

Plans to bring vulnerable Afghan interpreters to the UK accelerated

Following the decision to begin the withdrawal of military forces from Afghanistan, the Prime Minister has agreed the Ministry of Defence, Home Office and MHCLG to rapidly accelerate applications through the policy. ARAP was first introduced to help vulnerable Afghans, who risked their lives supporting British troops, to relocate to the UK and start new lives.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

We owe a debt of gratitude to our interpreters and other locally employed staff who risked their lives working alongside UK forces in Afghanistan.

We have always made clear that nobody's life should be put at risk because they supported the UK Government to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan.

As we withdraw our Armed Forces, it is only right we accelerate the relocation of those who may be at risk of reprisals.

The Home Secretary and I are going to do everything to make sure we recognise their services and bring them to safety. It is the right thing to do.

The ARAP scheme came into effect on 1 April 2021 and offers the relocation of current and former local staff in Afghanistan, including interpreters and their immediate families.

This new scheme acknowledges and reflects that the situation in Afghanistan has changed, and with it the potential risk to the local staff who have worked for the UK Government over the past twenty years.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I'm proud to say that the UK is fulfilling its promise to those Afghan interpreters and other locally employed staff who have worked tirelessly alongside our Armed Forces.

It is our moral obligation to recognise the risks they have faced in the fight against terrorism and reward their efforts. I'm pleased that we are meeting this fully, by providing them and their families the opportunity to build a new life in this country.

A new intimidation scheme administered by a specialist team based in Kabul

has been set up to administer the ARAP and support local staff who are threatened as a result of their work with the UK.

The Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy was launched on 1 April 2021 and will accelerate the pace of relocations alongside the military withdrawal, including making more resources available to speed up the scheme.

Under the new policy, any current or former locally employed staff who are assessed to be under serious threat to life are offered priority relocation to the UK regardless of their employment status, rank or role, or length of time served.

The MOD will work with a range of Government partners, including the Home Office and MHCLG, to successfully relocate those who meet the eligibility requirements and support them to integrate and build a new life in the UK.

By accelerating the ARAP for those staff still in Afghanistan, the Government is meeting its moral obligation to ensure their continued safety.

The Government has already supported the relocation of more than 1,360 former Afghan staff and their families, enabling them to create new lives in the UK.