



October 17, 2023

Dear Esteemed Officials of Pakistan,

We are writing as individuals and organizations dedicated to Afghan relocation and resettlement efforts to express our deep concern over recent events in Pakistan which put the safety and security of vulnerable Afghans at great risk. Recent changes and decisions made by the Pakistani government not only impact the lives of those Afghan nationals, but also carry broader humanitarian and national, regional, and international security implications.

Pakistan was a staunch ally to the U.S. during the war in Afghanistan and has long been a sanctuary for millions of Afghan refugees. In addition, thanks to the generosity and hospitality of the people of Pakistan, the country has become home to millions more refugees from the region. While we understand and appreciate the challenges this poses, the recent government notification announcing a plan to deport Afghans is both deeply troubling and concerning. We are particularly concerned that this decision will impact Special Immigration Visa (SIV) applicants, those with referrals to the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP), and Humanitarian Parole applicants, all of whom have a pending or approved pathway to legal U.S. immigration.

These individuals include, but are not limited to, former interpreters, journalists, women leaders, and other professionals who face significant risks if returned to Afghanistan. Many Afghans residing in Pakistan are in the late stages of exhaustive vetting processes and are awaiting U.S. visa or refugee status approval. To deport them back to an environment where their lives would be in jeopardy runs counter to humanitarian principles and international accords to which Pakistan is a signatory. Further, it is simply inhumane to treat these vulnerable neighbors in such a manner. At a minimum, we would hope to see an exemption from detention or deportation of Afghans who have pending or approved immigration applications to the United States.

We also write to express our deep concern over the unjust and frequently corrupt practices surrounding exit permits. This problematic process negatively affects everyone, but is disproportionately harmful to women and children, and is being administered in an illogical and unresolvable manner. Specifically, many children who originally entered Pakistan without being required to have a visa are now being denied exit permits on the basis of not having that very visa. Even newborns—who were born AFTER their family's arrival in Pakistan—are unjustly denied exit permits because they did not possess entry visas, an illogical and unfair situation that families are incapable of resolving. In fact, these practices run counter to the Pakistani government's effort to decrease the number of Afghans living in the country without immigration status to be there. If the exit permit process were administered fairly or waived entirely, and Afghans who are approved to immigrate to the United States and other nations could get exit visas for their families, the international community could better help Pakistan meet its goals.

Given the gravity of the situation, we respectfully request:

- An immediate halt to the deportation of Afghans who have pending or approved visa applications for entry into the United States or accepted referrals into the USRAP.
- Streamlining the exit permit process to ensure that Afghans with immigration pathways to third countries and who are ready to depart, are able to leave without roadblocks.
- Immediate approval of International Organization for Migration's request to establish a Resettlement Support Center in Pakistan to assist Afghans in transition and verify their eligibility for resettlement.

We urge you to consider that the deportation of these vulnerable individuals contravenes international obligations surrounding the humane treatment of refugees and asylees including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Pakistan is a signatory.

These deportations would not be consistent with Pakistan's humanitarian tradition, and if pursued, would certainly adversely impact Pakistan's relationship with the United States and could cause lasting damage to Pakistan's reputation among the international community.

Time is of the essence, lives are at stake, and the international community is watching. We strongly urge you to act promptly and compassionately. AfghanEvac would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters with officials of your government with an eye toward strengthening our cooperation.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this critical issue.

Respectfully,
Shawn VanDiver
President, #AfghanEvac

Dr. Colin H. Kahl
Senior Advisor, #AfghanEvac

Anne C. Richard
Senior Advisor, #AfghanEvac & Freedom House

Ambassador (Ret) Wendy J. Chamberlain
Former U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, former U.N.
Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees

Ambassador (Ret) Ronald Neumann
Former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan

Ambassador (Ret) Earl Anthony Wayne
Former U.S. Chief of Mission to Afghanistan

Ambassador (Ret) Hugo Llorens
Former U.S. Chief of Mission to Afghanistan

Ambassador (Ret) Philip Kosnett
Senior Advisor, #AfghanEvac and Former U.S.
Ambassador to Kosovo

General David D. McKiernan, U.S. Army (Ret)
Former Commander, International Security
Assistance Force (ISAF) and United States Forces -
Afghanistan (USFOR-A)

Lieutenant General John A. Bradley, U.S. Air Force
(Ret)
President and CEO, The Lamia Afghan Foundation

Major General James "Boe" Young, U.S. Army (Ret)
Board Member, Allied Airlift 21

Major General Patrick Reinert, U.S. Army (Ret)
Volunteer

Annie Pforzheimer
Chair, Women for Afghan Women | Former Deputy
Chief of Mission at Embassy Kabul

Tripp Adams
Interim President and CEO, Truman Center for
National Policy

Michael Abramowitz
President, Freedom House

Jack McCain
Founder, Operation Eagle

Judge (Ret.) Louisa Porter
President, San Diego Afghan Rescue and
Resettlement Fund

Teresa Casale
Executive Director, Mina's List

Katherine Schuette
Executive Director, Team America Relief

Mike Pollock
Co-Founder, Team America Relief

Lyla Kohistany
Chief Executive Officer, Honor the Promise

Christopher Purdy
Veterans for American Ideals and Human Rights First

Pegah Parsi
Chief Privacy Officer, #AfghanEvac

Jeffrey Wells
Chief Security Officer, #AfghanEvac

Sarah Ivory
Executive Director, USAHello

Dickson Monk
Executive Director, Columbia World Affairs Council

Lee Drake
Humanitarian Legal Assistance Project

Stephen Gates
President, Afghan Scout Relief Fund

Zuhal Bahaduri
Executive Director, The Five Pillars Organization

Katie Bray
Director of Immigration Legal Services, Catholic Charities Indiana

Jason Howk
Director, Global Friends of Afghanistan

Jasmin Mouflard
Executive Director, Hospitality for Humanity

Erin Piper
Co-Founder, Afghan Refugee Relief and Aid

Michael Trudeau
Volunteer, #AfghanEvac Coalition

Rabea Kruegel
Volunteer, #AfghanEvac Coalition

Alex Plitsas
#AfghanEvac Coalition Volunteer

Allison Spencer
Vice President, World Hazara Council USA

Wynona Heim
Principal, Wise Woman Advising

Kathryn Winogura
Co-Director, Burma Refugee Families and Newcomers

Khalil A. Arab
SIVs and Allies Program Manager, Combined Arms

Angela Bachmann
Volunteer, Blackhawk Alliance

Michelle Milligan
Director, Paloonkey

Reshad Ahmadi
Ambassador, Hearts and Homes for Refugees

Kim Corbridge
Afghan Promise

Amy Robertson
Program Director, Hearts and Homes for Refugees

Jennifer Muenzberg
Founder, Global Evac Afghanistan

Meredith M. Festa
President, Paws Unite People

Matthew Soulia
Project Alpha

Michael Sheridan
Director, Community Supported Film

Lark Escobar
Evac Coordinator, FAER

Victoria Marshman
Rescue Afghan Women Now

Sarah Cady
CEO, REACT DC

Hanna Tripp
Senior Policy Advisor, Minority Vets of America

Kimahli Powell
CEO, Rainbow Railroad

Laura Dietz
Founder, Task Force Nyx

Margaret Stock
Attorney, Cascadia Cross Border Law Group

Rose Lozon
Refugee Relocation and Resettlement Consultant,
Project Alpha

JoAnn LoBello
Paws Unite People

Samad Fazli
Team Spirit

Arash Azizzada
Co-Director, Afghans for a Better Tomorrow

Kathie O'Callaghan
Founder & President, Hearts & Homes for Refugees

Ellen Smith
Executive Director, Keeping Our Promise Inc.

Shani Gilchrist
Principal, SRG Strategic Consulting

John Moses
Founder, Massachusetts Afghan Alliance

Adam Zarnowski
World Hazara Council USA

Jeannie Hartley
Advocacy and Communications, World Hazara
Council USA

Tess Berry-Hart
Aman Project LGBTQ Afghans

Sara Elizabeth Dill
Partner, Anethum Global

Megan Charles
Team America Relief

Kim Staffieri
Executive Director, Association of Wartime Allies

Amy Letmanski
OSP Blackhawk Chalk

James Lance Conklin
Conklin Immigration Law, LLC

James Seddon,
Volunteer, #AfghanEvac Coalition

Kami Rice
Co-Founder, Allied Shepherd

Joseph Azam
Chairman, Afghan-American Foundation

Catalina Gasper
Founder, Task Force Diablo

Jennifer Thomas
Admin Lead, Tarjoman Relief

Emily Ruppert
Coordinator, EVAC

Margaret Arsala
#AfghanEvac Coalition Volunteer

Mia Renna
Security Fellow, Truman National Security Project

Matthew Crescenzo
Political Partner, Truman National Security Project

Leslie Harrison
Team13

Leigh Ann Kosmas
The Lamia Afghan Foundation

Will Felder
Director, Tarjoman Relief

Hansen Mak
Defense Council, Truman National Security Project

Ferdous Dehqan
Legislative Director, The Afghanistan-U.S. DPCC

Mark Christopher
Affiliate Professor, George Mason University

Leo Tanaka
Defense Council, Truman National Security Project

Claire Everhart
Political Partner, Truman National Security Project

Tabatha Thompson
Security Fellow, Truman National Security Project

Michelle Tolson
Volunteer

Mahdi Surosh
Program Officer, Freedom House, Afghanistan
Human Rights Coordination Mechanism

Fiona Eddison
Volunteer

Kendra Ganobsik
Case Manager (volunteer), World Hazara Council USA

Susan Holland
Volunteer

Laila Ayub
Co-Director and Immigration Attorney, Project ANAR

Colonel (Ret.) Arnold Strong, U.S. Army
CoFounder, Operation Snow Leopard

Kristy Perano
President, Kurdish Alliance of North America

Jay Jackson
U.S. Military Veteran

Sunil Varghese
Policy Director, International Refugee Assistance
Project

Homaira Hosseini
Board Member, Afghan American Community
Organization

Robert Hedlund
President and CEO, Joint Development Associates
International

Kimberly Keuling
U.S. Military Veteran

Stephanie Rudat
Political Partner, Truman National Security Project

Jessica Gottsleben
Truman National Security Project

David Yates
Chairman, Centre for Climate and Conflict Refugees

Freshta Razbaan
Prosecutor, Attorney General's Office of Afghanistan

Kathleen Ferguson
Volunteer Case Handler, Task Force Diablo

Rahela Kaveer
World Hazara Council USA

Robert Ness
Volunteer, Operation Snow Leopard

Hannah Williams
Volunteer, Blackhawk Alliance and World Hazara
Council USA

Valerie Edmondson Bolaños
Founder, Warrior Angels Rescue