



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

27 August 2021

Dear Colleagues,

AFGHANISTAN UPDATE

The developments in Afghanistan over the last few weeks have been extremely difficult to witness. We know many of you, like thousands of people around the country, have been closely involved in working to make Afghanistan a better place over the last two decades and have a deep connection with the country and its people.

Yesterday's callous attacks on innocent people outside Kabul airport brought into stark relief the fragility of the situation in Afghanistan. It was also a terrible reminder of the challenges we face both in getting people to safety now and supporting the country in the long-term.

Our thoughts are with the families of all those who lost their lives, including several US service personnel and many Afghan civilians.

As you know, in line with US military deadlines and our operational objectives, the UK evacuation effort at Kabul airport, Operation PITTING is concluding. We wanted to update you on the end of our current process and what follows next, including the return of nearly 1,000 HMG personnel over the coming days.

We have worked at unprecedented pace to facilitate the largest and most complex evacuation in living memory. The Armed Forces, MoD, FCDO and Home Office staff have worked incredibly hard in very difficult circumstances to bring out over 13,000 people over the last two weeks.

This number includes British nationals and their dependants, Afghans who worked for the UK government and military and their dependants, and other Afghans who are at particularly high risk. We have also supported our allies and partners to help their nationals to safety wherever possible.

This has only been possible thanks to the extraordinary efforts of UK troops and government officials on the ground, who put themselves in harm's way and worked around the clock to evacuate as many people as possible.

We are grateful for all your efforts to direct those in need of support towards assistance. Our consular teams have been able to reach many in need thanks to your help.

A whole of government effort will support and integrate our Afghan friends into UK society through this traumatic period.

What follows next – safe passage

We have always cautioned that the nature of the security situation in Afghanistan and our responsibility to keep our people safe meant that we would not be able to evacuate everyone we wanted to. We know that every single one of you will have been contacted about heart-breaking stories of those left behind in unimaginable circumstances.

That is why once we have finished the immediate evacuation our efforts will turn to doing all we can to help any remaining British nationals and Afghans who have supported us and who we were not able to evacuate over the last fortnight.

We continue to offer support to all those in that situation or who have left Afghanistan and are now in a third country. Please continue to direct anyone who gets in contact with you to the FCDO consular or MoD Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) helplines. Our ARAP scheme is not time limited.

We are clear that the Taliban must ensure safe passage for these people out of Afghanistan and any engagement with them will emphasise this first and foremost.

The Home Office is also working quickly across government and with international partners to establish the details of the new Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). This scheme will provide protection for Afghan citizens identified as most at risk, such as women and girls. The Government has committed to take around 5,000 refugees in the first year and 20,000 over the coming years.

This is one of the most comprehensive resettlement schemes the UK has ever established. We know how important it is to get the most vulnerable people to safety quickly. That is why during this period of acute crisis, while we had the ability to bring people out on military aircraft, we made the decision to evacuate as many of these people as possible.

Where we have managed to evacuate people to the UK who are not covered by ARAP or otherwise entitled to remain in the UK, they will fall under the new Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme. Those that were called forward by FCDO, but who we are sadly unable to evacuate before ceasing operations in Afghanistan, will also be guaranteed a place under ACRS.

Now that we are moving into a new phase for resettlement, we are looking at options to ensure that ACRS provides a safe route for those who are most vulnerable and at risk. Much will depend on the ability of individuals to receive safe passage from Afghanistan, and it is vital that the scheme dovetails with similar efforts being taken by our international partners. We will also work alongside Local Authorities to identify accommodation for those that arrive.

Our future commitment to the Afghan people

While the current phase of our engagement in Afghanistan is coming to an end, our commitment to the country will endure.

We are supporting the Afghan people in the long-term through a renewed humanitarian effort and by ensuring the Taliban are held accountable for the pledges they have made to respect human rights.

The UK has already doubled the amount of humanitarian aid to the region, committing up to £286 million with immediate effect, and we will continue to urge international partners to match our commitment.

Across government, ministers and officials are engaged in intensive international diplomacy, including at the UN Security Council and bilaterally. As President of the G7, the Prime Minister chaired an urgent meeting of G7 leaders on 24 August to discuss Afghanistan.

At this time, it is more important than ever that we stand united with our allies. The G7 agreed to produce a roadmap for engagement with the Taliban and agree standards they must be held to, including protecting women's rights and ensuring humanitarian access. All agreed on the need for unity of message and purpose amongst the international community, and the UK will continue to lead this effort.

Let us reassure you that we will continue to use every lever at our disposal to secure the safe passage of those who wish to leave Afghanistan and to hold the Taliban to account. We will also do all we can to support the people who remain, including through our increased commitment of humanitarian assistance. We thank you again for your continued support.

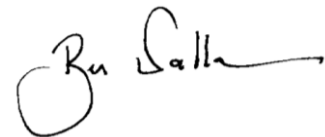
Yours,



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



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



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

Annex: Summary of Communication Routes

Type of case	For applicants directly	For MPs
British nationals	+44 (0)1908 516666 and select the option “Consular services for British nationals” or email help@fco.gov.uk	MP hotline number +44 (0)20 7008 0999 fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk putting ‘urgent consular’ in the subject
Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP)	Follow advice here .	localstaff-afghanistan@mod.gov.uk
Afghan nationals who have not worked directly for the UK but have supported UK objectives in Afghanistan and make be at risk as a result	+44 (0)2475 389980	afghanspecialcases@fco.gov.uk
Vulnerable non-British nationals in need of Assistance	+44 (0)2475 389980	mpurgentqueries@homeoffice.gov.uk