

# National Security Update: Afghan Allies

## **Issue Summary:**

Currently, Afghans who were admitted to the United States under temporary humanitarian parole following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan can only pursue permanent legal status through the asylum system or, for those who directly supported the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan during the last 20 years, the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program. Both options face severe backlogs, long processing times, and logistical obstacles for Afghans who were brought to the United States under emergency circumstances.

The Afghan Adjustment Act (AAA) would establish a pathway to lawful permanent resident status for eligible Afghans and incentivize those admitted to the United States with temporary humanitarian parole status to come forward for security vetting. After completing the additional vetting, including the in-person interview required during the application process, this pathway to status adjustment would provide eligible Afghans in need of protection with stability as they continue to rebuild their lives in the United States. Congress has passed similar bipartisan adjustment legislation in the wake of other wartime evacuations, humanitarian crises, and U.S. military actions including the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom.<sup>1</sup>

These brave Afghan men and women who fought bravely alongside our servicemembers provided essential services such as translation, map reading, logistical support, and intelligence gathering at great personnel risk to themselves and their families. The Taliban has a “kill on sight” policy for Afghans who is known to have aided or assisted US troops during the war. Many of the Afghans who were not evacuated in August 2021 are still under threat, often running between different safehouses. Conversely, the Afghans in the United States today are under the threat of death should they return to Afghanistan. [America committed to bringing our Afghan Allies out of danger and we can never backout on that promise.](#)

A similar version of AAA is inserted in the FY24 defense supplemental bill text under Chapter 3; Subtitle C – Fulfilling Promises to Allies; Sec. 3331-3338:

Summary from the National Immigration Forum: Fulfilling Promises to Afghan Allies

The bill [FY24 Defense Supplemental] would adjust the status of Afghan nationals who were admitted or paroled into the U.S. after July 30, 2021, following completion of a vetting process. This section is similar, but not identical, to the Afghan Adjustment Act of 2023.

- Legal Pathway to Status. Under this section, the legal pathway for Afghan evacuees begins with conditional status, with an opportunity to move into permanent legal status and eventual citizenship. The conditional status will remain in effect for four years based on the date the individual was paroled in (i.e. admitted) to the U.S. or on July 1, 2027. At that point, the government has no more than 180 days to remove the conditional status. The expiration date of an individual’s parole will not apply to someone under consideration for conditional status.

There are also provisions to improve the efficiency and oversight of both the refugee program and the SIV program. An additional 2,500 SIVs will be made available for five years totaling 10,000 additional SIVs.<sup>2</sup>

## **Actions taken:**

- NS Staff continues to meet with members of AAA support organizations and members from the House and Senate.
- NS Security Commission Chairman gave remarks at AAA coalition press conference organized at the VFW DC headquarters with Senators Moran, Klobuchar, Coons, and Blumenthal.
- Senator Moran reached out directly to the DC office and requested support on the issue.
- NS Division helped write and edit a [National Commander’s Message](#) on supporting the Afghan Adjustment Act in January 2023.

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<sup>1</sup> “The Afghan Adjustment Act” Office of Congressman Earl Blumenauer, July 14, 2023: <https://blumenauer.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/blumenauer.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/one-pager-theafghanadjustmentact.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> “Border Security and Asylum Reform in the Emergency National Security Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2024: Bill Explainer, National Immigration Forum, Feb. 6, 2024: <https://immigrationforum.org/article/border-security-and-asylum-reform-in-the-emergency-national-security-supplemental-appropriations-act-2024-bill-explainer/>

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- AAA was included in 2023 Commander's Testimony and Legislative Priorities

### **Actions taken (Con't):**

- NS Division has attended bi-monthly "Evacuate Our Allies" (EOA) coalition meetings with VSOs, immigration groups, and humanitarian non-profits for 2+ years.
- Helped facilitate a Tango Alpha Lima (TAL) Podcast interview with two members of the Female Tactical Platoon in October 2023.
- NS hosted the members of With Honor, PenFed, and veterans of the Female Tactical Platoon (FTP) at our National HQ in Washington, DC in July 2023.
- NS and Legislative Division attended an Afghan Allies Event for the Female Tactical Platoon (FTP) hosted by the Women's Foreign Policy Group in July 2023.
- Hosted US Army Afghan Veteran, Rebekah Edmonson, who was embedded with the Female Tactical Platoon along with her Afghan counterpart, Commander Mahnaz Akbari of the FTP at the National Security Commission Meeting during the 2023 National Convention in Charlotte, NC.
- **Legion Magazine Story: September 2023**, "[Last Chance at the Abbey Gate](#)" Brothers who worked with U.S. forces make a desperate attempt to flee Afghanistan with the help of strangers" and "[Road to a New Start](#)" about Afghan allies working through Task Force Movement to get commercial driver's licenses and jobs in trucking.
- **Legion Magazine Story: December 2023**, On Point: The American Legion in Washington/[Afghan Adjustment Act](#)

### **Applicable resolutions:**

Resolution No. 16: Recognition for Afghan and Iraqi Combat Translators

### **What can Congress do:**

Prioritize passing the Afghan Adjustment on any moving vehicle of legislation.

Increase the number of Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) for Afghans currently remaining in Afghanistan to migrate to the United States.

Require stringent vetting processes of Afghans and their family's seeking asylum against the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.