

# United States Senate

October 4, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
Department of Homeland Security  
Washington, D.C. 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

According to public reports, hundreds of Afghan evacuees housed at U.S. military bases have simply walked off of the bases at which they were being housed.<sup>1</sup> Individuals with lawful immigration status prior to the Biden administration's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan—such as United States citizens, lawful permanent residents, and approved special immigrant visa holders—justly expected a speedy departure from U.S. custody once they arrived safely in the United States. However, a more extensive review and vetting process is absolutely essential for the tens of thousands of unknown Afghans who were airlifted during the evacuation. The Biden administration's obfuscation and steadfast refusal to answer oversight inquiries from Congress exacerbates these concerns.

The U.S. government is currently investigating multiple crimes committed in evacuee facilities. The American people have seen reports of a group of male Afghan evacuees assaulting a female servicemember at a Fort Bliss facility in New Mexico.<sup>2</sup> An Afghan evacuee allegedly sexually assaulted young boys at Fort McCoy in Wisconsin.<sup>3</sup> Another Afghan evacuee reportedly choked his wife at Fort McCoy.<sup>4</sup> The State Department has raised concerns about child trafficking by older Afghan men.<sup>5</sup> Even previously-deported criminals—including an Afghan who had previously been convicted of rape in the United States,<sup>6</sup> and another who had previously been convicted of aggravated robbery<sup>7</sup>—were airlifted back to the United States. In light of these reports, it is alarming that hundreds of Afghan evacuees have reportedly left U.S. military bases directly into our communities, possibly before completing our vetting and immigration processes. Accordingly, please provide answers to the following questions:

<sup>1</sup> Phil Stewart and Mica Rosenberg, "Exclusive: Some Afghan evacuees leaving military bases in U.S. before resettlement," *Reuters*, October 2, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/exclusive-giant-can-worms-some-afghans-leave-us-military-bases-before-2021-10-01/>.

<sup>2</sup> Deepa Shivaram, "FBI Investigating Reported Assault of Female U.S. Service Member By Afghan Evacuees," *NPR*, September 25, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/25/1040704546/fort-bliss-assault-female-service-member-afghan-evacuees-fbi>.

<sup>3</sup> Emily Hamer, "Afghan man sexually assaulted boys ages 12, 14, in Fort McCoy bathroom, affidavit alleges," *Wisconsin State Journal*, September 24, 2021, [https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/crime-and-courts/afghan-man-sexually-assaulted-boys-ages-12-14-in-fort-mccoy-bathroom-affidavit-alleges/article\\_d35675e9-3376-5a65-9552-788579394ad2.html](https://madison.com/wsj/news/local/crime-and-courts/afghan-man-sexually-assaulted-boys-ages-12-14-in-fort-mccoy-bathroom-affidavit-alleges/article_d35675e9-3376-5a65-9552-788579394ad2.html).

<sup>4</sup> Molly Beck, "Two Afghan refugees charged with child sex, spousal abuse crimes at Fort McCoy," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, September 23, 2021, <https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2021/09/22/two-fort-mccoy-afghan-refugees-charged-child-sex-spousal-abuse/5820807001/>.

<sup>5</sup> Matthew Lee, "Afghan evacuation raises concerns about child trafficking," *AP*, September 3, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-child-trafficking-27d93a340c4834d497eb36e22bb72f42>.

<sup>6</sup> Stephen, Dinan, "EXCLUSIVE: Convicted rapist reached the U.S. on Afghan evacuation flight," *The Washington Times*, August 30, 2021, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/aug/30/convicted-rapist-reached-us-afghan-evacuation-flight/>.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen, Dinan, "EXCLUSIVE: Second major felon found on Afghan evacuation flight," *The Washington Times*, September 16, 2021, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/sep/16/second-major-felon-found-on-afghan-evacuation-flight/>.



1. How many Afghan evacuees have made "independent departures," in which they simply left U.S. military bases on their own accord?
2. What requirements, if any, must Afghan evacuees meet before being allowed to leave military bases in the United States? What conditions are placed on such Afghan evacuees when they leave?
3. What vetting, if any, have Afghan evacuees completed before arriving at military bases in the United States? Is the Department of Homeland Security undertaking any additional vetting after Afghan evacuees have arrived at military bases in the United States? If so, how many of the evacuees who have made "independent departures" completed all additional vetting prior to their leaving the military base?
4. Of the number of evacuees who have made "independent departures," how many received affirmative approval from Department of Homeland Security officials to leave the base?
5. What are the immigration statuses, if any, held by evacuees who have made "independent departures?" Please provide a breakdown of the number of evacuees who had American citizenship, lawful permanent residency ("green cards"), approved special immigrant visas (SIVs), or other status, as well as the number of evacuees who have only been paroled into the United States but who do not have any other immigration status.
6. What measures is the Department of Homeland Security taking to track the whereabouts and activities of evacuees who have made "independent departures" in the United States?
7. Of the evacuees who have made "independent departures," for how many does the Department of Homeland Security have a confirmed current location?

Please provide complete, written responses to these questions as soon as possible, but no later than 5:00PM on Friday, October 8, 2021. Please also arrange for a staff briefing on this matter by contacting my office's counsel at (202) 224-2353. Thank you for your attention to this concerning matter.

Sincerely,



Tom Cotton  
United States Senator

Cc: Secretary Lloyd Austin, Department of Defense