

AFGHANISTAN BULLETIN

Dear SAR members & friends,

We are deeply saddened and angered by the tragic situation unfolding in Kabul and across Afghanistan, by the lives lost, the fear, separations, abandonment, and overarching regret that it did not have to be.

We are buoyed however by the heroic efforts of many in the military, government, civil society, and the private sector to evacuate or otherwise safeguard civilians, allies, and at-risk Afghans of all types, including many scholars, students, and civil society leaders.

We are heartened by the extraordinary response of our network members and partners to pleas for help. Extraordinary, but not surprising, as we have come to expect extraordinary kindness and efforts from the campuses, administrators, staffs, faculties, donors, and friends like you who have voluntarily joined our network and our collective mission.

The situation remains chaotic. Information is limited, incomplete, and changing rapidly. With this Afghanistan Bulletin, we will provide updates on SAR activities, partner activities, available resources, calls for help, and opportunities to share and get involved. We will tell you what we know, what we don't know, and how you can help. And we invite you to share with us what you know, what you can offer, and what you need, by email to scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu, subject line: "Afghanistan: [describe your issue]."

The situation is tragic, but Afghanistan's future is not lost. Not yet. Not so long as we support Afghanistan's scholars, teachers, and students; lawyers and judges; civil society leaders and activists; writers and journalists; musicians and artists. They are Afghanistan's future, a new, rights-respecting, forward-looking, knowledge-based future, and together we will help them.

Thank you for all you are doing,



Rob Quinn
Executive Director

1. HEIs offering help

Early in the crisis, SAR surveyed network member institutions, asking them to pledge to host a suitable at-risk scholar from Afghanistan, this year if at all possible. We asked institutions to pledge to cover these costs of visits on their own, if at all possible, and estimated these to be in the range of USD \$50,000 to \$90,000, or €40,000 to €75,000 euro depending on the individual, duration, host country, and terms of the visit. We also invited institutions unsure about hosting or the availability of funds to let SAR know of their interest, so that SAR staff might then work to assist in filling whatever gaps may be necessary. SAR staff will also work with campus representatives to identify a suitable candidate for each opportunity.

We are so grateful to the many institutions, leaders, administrators, faculty, and staff that have responded with offers to host or other assistance. Thus far nearly 200 institutions have responded positively, with 45% offering full or partial support.

But we still need more help. If your institution can pledge to host one or more at-risk Afghans, please complete the [survey here](#).

If your institution can offer other assistance or expertise not indicated in the survey that may be of benefit to at-risk Afghans, please email us at scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu, subject line: "Afghanistan assistance: [type of assistance]".

2. Applications for assistance

SAR staff are processing a very high volume of requests for help from Afghanistan. Over the last two weeks, we have received more than 600 applications and referrals (compared with 491 in all of the 2019-20 academic year), including at least 350 that are likely candidates for SAR assistance. At least 35% of candidates processed to date identify as female.

In response, we have:

- Employed even greater flexibility with our criteria for consideration (beyond our already flexible understandings of "scholar" and "practitioner") in an attempt to assist as many at-risk Afghans as possible, while continuing to focus on our core mission.
- Instituted an emergency triage system aimed at identifying candidates for priority evacuation assistance and/or priority review for placement (discussed below).
- Established an expedited application review for all Afghan applications, to speed production of candidate profiles for sharing with institutions that have signaled their willingness to host (discussed below).
- Compiled lists of candidates not qualified or well-suited for campus hosting, and will attempt to refer these individuals to other organizations, services or opportunities that may be better suited to their needs.
- Continued to process applications and requests for assistance from scholars and practitioners from countries beyond Afghanistan, and welcome interest from institutions in hosting these scholars also.

If you know of at-risk Afghan scholars or practitioners you believe would qualify for SAR assistance, please refer them to the application at <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/get-help/> (nominators may complete the form for individuals unable to do so safely), or email information to apply.scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu.

Links to additional resources for at-risk Afghan are available on the SAR website at <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/resources-for-at-risk-individuals-from-afghanistan/>.

NOTE ABOUT SECURITY: The situation in Afghanistan is still unfolding and dangerous. SAR urges anyone working to assist at-risk Afghans to keep in mind personal and information security concerns. SAR recommends whenever practical using encrypted communications (e.g. Signal, WhatsApp with disappearing messages, etc.) in place of general email. If contacting persons still in Afghanistan, exercise caution about what information is requested or shared, especially information which might expose their location or affiliation with US or other foreign nationals. If sharing candidate information with SAR or within your institution, including candidate profiles provided by SAR, for purposes of evaluation for hosting or other opportunities, please treat it as confidential employment-related information and limit access to those necessary to make a final determination on assistance. Additional digital security resources available [here](#). For questions or concerns about security, contact SAR at apply.scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu.

3. Evacuation efforts

SAR has worked to assist at-risk Afghans on our priority lists with evacuation, principally by channeling candidate information to persons and offices directly engaged in the logistics of extraction and evacuation. These include US, European, and other government officials (including executive, legislative, diplomatic, and military), intermediaries with access to such officials, NGO and civil society actors, and groups of academics and staff with personal expertise and relationships in Afghanistan. Efforts by the people in these communities, from the highest rank to the general staff, have been heroic and are ongoing. Thank you to everyone involved in these efforts.

SAR also engaged in public advocacy urging the continuation of evacuation efforts beyond the announced August 31st deadline (which in practice means several days earlier). We have:

- Assembled lists and travel documents of priority cases and channelled these to persons and groups organizing flight manifests.
- Issued a letter [to the US administration](#) urging them to extend the evacuation and make other necessary adjustments to entry/exit policies to facilitate relocations. **Thank you to the more than 3,800 institutions and individuals who endorsed the letter.**
- Organized [an appeal to European governments and EU institutions](#) urging similar action and pressing for a dedicated EU fellowship scheme and other dedicated funding streams. **Thank you to the more than 70 institutions that endorsed the appeal.**
- Co-signed [a letter from leading US human rights and refugee groups](#) to President Biden with the same main requests.

Evacuation efforts will not stop with the departure of US and other foreign forces, but they will be more difficult. At-risk Afghans will likely seek ways to exit Afghanistan for weeks, months, or longer. SAR appreciates the understanding and patience of institutions eager to support at-risk Afghans that it may take some time before many individuals are able to travel and take up generous offers of assistance (discussed below).

SAR also maintains an **emergency fund** for small grants to at-risk Afghans or those assisting them (generally \$500 to \$5,000, approximately €400 to €4,000) with costs of eventual relocation, and resettlement. For information on such assistance email countryresponse.scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu, subject line "Emergency Fund request: [summary description]".

4. Afghans Seeking Hosts

As discussed above, we have established an expedited application review for all Afghan applications to speed production of candidate profiles for sharing with institutions that have signaled their willingness to host.

As of today, we have completed our expedited review for approximately 15 candidates. We are collecting information on another 60 priority candidates and hope to complete their reviews shortly. However, most candidates are still in Afghanistan, while a lucky few may be in transit or temporarily at a point of first arrival outside the country. Available information is incomplete and changing. We appreciate your patience.

Next week, we hope to have a first confidential list of candidates seeking assistance that we will begin to share with institutions that have expressed their willingness and capacity to host. As we receive and process additional applications, this list will grow.

NOTE ABOUT TIMING: With the situation in Afghanistan still very fluid, it is difficult to predict how many qualifying individuals may be able to exit, when, or to where. What is clear is the need for support, as soon as possible upon their evacuation and arrival, to mitigate the disruption to their lives and careers. SAR appreciates the understanding and patience of institutions eager to support at-risk Afghans, that it may take some time before many individuals are able to travel and take up their offers of assistance. SAR will provide updates in the next Afghanistan Bulletin.

If your institution is interested in hosting one or more at-risk Afghans, and you have not already done so, please complete the [survey here](#).

5. Funding

SAR is grateful to the many institutions, leaders, administrators, faculty, and staff that have responded already with offers to fund visits by at-risk Afghans, in full or in part, or to look for internal funding. These efforts are vital, and will make an enormous contribution to our successful response to the crisis.

But the opportunity and scale of need are too much for any one institution, or even for the higher education sector alone. Foundation and government resources will be vital, especially in the beginning, especially for the most vulnerable.

SAR is grateful to existing funding partners for their support for our work on Afghanistan, including for emergency assistance grants, fellowships, and staff time.

SAR is reaching out to other **foundations and government sources** to encourage the allocation of substantial funds to support scholarships, fellowships, and jobs for displaced Afghans, including to supplement campus sources of support, and to encourage hosting opportunities at institutions in countries in the region for many candidates who may be unable to travel or might prefer to remain closer to home.

SAR welcomes suggestions for such sources of funds and invites conversations with interested funders by email at scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu, subject line: "Afghanistan funding". **As such funds become available, SAR will share information on how institutions might apply for such support in a future Afghanistan Bulletin.**

SAR also invites introduction and conversations with corporate and private donors interested in supporting at-risk Afghans and in securing their legacy as a defender of a generation of talented, courageous Afghans, men and especially women, who literally put their lives on the line for the freedom to think, question, and share ideas. To explore such support, email SAR at scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu.

As noted above, SAR also maintains an **emergency fund** for small grants to at-risk Afghans or those assisting them (generally \$500 to \$5,000, approximately €400 to €4,000) with costs of eventual relocation and resettlement. For information on such assistance email countryresponse.scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu, subject line "Emergency Fund request: [summary description]".

6. Visa / arrival issues

Information on visas, refugee and parole processing, temporary and long-term immigration programs, and other possible avenues for at-risk Afghans leaving Afghanistan, for the US and other countries, remains limited and unclear. SAR will endeavor to collect and share such information, as available, in a future Afghanistan Bulletin. SAR invites individuals or groups with expertise and official information on these matters to email us at: scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu, subject line: "Afghanistan: Visa/arrival information."

United States: Information for Afghans under the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, and other pathways for at-risk Afghans to the United States is available at: www.state.gov/afghanistan-inquiries/.

United Kingdom: Afghan relocations and assistance policy, eligibility criteria at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy/afghan-relocations-and-assistance-policy-information-and-guidance> Information on the resettlement scheme for Afghans: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>.

Germany: Information for Afghan people entitled to protection: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/konsularisches/afg?openAccordionId=item-2478482-4-panel>

UNHCR: Information on relocation programmes in Denmark, Belgium, and Canada: <https://help.unhcr.org/afghanistan/relocation/>

7. Post-arrival

While the majority of our energies are currently directed to processing requests for assistance, evacuation, and matching candidates with hosts, we remind ourselves that arrival on campus is only the beginning of a visit. Resources to help scholars/visitors and hosts make the most of their time together are available on the SAR website. These include:

- [SAR's Scholar Handbook](#) (advice for scholar's for a successful visit)
- [SAR How to Host Handbook](#) (advice for host campuses)
- [SAR Speaker Series Handbook](#) (advice on organizing events)
- [Academic Opportunities Newsletter](#) (monthly job and fellowship postings)
- [External Opportunities directory](#) (fellowship & other around the world)
- [Online Scholar Training Modules](#) (advice on making the most of a visit)
- [Resources to Support Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Webinars and other resources for employers and at-risk scholars](#) developed by the EU-funded [Inspireurope](#) project, coordinated by Scholars at Risk Europe.

SAR invites sharing of additional resources, or suggestions for future SAR resources, trainings, or activities by email to scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu, subject line: "Afghanistan Bulletin: Resources."

8. Events, media, other resources

SAR welcomes suggestions of events, media, or other resources to include in a future 'Afghanistan Bulletin' by email to scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu, subject line: "Afghanistan Bulletin: Resources."

- [Fear for the Future: Scholars and students face desperate circumstances following Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.](#) Elizabeth Redden, InsideHigherEd, 8/17/2021.
- [Remarks of SAR Executive Director Rob Quinn at the launch of the 2021 Australia Section](#), discussing SAR's response to Afghanistan, August 19, 2021.
- [Over 100 European institutions ready to host Afghan scholars.](#) Ben Upton, Research Professional News, 8/24/2001 ("Scholars at Risk has received over 100 inquiries from institutions in Europe interested in hosting academics and activists fleeing Afghanistan. On August 22, SAR published an urgent appeal to European governments and the EU calling for evacuation flights to continue as long as there are Afghans who wish to leave.")
- ['Immediate Action Needed to Protect Afghan Scholars.'](#) Will Nott, The PIE News, 24 August 2021
- ['Plea to save the 'lives and careers' of Afghan academics.'](#) Brendan O'Malley, University World News, 8/25/2001 ("Scholars at Risk, along with 50 higher education networks, associations, and organizations, have issued an appeal urging European governments and EU institutions to take practical steps in securing the lives of Afghanistan's scholars, including by continuing evacuation flights, increasing resettlement quotas, and waiving visa and residency requirements.")

9. Misc.

Job openings: SAR is seeking additional temporary and extended-term staff to assist with our work on Afghanistan. For information visit the [career opportunities](#) page on the SAR website, or [subscribe](#) to receive notices of future positions.

Podcast: SAR's [Free to Think podcast](#) recently reissued an earlier conversation on Afghanistan. You can listen or subscribe to the podcast on your favorite platform.

10. Urgent appeal for Afghanistan

It's not too late. SAR members, partners, and staff are doing everything we can to help Afghanistan's scholars, students, practitioners, civil society leaders, and activists, especially women and ethnic and religious minorities. For the better part of twenty years they have worked for a new, rights-respecting, forward-looking, knowledge-based Afghanistan. They dedicated their lives to the values of openness and tolerance. These are not the values of the Taliban, so their lives are now at risk.

Timely action can still make an enormous difference. Your gift today can help. Please make a gift today in support of at-risk colleagues in or from Afghanistan. Visit: https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/afghanistan_appeal/

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Scholars at Risk is an independent not-for-profit corporation, hosted at New York University. Our international network of institutions and individuals shares a mission to protect threatened scholars, promote academic freedom, and prevent attacks on higher education communities around the world.

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