

April 24, 2023

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave., SE
Washington, D.C. 20528

RE: Request for establishing an immediate, streamlined, and accessible re-parole process and automatic extension of work authorization for resettled Afghans in the United States

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

The undersigned organizations write to you to request the immediate establishment of a streamlined and accessible re-parole process and an automatic extension of work authorization for Afghans who have been resettled in the United States following the fall of the Afghan government in August 2021.

Over the last almost two years, under your leadership and with coordination with other federal agencies, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has partnered with Afghan and Muslim American communities, veterans, and other advocates and allies to evacuate and welcome over 90,000 Afghans to safety in the United States. With the two-year anniversary of the U.S. withdrawal now approaching, these new members of our communities across America are at significant risk of losing their hard-earned protection and the work authorizations they rely on for their livelihoods.

Since being evacuated to the U.S., resettled Afghans have demonstrated significant resilience and a clear commitment to becoming productive members of their new communities. They have enrolled their children in schools, launched businesses, found long-term housing, and restarted their careers while filling critical labor gaps within the U.S. economy. They have also shown their immense potential, a fact highlighted in a recent report published by Upwardly Global noting that 46 percent of resettled Afghans are working-age adults, with a potential annual contribution of over \$1.71 billion into the U.S. economy and an estimated \$227 million in federal income taxes.¹

The contributions these Afghans are making, however, are not just economic. American universities, think tanks, development agencies, human rights organizations, and arts and cultural institutions are all benefiting significantly from employing, engaging with, and hosting Afghan academics, human rights defenders, activists, and artists. These individuals are enriching our country and our society. They are also who we will inevitably lean on for hope as we look to bring Afghanistan back from the dark place it has fallen to in the last two years. This

¹ "Afghans Bring Critical Value to the US Economy," Upwardly Global, March 2023, <https://www.upwardlyglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Afghan-Newcomers-Bring-Critical-Value-to-the-U.S.-Economy-and-Society-v3-4.pdf>

tremendous value and this tremendous potential will be lost if the U.S. fails to uphold its promise to protect, safeguard, and uplift resettled Afghans in their newfound home.

The United States must not withdraw support for these new Americans as they rebuild their lives. We urge you to lead by example and translate your expressed commitment to protecting Afghans into actionable policy. We urge you to exercise your authority to ensure that the Afghans we have all worked so hard together to evacuate and resettle have the opportunities and the peace of mind they so urgently need.

We, the undersigned Afghan-American and American Muslim organizations, are committed to working with you and your team to do our part to facilitate and support this process. We believe that by working together, we can ensure that resettled Afghans in the United States are able to thrive, integrate, and contribute in the very way that over 400,000 Afghan-Americans already do every day in this country.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. We look forward to your continued leadership and partnership.

Sincerely,

Afghan-American Alliance of Georgia (AAAG)
Afghan-American Foundation (AAF)
Afghan Coalition (AC)
Afghan Community Association (ACA)
Afghan Community Empowerment (ACE)
Afghan Elderly Association (AEA)
Afghans Living in DC Area (ALDC)
American Muslim Empowerment Network (AMEN)
Afghan Refugee Relief (ARR)
Art Lords
Emergency Relief and Development (ERD)
ICNA Relief
Immigrant and Refugee Outreach Center (IROC)
Mustafa Center
Nebraska Afghan Community Center (NACC)
The Five Pillars Organization
Women for Afghan Women (WAW)



May 30, 2023

Mustafa Babak
Executive Director
Afghan-American Foundation
mustafa@afghanamericans.org

Dear Mr. Babak:

Thank you for your April 24, 2023 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). I am responding on behalf of the Department.

I appreciate the information you have provided about the lives that resettled Afghans have created in the United States and the contributions they are making. DHS remains committed to supporting resettled Afghan nationals in the United States.

I also appreciate your request for the establishment of a streamlined and accessible re-parole process and an automatic extension of work authorization for Afghan nationals resettled in the United States. [On May 5, 2023, DHS announced it is establishing a process to re-parole eligible Afghan nationals](#) so they can continue living and working legally in the United States. Beginning in June, Afghan nationals who arrived in the United States under humanitarian parole through Operation Allies Welcome (OAW) will be able to request a re-parole and work authorization through online and paper filing. As with any parole request, these requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons and significant public benefit. Afghan nationals are encouraged to create or update online accounts on myUSCIS in preparation of filing online. Additional details regarding the process will be available soon.

While we understand the desire for re-parole, we must emphasize the pursuit of durable immigration pathways. Because it is temporary, parole cannot provide the protection and benefits that are provided with long-term and permanent pathways available to Afghan nationals, such as asylum or adjusting status from a special immigrant to a lawful permanent resident. You can find information about long-term pathways and other helpful information at our website: uscis.gov/humanitarian/information-for-afghan-nationals.

Starting on May 17, DHS will begin to host Afghan Support Centers across the country – the first will be held in Phoenix, Arizona. U.S. government personnel and nongovernmental organizations at the centers will provide information regarding immigration and social services available for those who arrived through OAW and EW. Additional dates and locations for Afghan Support Centers will be announced in the coming weeks.

Mustafa Babak
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Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Please share this response with the other organizations that cosigned your letter. Should you require any additional assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director