

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 23, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State 2201
C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20451

The Honorable Kristi Noem
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
2801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Rubio and Secretary Noem:

We are writing to express profound concern over the recent decision to terminate Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for over 8,000 Afghan nationals currently residing in the United States. This decision endangers thousands of lives, including Afghans who stood by the United States. This decision represents a historic betrayal of promises made and undermines the values we fought for far more than 20 years in Afghanistan.

Since the Taliban's takeover in 2021, conditions on the ground in Afghanistan have steadily deteriorated with a fragile economy, limited access to basic services and a closing space for fundamental human rights and freedoms. Millions of Afghans are on the brink of famine. The Taliban has confined women to their homes as they issue edict after edict to strip them of their hard-won freedoms.

TPS was designated for Afghan nationals in 2022 and extended in 2023, due to recognition of the deteriorating economic and humanitarian conditions, in addition to atrocious attacks on the rights of women and minority groups. Revoking TPS for Afghans in the United States exposes these individuals to the very real threat of persecution, violence and even death under Taliban rule. Afghan women and girls in particular face unique and systemic repression — banned from secondary and higher education, denied employment and forced into isolation. Deporting Afghan women and girls would condemn them to a life of fear and oppression.

Furthermore, those who worked as journalists, educators, activists or with international NGOs are at even greater risk of targeted retaliation. While those who served by or on behalf of the U.S. government in Afghanistan are eligible for Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs), those who chose to support the vision for a free and democratic Afghanistan through a robust civil society are not eligible. Yet their work puts them no less at risk for retaliation by the Taliban, who view civil society and women's rights as a direct threat to their totalitarian, fundamentalist government.

We strongly urge your administration to reconsider this decision and immediately reinstate TPS protections for Afghan nationals. Beyond the moral and humanitarian obligation, doing so reaffirms to our allies and partners around the world that the United States stands by those who stand with us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeanne Shaheen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa Murkowski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator