



Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

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House of Commons  
London  
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*Dear Colleague*

## **AFGHANISTAN**

Thank you for emailing about the situation in Afghanistan. I know that, like many colleagues, you have been contacted in recent weeks by, or on behalf of, people wishing to leave Afghanistan. Those writing include British nationals and their families, Afghans who worked for the British Government, and other Afghans who have reason to fear for their safety.

I am sorry that we have not been able to respond to everyone sooner. We have had a huge number of people contacting us in the last three weeks on Afghanistan, more in fact than during the entire Covid crisis, and our focus was on getting as many people to safety as we possibly could through Operation PITTING.

As you know, it was not possible to extend the evacuation window, and we have now concluded Operation PITTING. We worked at an unprecedented pace to facilitate one of the largest, most complex evacuations in living memory. Our Armed Forces, FCDO, Home Office, and MoD civilian staff worked incredibly hard, in exceptionally difficult circumstances, to bring over 15,000 people to safety in the UK over the two weeks of the operation.

This number included British nationals, Afghans who worked for the UK Government and Armed Forces, and other Afghans judged to be at especially high risk, and dependants of these groups. We also supported our allies and partners to help their nationals get home wherever we could. The correspondence we received was an important source of names used to build up a pipeline for evacuation, and staff continued to use the correspondence to identify people for possible evacuation until people could no longer be called forward for flights.

As we welcome those who are now here, we are also focused on how we can help those still in Afghanistan to come to the UK, if they are eligible to do so.

We are working hard with others to hold the Taliban to their promise to allow safe passage out of Afghanistan for foreign nationals and Afghans who wish to leave. The Foreign Secretary is leading this effort, and travelled to the region last week to take forward practical ways in which we can enable those eligible to come to the UK. I travelled to Tajikistan for talks on Friday on the same set of issues – securing safe passage for those fleeing Afghanistan and advancing the government's international priorities.

### **Support for those in Afghanistan**

We are grateful for all your efforts to direct to us those **British nationals** who wished to leave Afghanistan. Our consular teams have already been able to reach many in need thanks to your help.

We have encouraged all British nationals who remain in Afghanistan to register with us – using this [form](#) - to give us a detailed picture of those remaining, and an additional means, beyond our publicly-available Travel Advice, for us to be able to send regular updates and advice on what they should do next.

For as long as we do not have an Embassy in Afghanistan, we will not be able to provide in-country support on a range of consular services. However, our Embassies and High Commissions in neighbouring countries stand ready to do so, and are being reinforced in order to ensure they can help those who reach them. We have sent out Rapid Deployment Teams to Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to reinforce our Embassy staff to process arrivals from Afghanistan.

We will continue to support British nationals and their eligible family members to come to the UK.

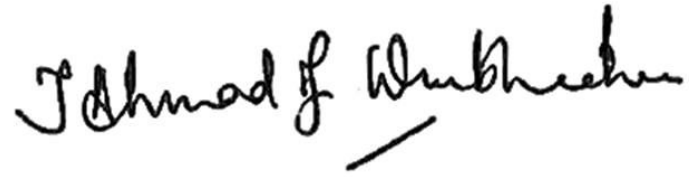
**Afghan nationals** who have been notified that they have been accepted for relocation to the UK under the **ARAP** programme will be welcomed into the UK. That offer stands and will be honoured. Our ARAP scheme is not time limited. The joint MoD-Home Office team who have administered the scheme until now will continue to do so. Anyone agreed as eligible for the ARAP programme who is now in a third country can approach our Embassies and High Commissions for support in completing their application process and their onward travel to the UK. We will alert the joint team to the correspondence you have sent us on behalf of individuals and their eligible dependants in this category who have already applied.

Anyone who believes they may be eligible but has not yet applied should consult the guidance on how to apply at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance>.

Afghan nationals who were called forward to Kabul airport for evacuation by the FCDO will be guaranteed a place under the new **Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)**. Those in this group received a personalised e-mail notifying them that they should proceed to the Airport. Their details have been transferred to the Home Office who will administer the new ACRS.

The ACRS will be launched very soon. Those who were not called forward for evacuation will be able to find information about the new scheme and how it will be administered here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>  
My thanks again for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**LORD (TARIQ) AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON**

Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth  
Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict