All respondents	115	36	15	11	8	18	21

- In all, 103 family members from 71 households had studied fully or partly in India among the 2022 returnees. 41 per cent of these family members had a diploma, degree, or a higher qualification (Figure 65). The highest education levels were among family members in the Jaffna district⁴.

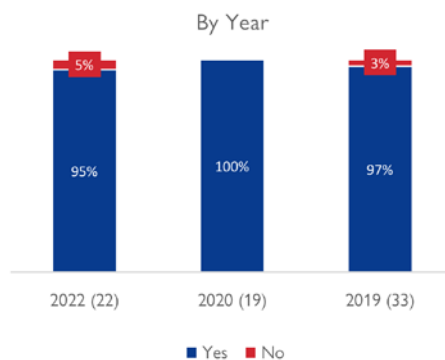
Figure 65: Education in India of family members



Base: Family members for whom there were responses on the level of education

- 22 out of 115 returnees in 2022 (22%) had submitted their / their family members' Indian education certificates to the authorities for approval. Of these 22 returnees, 95% said the certificates were approved. (Figure 66). One respondent (5%) said the educational qualifications were not accepted in Sri Lanka but did not state a reason for the non acceptance.

Figure 66: Extent to which foreign education certificates were accepted



Base: Respondents who sought approval for education certificates

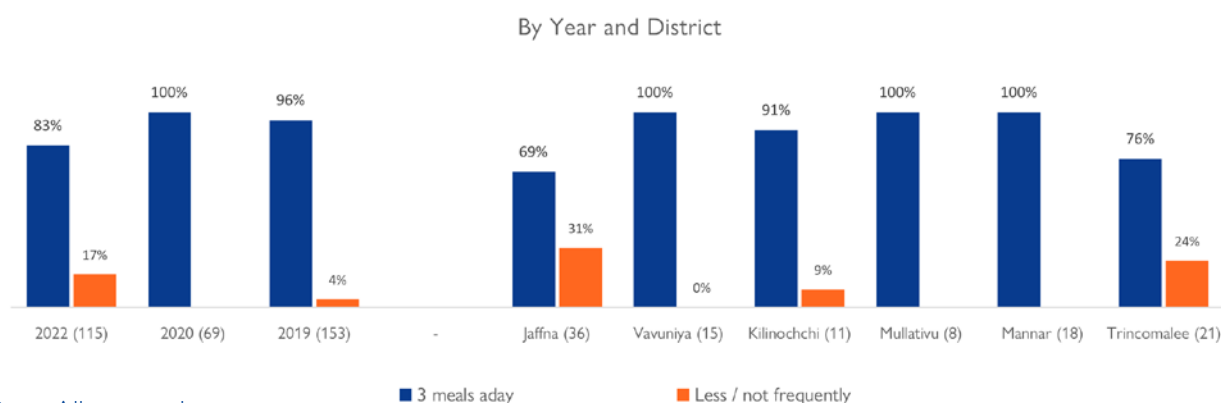
⁴ Since the number of family members is low in the Vavuniya and Mullaitivu districts, education profiles in these two districts need to be looked at indicatively

- Among the 2022 returnees, 10 respondents had approached the Sri Lankan educational authorities to get an equivalent Sri Lankan educational certificate.
 - Nine of them were able to get this done, and seven of them were assisted by OFERR Ceylon
 - The respondent who could not get this certificate said they lacked the relevant documentation

8.5 | Food security

- 17 per cent of 2022 returnees said they did not have three meals a day, and in the Jaffna and Trincomalee districts the percentage saying so was higher (31% and 24% respectively) as shown below in figure 67.

Figure 67: Number of meals per day in last one week



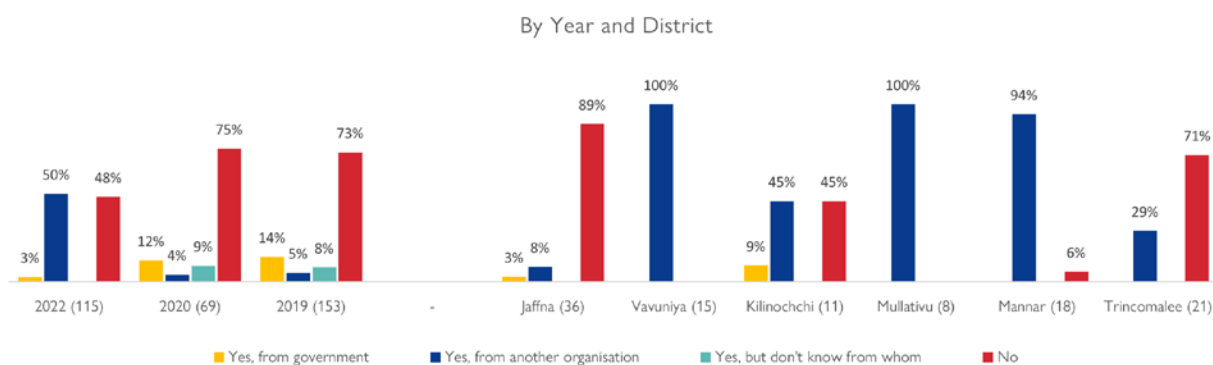
Base: All respondents

- Respondents were asked if their household received any food rations / allowances from the government or any other organization on arrival in Sri Lanka. Among 2022 returnees almost half (48%) said they did not receive a food ration or allowance, but this was more favorable than the 75 per cent and 73 per cent who said 'no' among 2020 and 2019 returnees (Figure 68). In Jaffna and Trincomalee districts, most 2022 returnees did not receive food rations / allowances.

Only 3 per cent of 2022 returnees said they received a food ration / allowance from the government and 50% said they received this from another organization. Of this 50 per cent (57 respondents), 96 per cent said they got the food ration / allowance from UNHCR.

91 per cent of the 2022 returnees who received the food ration / allowance said this was given for a period of one to three months, and the balance 9 per cent said it was a one time assistance.

Figure 68: Received food rations / allowances on arrival in Sri Lanka



Base: All respondents

COVID-19 IMPACT

Intent of queries: To determine the impact of COVID-19 in terms of incidence of vaccination, rate of infection, attitudes towards those infected with COVID-19, types of assistance received and from whom.

9.1 | Incidence of vaccinations and being treated for COVID-19 if infected.

- Almost all adults were given the COVID-19 vaccine, and only one adult (among the 2022 returnees) refused to take the vaccine (Table 34).

Among the 2022 returnees, 5 per cent of households (six households) experienced at least one family member being infected with the COVID-19 virus, and seven family members were infected in all. One respondent said they did not receive treatment for COVID-19, but the infected family members in the remaining five households had received treatment. Also, no one had succumbed to the infection.

Table 34: Incidence of vaccination and infection and reasons for not taking vaccine

Incidence, reasons for not being vaccinated,	2022	2020	2019
Extent of all adults receiving COVID-19 vaccine:	-	-	-
Yes, all adults in household received it	99%	94%	93%
No, some adults in household did not receive it	-	6%	7%
No, none of the adults in household received it	1%	-	-
Base: All households	115	69	153

Reasons for not being vaccinated (No. of respondents)			
Did not want to take the vaccine	1	-	2
Due to medical condition	-	3	3
Did not get the opportunity in India or Sri Lanka	-	-	3
Living alone (No care giver in case of reactions)	-	-	1
Not eligible due to age	-	-	1
Base: No. of households not vaccinating all or some adults	1	4	10

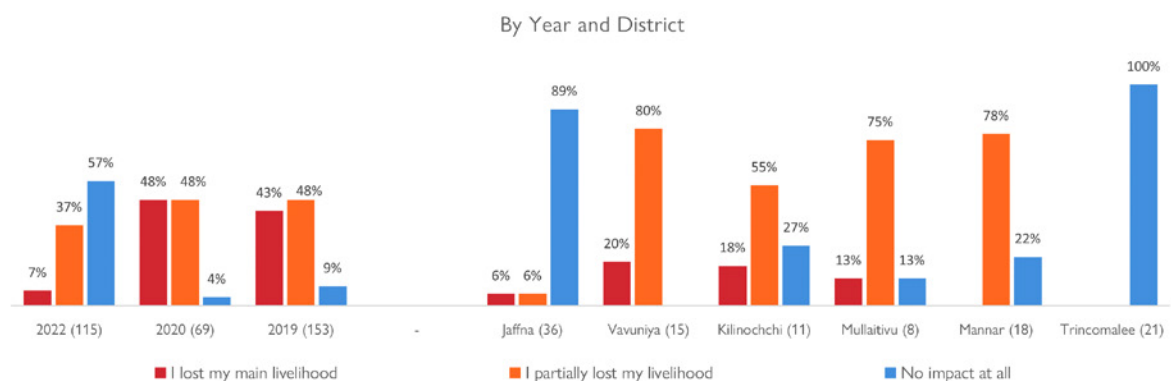
Extent of HHs being infected COVID-19 (Base: All HHs)	5%	4%	5%
No. of HHs infected	6	3	7
No. of HH members infected	7	6	11
No. of HHs with covid-19 infection not getting treatment	1	-	-
No. of HHs where anyone succumbed to COVID-19	-	-	-
Base: All households	115	69	153

9.2 | Impact on infected households from the community and impact on livelihoods

- Respondents in households where there were family members infected with COVID-19 were asked if they or their family members received hostile treatment from the community due to this. Among the six 2022 returnee households where one or more family members were infected with COVID-19, respondents from five households (83%) said they received hostile treatment.
- Among the 2022 returnee households, 57 per cent of the respondents said they did not suffer any adverse impacts due to COVID-19, while 7 per cent said they completely lost their livelihood and 37% partially did so (Figure 69). The impact was highest in the Vavuniya and Mullaitivu districts.

Among 2020 and 2019 returnees however, the impact was substantially higher with over 90 per cent saying they completely or partially lost their livelihoods.

Figure 69: Impact of COVID-19 on livelihoods



Base: All respondents

- Finally, only 1 per cent of 2022 returnee households (one household) received assistance related to COVID-19, down from 80 per cent each among 2020 and 2019 returnees. This household received cash from the DS office.

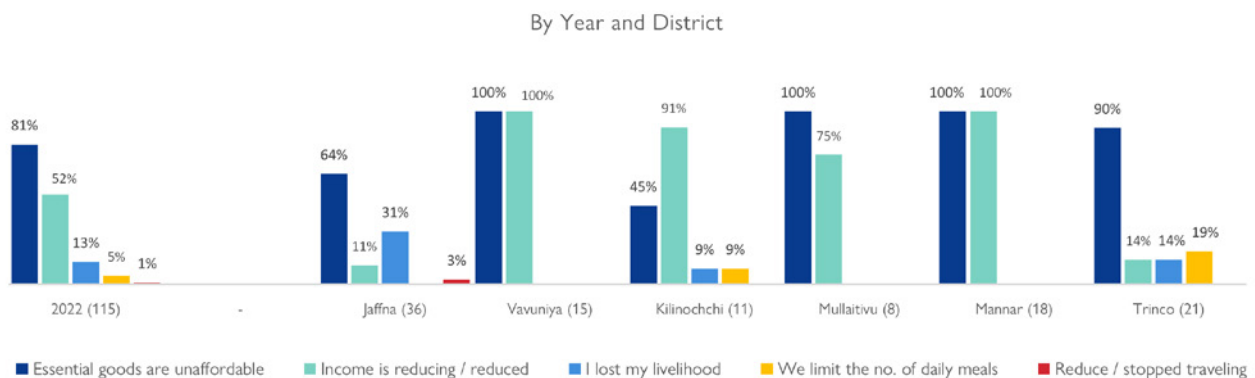
ECONOMIC CRISIS IMPACT AND CLOSING REMARKS

Intent of queries: To determine the impact of the 2022 economic crisis in Sri Lanka where the country experienced substantial currency devaluation, curtailment of imports and substantial increases in lending interest rates from banks and other financial lending entities. These questions sought to gauge the impact of this crisis on respondents' lives.

10.1 | Impact of the economic crisis

- All respondents were asked how the current economic crisis affected them. Over 80 per cent of 2022 returnees mentioned they cannot afford to buy essential goods, followed by half who said their income is coming down or has reduced (Figure 70). In Jaffna district, a third (36%) said they lost their livelihoods.

Figure 70: Impact of current economic crisis



Base: All respondents

- 15 of the 115 returnees in 2022 said they lost their livelihood / income. Most said they hardly had anything to live on, while some said they sold or pawned jewelry or other items (Table 35).

Table 35: If livelihood / income is lost, how are they managing

Number who said:	2022
There is no income at all, hard to live	11
Pawn / sell jewelry / other items	3
Depend on spouse's income	1
No response	1
Base: Those responding that livelihood / income is lost	15

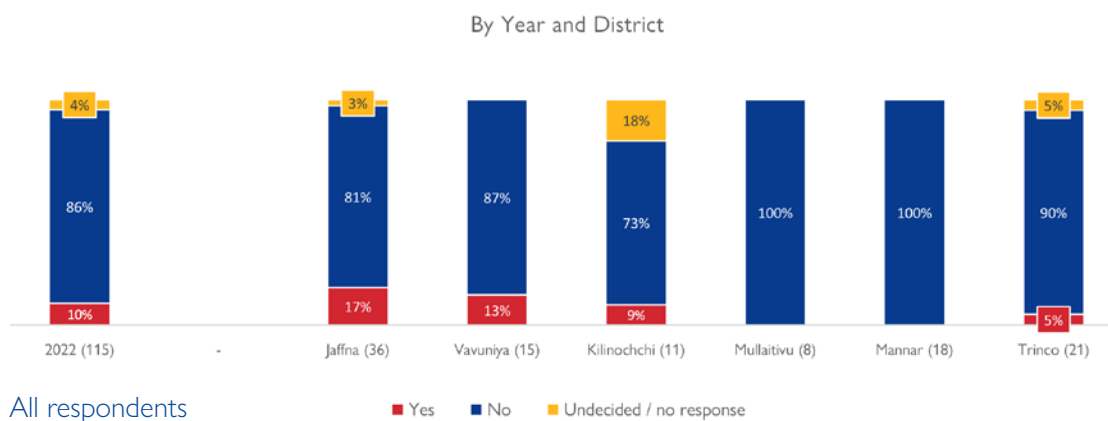
- Respondents were asked to name their impediments if livelihood was lost. As shown in figure 36, the lack of fuel for travel and transport was mostly mentioned.

Table 36: Impediments when livelihood was affected

Number who said:	2022
Could not do go fishing due to a lack of fuel	4
Could not undertake cultivation / harvest due to lack of fuel and / or unavailability of fertilizer	3
Could not to go to my workplace due to lack of transport / lack of fuel	3
Could not continue production and marketing of my cottage industry items due to lack of fuel / gas	2
Lack of opportunities	2
Base: Those who responded that livelihood / income is lost	14

- All respondents were asked whether they got medicine when they or their family members were sick. All but three respondents said they got medicine i.e., 3 per cent said they did not get medicine. The reason for not getting the medicine was that the price was unaffordable.
- When asked if they were thinking of returning to India or elsewhere due to the current economic crisis in Sri Lanka, as many as 10 per cent of 2022 returnees said yes, and in the Jaffna district the percentage saying 'yes' was higher, at 14 per cent (Figure 71).

Figure 71: Whether thinking of returning to India / elsewhere due to Sri Lankan economic crisis



10.2 | Respondents' closing remarks

Finally, all 115 respondents were asked if they had any other comments they wished to share about their daily lives. The main responses were as follows:

- Need livelihood assistance (34%)
- Need permanent house / shelter (34%)
- No support from the government (26%)
- Need land (14%)
- Cost of living is high (14%)
- Lack of job opportunities (9%)
- Need utilities i.e., water / electricity (4%)
- Citizenship is delayed (3%)
- Need assistance for children's education (3%)
- Do not get Samurdhi benefits (3%)

A few spontaneously appreciated the work done by UNHCR

- Thank you to UNHCR for their help (4%)

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