

Foreign Secretary Statement: 20 August 2021

Press release

Statement from Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab.



The Foreign Secretary said:

The whole of Government has been working tirelessly over the last week to help as many people evacuate from Afghanistan as possible. The UK Government's overriding priority has been to secure Kabul airport so that flights can leave.

On Friday afternoon, 13 August, advice was put to my Private Office (around 6pm Afghan time) recommending a call to the Afghan Foreign Minister. This was quickly overtaken by events. The call was delegated to a Minister of State because I was prioritising security and capacity at the airport on the direct advice of the Director and the Director General overseeing the crisis response. In any event, the Afghan Foreign Minister agreed to take the call, but was unable to because of the rapidly deteriorating situation.

The Government's approach to prioritise security at the airport was the right one. As a result, 204 UK nationals and their families, Afghan staff and other countries citizens were evacuated on the morning of Monday 16 August. Since then, 1,635 have been evacuated. I pay tribute to the excellent team we have in place, and we continue to prioritise what is required to evacuate people to the UK safely.

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