

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

May 7, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520-0099

Dear Secretary Rubio,

I am writing to you with deep concern regarding the Department's plans not only to close Camp As Sayliyah (CAS) in Qatar but also to relocate over 1,100 Afghan Allies to countries ill-equipped to accept them. Over 800 eligible refugees at CAS, about half of whom are women and children, have a clear path to resettle in the United States. I urge the Administration to honor the commitments we made to Afghans who served alongside U.S. forces and personnel and admit vetted Afghans at CAS to the United States under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program or under humanitarian parole. Abandoning them and their families would be a grave betrayal and would undermine the trust and cooperation the United States relies on from allies in times of need.

Under Executive Order 14013, which largely suspended the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program in January 2025, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security are able to make exceptions on a case-by-case basis when admission of such an individual is in the national interest of the United States. Providing resettlement for vetted Afghans who risked their lives in support of the United States is clearly in our U.S. national interest. In addition, the Administration should explore options to provide this limited number of Afghans with humanitarian parole to resettle in the United States. Over half of the CAS population of Afghans are women and girls. Another roughly 150 are family members of Department of Defense personnel. Others include women who served as officers in the Afghan security forces. They all deserve a new start in the United States. If we betray our promises to them, we will find it harder to ask future partners to fight and serve alongside us. Moreover, they are all at high risk of persecution by the Taliban if efforts to find third country homes fail. We must not send any Afghans at CAS back to Afghanistan.

To date, the Trump Administration has only prioritized white South Africans for refugee resettlement in the United States, despite the UN Refugee Agency never designating Afrikaners as a group warranting refugee status. According to external reporting, the Trump Administration is now considering expanding its 7,500-person refugee cap for the year to 10,000 to allow additional white South Africans to resettle in the United States. This begs the question: Why can't the Trump Administration make exceptions for individuals whose lives are truly at risk if

they were to return to their home country and who worked alongside the U.S. Government for years to advance U.S. national security interests?

I urge you to reconsider your plans to relocate this small population to third countries and instead allow them to resettle in the United States. We must remain a country that stands by its promises and commitments to those who stood alongside us.

Thank you for your consideration and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations