



August 25, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As leading organizations comprised largely of Post-9/11 veterans, we urge you to pursue every avenue available to your Administration to ensure Afghan allies and refugees are fully and safely withdrawn from Afghanistan and our national commitment to protect these brave allies is fulfilled ahead of the August 31 withdrawal deadline. We are encouraged by the work you've already done, such as expanding the safe zone around Kabul's airport to help ensure safe passage for our citizens and allies, and engaging commercial airlines to provide additional planes, but there is much more that can be done.

First, we request immediately redirecting staffing at the federal agencies overseeing the Special Immigrant Visa (SIV), refugee paperwork processes, and background investigations to meet the rising demand. Under such a tight deadline, it is imperative to provide adequate staffing to process the massive influx of people awaiting evacuation and ensure government backlog is not an impediment to getting our citizens and allies out of Afghanistan.

Similarly, we request that you review ways to reduce the administrative paperwork slowing down the processing for our Afghan allies and refugees. The process is cumbersome in the best of times and not conducive to solving the emergency many Afghans now face. We understand the need for some regulation but minimizing the red tape currently in place should be a priority. Bureaucracy is not an acceptable reason to leave allies and refugees behind.

Finally, our allies and Afghan refugees are depending on our government coordinating effectively and this must be a whole-of-government response. We are also calling on Congress to support this mission and urge you to work with Congress to address any funding or immigration process issues causing delays or otherwise jeopardizing the well-being of our allies. Additionally, several states and Guam have offered support, and we encourage continuing to work with leaders across all aspects of government to quickly resettle and welcome Afghan allies and refugees.

Time is of the essence. We implore you to act swiftly at this pivotal juncture, as it may be our last opportunity to ensure our Afghan allies are afforded the protection America promised them. Thank you for your commitment to our service members, veterans, and allies that served on behalf of the United States in Afghanistan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Butler', written in a cursive style.

Jeremy Butler
Chief Executive Officer
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jared Lyon', written in a cursive style.

Jared Lyon, MPA
National President & CEO
Student Veterans of America