

9 September 2021

Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP  
Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs  
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office  
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Dear Foreign Secretary

On behalf of the University and College Union, I am writing to ask that the UK Government urgently process visa applications for Afghan citizens, who have risked their lives to advance the UK's global research base, ensuring they are able to be resettled in the UK.

UK researchers, working on UK-funded global research, have been working in close partnership with Afghan citizens to advance the UK's international development agenda and address the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Partners in Afghanistan include researchers, human rights activists, women activists, LGBT+ activists and community members, artists, filmmakers, journalists, doctors, and lawyers. They risked their lives working on the ground conducting fieldwork in areas of policy and practice that the Taliban see as a threat to their interests and agenda.

Their association with UK-funded research makes them and their families eligible for resettlement in the UK. Their applications for visas through the Afghan Relocation Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme have been submitted. The Minister of Defence and the Prime Minister have the list of researchers and partners who have applied for the scheme. Your own department has the list of the partners who have applied for the scheme. And still, they do not have visas to enter this country.

We call on the UK Government immediately to do the following three things:

- First, the Home Office must manage a rapid response to the ARAP (Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy) and other resettlement schemes. Anyone who has applied for relocation or resettlement under one of the UK schemes, and received a call or email from the FCDO, should be urgently granted safe passage from Afghanistan by the safest possible route under protections afforded by the UK Government. The ARAP applications must be processed urgently. Everyone processed must be informed as soon as possible and given evidence that they have been processed. This evidence is needed for them to get any assistance at all.

- Second, the UK and its NATO partners need to create safe passage from Afghanistan, especially land, which necessitates negotiations with neighbouring countries. Anyone who is permanently settled in the UK, married to a UK national, or in a civil partnership with a UK national, or UK permanent resident, should be immediately granted safe passage from the country by the most practicable route, including air evacuations from bordering countries. Anyone with a valid pass issued by a national government, international authority, protection agency, or internationally recognised body, should be granted safe passage.
- Third, the Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme needs to be opened and made operational with immediate effect.

The system cannot continue to fail the most vulnerable people of Afghanistan, whose lives are threatened in large part because of the work they have done on behalf of the UK government. We therefore urge the UK Government to act decisively and ensure that all opportunities for evacuation by land, initially to neighbouring countries, are utilised.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Grady'. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**Dr Jo Grady**  
**General Secretary UCU**