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## Hundreds of Afghan refugees held in Karachi

9/7/2013

Pakistani security forces have detained hundreds of Afghan refugees from various areas of Karachi, the capital of southern Sindh province, during a latest crack down on miscreants.

The massive operation involving police and Rangers personnel that began on Wednesday came after security situation in the country's financial hub was further deteriorated.

On Thursday, three suspected militants were killed during an exchange of fire with security forces in Mauripur area.

An Afghan elder Haji Abdullah told Pajhwok Afghan News Pakistani security forces had detained 475 Afghan refugees from various areas as of Friday.

He said all the Afghans detained had been issued computerised "proof of registration (PoR) cards" with special biometric features. Most of the detainees worked in bakery shops, vegetable and fruit markets and others, he added.

A 70-year-old Afghan woman, who lives in the city's Super Highway area, said her only son had been detained by police in the Sohrab Goth area, leaving the family without a guardian.

Another Afghan elder, Haji Nasim, said police had no right under the law to keep detainees in custody for more than 24 hours before producing them in a court.

He claimed the police held the Afghans over the past three days in other places instead of police stations. The elder said police had also released some individuals in return for money.

A number of Afghans on Thursday staged a protest demonstration in front of the Karachi press club against the detentions.

On the other hand, police said they had arrested a number of foreign suspects, with some from Afghanistan.

Karachi police spokesman Imran Shaukat told reporters they had arrested and released those Afghan nationals who lacked legal stay documents.

The Afghan consul general in Karachi, Shah Ahmad Saeed, told Pajhwok Afghan News he had officially raised the issue with Pakistani officials.