



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office



Home Office



Ministry  
of Defence

The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP  
Foreign Secretary

The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP  
Home Secretary

The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP  
Defence Secretary

MSU/4/2/6/9/is

24 August 2021

**TO: ALL MPS AND PEERS**

Dear Colleagues,

### **AFGHANISTAN UPDATE**

The strength of feeling about the humanitarian crisis now unfolding in Afghanistan from colleagues across both sides of both chambers is keenly felt. There is no denying that the events that have unfolded in front of us over the last two weeks were unpredicted in their pace and scale and that our response, as fast and as full as it may be, will not be able to reach all of those we would have wished to protect.

But you can be assured that the full might of Government is being brought to bear in our evacuation efforts, and our teams in Kabul, the Gulf and at our headquarters continue to work round the clock in very difficult circumstances to deliver people to safety outside Afghanistan.

#### **OPERATION PITTING – Evacuations**

Until the US military withdraw from Kabul Airport on 31 August, we continue to facilitate the urgent evacuation of British nationals, those eligible for consular support, staff who worked for the UK in Afghanistan and other special cases.

We are grateful to you and your staff for your important work directing people to the correct stream for support. Where you have shared cases with us, we are following up directly and our consular teams are doing all they can to reach everyone who needs our help.

Work to provide resettlement to at risk Afghans did not begin on 15 August, nor will it cease with the end of military evacuations.

Before the formal evacuation started, an estimated 500 British Nationals followed FCDO advice and left the country by commercial means and over 1,900 people had left under the ARAP scheme.

Since the start of our evacuation on 15 August we have now evacuated over 5,100 individuals under the ARAP programme, 1,800 British Nationals and their dependents, 1,100 Third Country Nationals and 200 other eligible persons.

By 0600 BST 24 August, we had evacuated over 8,500 people on RAF aircraft since 15 August.

In total, around 11,000 people have been supported to leave the country since April, due to the extensive cross-Government effort. This figure includes those we have advised and supported to leave since April, as well as those evacuated on charter flights, from the Gulf to the UK, since 15 August.

We are doing everything in our power to continue to increase this figure. We have significantly increased both our processing and evacuation capacity, with approximately 1,000 UK military personnel now deployed in Afghanistan.

The task has not been easy. Our troops have worked incredibly hard in extremely challenging situations and we know that colleagues will join us in thanking them for the exceptional job they are doing. As you will have seen from media coverage, our military planners have worked quickly to adjust plans to deal with crowding around Kabul Airport, and overcome changes to Airport access.

Working across Government, we have been streamlining processes to get people out as quickly as possible. Home Office officials are on the ground in Afghanistan, and rapidly processing security checks on others seeking to travel.

We have worked together to ensure there are no backlogs once relevant personal details have been provided and over 4,000 checks have been completed in the last 72 hours alone.

### **Ongoing applications**

We continue to process a variety of different individuals and cohorts, with cases selected on the basis of the nature and extent of their work with and for the UK, and their vulnerability. This window of opportunity at Kabul Airport for military evacuation will shortly come to a close. This is why we are working around the clock to ensure that every possible seat on each plane is put to good use and why we continue to engage without international partners on what support we can give during the next phase.

It is the sad reality that many of those who are screened and declared eligible for evacuation, may not make it to the airport before our flights end. The challenges they face getting to the airport, coupled with the crowds at the gates, mean that many will simply not get to us in time. If the US timetable to withdraw by 31st August does not change then our forces will have to leave before then. It is for that reason that we are quickly developing third country processing hubs and alternative routes back to the UK.

### **The Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme**

As the Home Secretary has announced, after our military presence has withdrawn, we will begin a new resettlement scheme for vulnerable Afghan people, focussing particularly on women, children, and other vulnerable groups. We expect to take around 5000 in the first year, and a total of 20,000 over coming years. Further information on the scheme can be found [here](#).

For the vulnerable Afghans remaining in Afghanistan when we are no longer able to conduct evacuation flights, the Home Office have established a telephone number for vulnerable non-British nationals in need of assistance. The number (+44 (0)2475 389980) is already live.

### **Housing**

At the heart of our resettlement scheme are homes from local authorities around the country. If you haven't already, we urge you to get in contact with your local authorities to discuss what part they can play to in supporting this national endeavour. We are writing to all Local Authorities and Devolved Administrations to ask for this support to come forward.

### **International Engagement**

Having pledged to double the amount of humanitarian and development assistance that we had previously committed to Afghanistan this year - taking this up to £286 million with immediate effect - the Prime Minister has made clear that UK will play a leading role in the international community's ongoing support for the people of Afghanistan. The Foreign Secretary chaired a meeting with G7 counterparts on 19 August and the Prime Minister will now host a meeting of G7 leaders on Tuesday. The Government remains in constant contact with the UN, key allies and partners in the region to drive discussions on how countries can response to new threats faced in Afghanistan and how we can address the humanitarian and human rights challenges that may emerge in the new Afghan regime.

We want you to know that everything that can be done to bring as many vulnerable people back to the UK as possible, is being done.

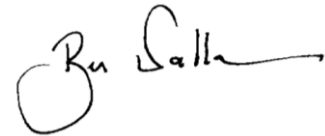
Yours,



**The Rt Hon Dominic  
Raab MP  
Foreign Secretary**

*With all good wishes*  


**The Rt Hon Priti Patel  
MP  
Home Secretary**



**The Rt Hon Ben  
Wallace MP  
Defence Secretary**