

Military operation established to support the drawdown of British nationals from Afghanistan

Operation Pitting will be commanded from the UK's Permanent Joint Headquarters in Northwood and is the name for military support to the evacuation of British Nationals and former British staff eligible for relocation under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP).

This will be led by the 600 members of the Armed Forces who have already begun to deploy, with members of 16 Air Assault Brigade leaving this weekend.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

Protecting British Nationals and ensuring their safety as they leave Afghanistan is our top priority, which is why we are commencing Operation Pitting, for which our military are very well prepared.

Over the next few weeks, we shall all do our very best to support the Afghan Government and those that have worked with us over 20 years.

As announced yesterday, UK troops will be providing force protection and logistical support for the relocation of British nationals where required and assist with the acceleration of the ARAP.

To accelerate this process the Home Office will be deploying a small team of officials to assist the FCD0 in Kabul. They will be tasked with streamlining the processing of new visas and other documents needed for British nationals, former UK staff and other eligible people to leave Afghanistan and travel to the UK.

Over 2,000 eligible local staff who supported the UK Government in Afghanistan, and their families, have been relocated to the UK since April this year. Over 3,000 locally employed civilians and their families have been relocated since 2014, demonstrating the UK's commitment to ensuring the safety of those who supported the government.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

We have a moral obligation to support the fearless Afghan staff and their family members, who served alongside our brave troops in Afghanistan.

No one should have their lives put at risk for working with the UK

Government, which is why we have significantly expanded and accelerated our dedicated resettlement scheme, deployed Home Office officials to help process British nationals for evacuation, and waived visas for their dependants.

The UK urges British nationals to leave Afghanistan immediately, given the deteriorating security situation. We are providing support to help British nationals leave, including providing where appropriate emergency travel documents and loans.

British nationals who have not already done so should call the British Embassy Kabul on +93 (0) 700 102 000 and select the option "Consular services for British nationals" as soon as possible to discuss their departure plans.