

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

March 18, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20451

Dear Secretary Rubio:

I am writing with deep concern about the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program and those allies who stood shoulder to shoulder with U.S. servicemembers and diplomats over the course of 20 years of war in Afghanistan. The recent Executive Order by President Trump have suspended the resettlement efforts for these individuals and their families. Following this Order, many of our Afghan allies—who had already been scheduled to travel to the U.S.—have had their flights canceled and are now stranded with no clear path to travel to the United States.

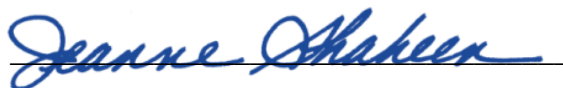
Currently, 5,752 SIV applicants and visa holders remain in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Qatar and Albania, some of whom are family members of active-duty U.S. military personnel. The United States government brought them these platforms as part of our promise to get them to safety. But they are now stranded without access to essential supplies such as routine medical care, services for women and children, mental health counseling and infant care, among other necessities.

Following the 2021 withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan and the Taliban takeover, the need to expeditiously get our Afghan allies to safety became exigent. Should they return to Afghanistan, these individuals are at direct risk of reprisal from the Taliban for their service in support of the United States. This grim reality has been borne out by the many who have been killed since August 2021. They risked their lives and died for us and in return, we promised to protect them and their families. We must stand by this promise.

I respectfully urge you to continue the longstanding support for these individuals and take the necessary steps to lift the restrictions preventing Afghan SIV applicants and holders from traveling to the United States. Their arrival in the United States is not only a matter of moral responsibility but a national security priority that we stand by our commitments during the most challenging of moments.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations