

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 2, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary
The United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I write to extend my gratitude for the Department of State's quick efforts to support the safe evacuation of thousands of Afghan allies and partners in such a short period of time. Despite my concerns regarding the circumstances that got us into this situation, I commend our diplomatic corps who stepped up to support this large scale consular crisis.

My constituents in New Hampshire share deep personal connections in the effort to safely evacuate Afghan allies. I have heard from New Hampshire constituents with relatives remaining in Afghanistan; veterans fighting for the lives of their translators who helped ensure their own safety on the battlefield; advocates invested in women's development who have sought to support Afghan women and girls who now face threats to their livelihood from the Taliban; and businesses and contractors with employees on the ground in support of Afghanistan's economic and security development who now face an uncertain future.

To that end, my office has submitted over 2,200 names to the Department, many of whom are Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants who have worked with my office for a number of years, Priority 1 and 2 designees who obtained sufficient documentation but were still unable to evacuate and women and girls who fear retribution from the Taliban for seeking basic human rights. Although some individuals have shared the status of their evacuation with my office, I do not have confirmation from many cases that have successfully departed. In addition, I have questions concerning next steps for individuals who remain in Afghanistan and third countries awaiting a path to safety.

In light of the United States' full withdrawal of our military footprint in Afghanistan, I ask for an update not only on the cases provided to the Department, but a better understanding of the process to support those who still remain. It is my intention to continue to provide names of individuals who are left stranded, and I welcome clarity in how the Department intends to follow up with these cases and what opportunities are available to ensure their safe and timely evacuation.

Thank you to your attention to this matter, and I look forward to hearing back on the Department's plan to engage with Congress on these cases.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator