



The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin  
Secretary of Homeland Security  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C.

**Subject: Urgent Opposition to Forced Relocation of Afghan Allies and Vulnerable Refugees from Camp As Sayliyah to the Democratic Republic of Congo**

May 7, 2026

Secretaries Rubio and Mullin:

We write regarding reports that the Administration is considering relocating Afghan allies and vulnerable refugees from Camp As Sayliyah (CAS) to third countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Any relocation plan must be lawful, voluntary, safe, transparent, and durable. It must not be used to abandon U.S. commitments to its allies: people who were moved into U.S. supported transit for the purpose of completing protection, immigration, and resettlement processing. We must complete processing to the United States and to safety as expeditiously as possible.

This is not a temporary measure. It is a decision to abandon commitments the United States has already made. It also reflects a dismissal of the humanitarian promises we have as a country to the most vulnerable people we have made commitments to.

More than 1,100 Afghan allies and their families remain at CAS under U.S. authority, the vast majority of whom are fully vetted and approved refugees mere steps away from traveling to the United States. They have remained there since the refugee program was indefinitely suspended on January 20, 2025. Many are family members of active-duty U.S. servicemembers and Intelligence Community partners. More than half are women and children.

These individuals were moved to Qatar by the United States to complete lawful immigration processing and comprehensive vetting. They followed the rules, completed extensive vetting, and have now been held in transit for over 15 months under deteriorating conditions.

A forced, ad hoc, or non-durable relocation plan to any level 3 or 4 travel advisory countries would fail on three levels.

## **U.S. Allies at CAS Must Not Be Forcibly Relocated to Third Countries or Afghanistan.**

Forcing Afghans at CAS to choose between living in someone else's refugee crisis, in the DRC, or returning to Afghanistan – violating the humanitarian principle of *non refoulement* – is morally reprehensible and wrong as a matter of policy.

Further, this plan for Afghans at CAS is part and parcel of the Trump administration's "third country removals" policy: making deals with corrupt and abusive governments to accept immigrants deported from the United States to dangerous countries to which they have no connection.

The U.S. government should complete processing rapidly for Afghans at CAS. Few steps remain in the vast majority of the cases. **Individuals who can lawfully complete screening, vetting, and admissibility review should be admitted to the United States without delay.** That is the outcome they were processed for, and it remains the appropriate and intended destination.

For individuals who are unable to proceed to the United States due to security-related determinations, the alternative cannot be indefinite limbo or transfer to unsafe environments. **Any third-country option must provide durable protection, including legal status, the right to work, freedom of movement, access to services, family unity, and a credible path to permanent integration in the receiving community.**

### **Second, it is legally questionable.**

The United States assumed a duty of care when it moved these individuals into transit under U.S. authority. That obligation does not disappear because policy priorities have shifted.

### **This is a moral failure**

Afghans at Camp As Sayliyah risked their lives in support of U.S. operations and in many cases to serve U.S. humanitarian programming abroad. The promise to bring them to safety was not conditional. It was earned, and it reflects a responsibility to protect that we as a community need to honor.

The past year and a half has seen families torn apart, and promises broken on every level of the refugee experience. For those at CAS, they have undergone some of the most rigorous vetting in the history of U.S. immigration. They are approved refugees. Many are entitled to family reunification under existing law.

Abandoning these allies sets a dangerous precedent for the United States. If the United States can indefinitely hold approved refugees in transit and then redirect them to third



countries, future partners will not trust American assurances. That risk extends well beyond Afghanistan.

This situation did not emerge overnight. It reflects a broader pattern:

- Suspension of refugee processing in January 2025, resulting in the languishing of over 120,000 people destined for the U.S. with no permanent solution
- Elimination of CARE and termination of Enduring Welcome
- Slowdown of SIV processing
- Attempts to repatriate Afghans awaiting U.S. processing with little transparency

Taken together, these actions represent a systematic effort to avoid, rather than fulfill, U.S. obligations.

For more than 15 months, many across the refugee resettlement, faith partner, and other coalitions have engaged in good faith. We have sent dozens of communications, provided real-time information from families at CAS, and offered solutions. We have not received a single principal-level meeting.

At this point, the path forward is clear.

We call on the Administration to:

1. Complete processing for all CAS residents and afford exceptions necessary to enter the United States in the context of the travel and refugee bans. Immediately admit who can lawfully complete screening, vetting, and admissibility review, consistent with existing commitments and processing pathways
2. Prohibit the use of third-country relocation as a substitute for U.S. resettlement
3. Establish durable third-country resettlement pathways for individuals who are unable to proceed to the United States due to security-related determinations, ensuring legal status, the right to work, freedom of movement, access to services, family unity, and a path to permanent integration
4. Limit any third-country relocation options to countries that can demonstrably provide safety and stability, using the Department of State's Travel Advisory system as a baseline indicator, with no placements in Level 3 or Level 4 countries
5. Ensure any relocation is voluntary, informed, and individually reviewed, with clear communication of rights and long-term status
6. Maintain safe and humane conditions at CAS while all relocation and resettlement pathways are executed
7. Resume full processing of SIV, refugee, and family reunification cases
8. Brief Congress on the legal authority for continued custody, transfer, or relocation of CAS residents



9. Meet immediately with coalition representatives and impacted families
10. Commit publicly to resolving this situation in line with U.S. law, established commitments, and basic standards of humanitarian protection

The coalition behind this effort includes veterans, military families, faith leaders, resettlement agencies, civil rights organizations, and frontline civilians. It is bipartisan and has been from the beginning.

America made a promise. For those who can lawfully complete screening and resettle in the United States, that pathway should be honored.

For those who cannot, the answer cannot be limbo, coercion, or return to danger. It must be durable protection and the ability to restart their lives, safely.

These families upheld their end. The question now is whether we will uphold ours.

The consequences extend beyond the 1,100 individuals at CAS. They affect every future conflict where the United States relies on local partners. They reflect the future of the refugee protection system itself.

We urge you to choose to honor those commitments.

Respectfully,

  
Shawn Van Diver  
President, AfghanEvac

**Complete signatory list beginning next page**

# Complete Signatory List (as of 6:30am eastern May 7, 2026)

102 organizations | 806 individuals | Total: 908

## Organizations (102)

#AfghanEvac	Human Rights First	REACT DC
HIAS	Immigration Law & Justice	Red T
Church World Service	Network	Refugee Advocacy Lab
International Refugee	Instant Aid	Refugee Council USA
Assistance Project (IRAP)	Institute for Justice and	Refugee Women Rising
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of	Democracy in Haiti	Refugees International
America (IAVA)	Interfaith Council for New	Restoring Dignity
ACLU	Americans Westchester	Richard Ojeda for Congress
50501 Miami	International Institute of New	Rivertowns for Refugees
Afghan Cultural Society	England	Sargent Child and Family
Afghan Labor Advocacy Network	Jewish Family & Children's	Services
(ALAN)	Service of Long Beach and	Scarsdale Synagogue
Afghan Refugee Network	Orange County	Secure Survivors
Afghan Scout Relief Fund	Jewish Family Service of San	Showing Up for Racial Justice,
Afghan Underground	Diego	NYC Chapter
Afghanistan Human Rights	Kurdish Alliance of North	SPARTA Pride
Organization (AHRO)	America	Stratton Ltd
Afghans For A Better Tomorrow	Lutheran Social Services of the	Supreme food service SPV
Alianza Americas	National Capital Area	Task Force Butler Institute
Ally Assistance Organization	Maryknoll Office for Global	Task Force Nyx
Americans Against Trump	Concerns	The Article 26 Foundation
ANAR	Mashreqi_A	The Chamberlain Network
Archway Refugee Connections	Mauritanian Network for Human	The Lamia Afghan Foundation
ArtLords	Rights	The Tea Room Charlotte
Asian Americans Advancing	Miami Valley Immigration	Truman National Security
Justice - Atlanta	Coalition	Project
Blackhawk Alliance	Miry's List	U.S. Committee for Refugees
Blacksburg Refugee Partnership	Morningside Monthly Meeting of	and Immigrants
Borderlands Resource Initiative	the Religious Society of Friends	Unitarian Universalist Service
Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church	(Quakers)	Committee
Catholic Community Services of	Mother Robot	Unitarian Universalists for Social
Lane County	Neighbors for Refugees,	Justice
Center for Gender & Refugee	Larchmont, NY	Unity and Solidarity of
Studies	NJ Coalition for Afghan	Afghanistan Women
Common Defense	Refugees	USAHello
Community Refugee &	Nonviolent Peaceforce	USAID Alumni Association
Immigration Services (CRIS)	North Carolina Council of	Veterans for Responsible
Community Supported Film	Churches	Leadership
Conklin Immigration Law, LLC	Northwest Immigrant Rights	Veterans Legal Support Network
CSSI	Project	WADAN (Welfare Association for
CURE International Hospital	One World, One Love NJ	the Development of Afghanistan)
DOLLFACE6	Open Arms for Refugees, Inc.	We Choose Welcome
FAER	Pax Christi Long Island (New	Witness at the Border
FAER Afghan Evacuation and	York)	World Hazara Council, USA
Resettlement Working Group	Pax Christi New York State	World Relief California
Franklin County Continuing the	Pessarar Afzaly Construction	
Political Revolution	Company	
Hearts & Homes for Refugees	Project Alpha	



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