

# NEIGHBORS FOR REFUGEES

February 26, 2025

Dear Neighbors,

In spite of recent changes in Washington, [Neighbors for Refugees](#) is busy helping legal refugees to the U.S. from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Nicaragua, and other countries. We are fulfilling our mission to help our new neighbors become self-supporting and fully contributing members of our community.

In addition to this quick update, we're passing on a critical and compelling message from [AfghanEvac](#), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to, "honoring the promise we made to our Afghan friends and allies." Please read their update about the possible demise of the U.S.'s Enduring Welcome Program to relocate and resettle our Afghan allies -- below.

**We have helped to resettle more than 50 Afghan families – we continue our support of Afghan and other refugees**, notwithstanding the many new challenges our refugee clients and we face.

We have:

- Paid airfares (no longer covered by the U.S. State Department) to fly an Afghan family of seven from a refugee camp in Doha, Qatar to Rochester, NY (in partnership with Open Arms for Refugees, Ossining, NY) for resettlement. The family had been stranded in the Middle East after working closely with the U.S. during the Afghan war. **We are still able to welcome and resettle fully-vetted, Afghan, Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders** (who worked closely with the U.S. during the Afghan war) – **although no longer with financial, case worker, or benefit program support from the State Department.**



- **Continued to work with HIAS and other national resettlement agencies to support the resettlement of SIV families** in the U.S.
- **Accelerated our resettlement of six refugee families** since the election, including an Afghan family of 6 we moved from the NYC homeless shelter system soon after the inauguration. Our financial commitment to these families extends well into 2025.

- **Established a legal aid fund** to assist: Afghan asylum seekers, Ukrainians who arrived legally under the State Department's *Uniting for Ukraine* program, and a Venezuelan family facing possible deportation with the administration's cancellation of Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Venezuelans.
- **Increased our job placement support** to refugees, including a childcare fund to help enable mothers to work. The **extreme anti-refugee rhetoric has dampened some employers' willingness to hire refugees.**

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## **AfghanEvac URGENT UPDATE: State developing plans to permanently shut down Enduring Welcome operations**

**“ . . . All signs point to an intentional effort to dismantle Enduring Welcome permanently.** This is not a pause. Plans are being actively drawn up to shut down the only remaining U.S. government effort to relocate and resettle our wartime allies.

### **The Human Cost**

If this plan becomes policy, it will abandon:

- **200,000 Afghans** in Afghanistan identified as part of the Enduring Welcome pipeline.
- **40,000 Afghans** in Afghanistan who have already completed vetting and are ready for travel.
- **50,000 Afghans** outside of Afghanistan who are in the Enduring Welcome pipeline.
- **15,000 Afghans** in Pakistan waiting for their flights.
- **3,000 immediate family members** of active-duty U.S. service members.
- **About 10,000 individuals** seeking family reunification, including **3,000 family members of unaccompanied minors in the U.S.**

Many of these individuals have already **sold everything, fled their homes, and are now marked for death by the Taliban.** The infrastructure we built was **keeping our promises and protecting U.S. national security**—and now it's being dismantled.

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### **What We Know**

While **no final decisions have been made yet**, the indicators are clear:

- The **State Department has directed CARE** (Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts) and associated staff to prepare plans for the full closure of Enduring Welcome.
  - Staff at relocation hubs abroad **were informed their work may be ending**, potentially stranding thousands of Afghans in third countries with no way forward.
  - **CARE personnel working on Afghan relocations are moving to new roles**, a sign that this isn't temporary—it's a shutdown in progress.
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## The False Justifications & The Dangerous Consequences

### You may hear officials say

- *“SIV processing is still happening.”* But without a relocation pathway, **no Afghans are actually arriving**—it’s an empty promise.
- *“This is just a temporary pause.”* But internal planning is actively moving toward a **permanent shutdown**.
- *“This is about security concerns.”* But **Enduring Welcome Afghans are the most heavily vetted immigrants** the U.S. admits, undergoing biometric, intelligence, and security screenings by every major agency.

### This is a National Security Disaster

If the U.S. abandons its Afghan allies, the consequences will be **severe and long-lasting**:

- **Future allies will refuse to work with the U.S.** Why risk their lives if we won’t stand by them
- **Terrorist groups like the Taliban, ISIS-K, and al-Qaeda will be emboldened.** They will use this as proof that America **cannot be trusted**.
- **U.S. service members will be at greater risk** in future wars, forced to fight without local support.

Despite what officials may claim, this is **not just about foreign policy—it’s a betrayal of America’s veterans, service members, and wartime allies.**

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We will continue to share Neighbors updates and relevant information about the challenges facing current and prospective refugees. We continue to pursue (aggressively!) opportunities to resettle and refugee families. **Your support enables us to meet many of the new challenges facing refugee families -- thank you!**

*Neighbors for Refugees*