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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

September 17, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Blinken
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW, Mail Stop 0150
Washington, DC 20528-0150

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Mayorkas,

Recent news reports indicate that in the chaotic collapse of Afghanistan and subsequent evacuation, multiple Afghan men arrived with child brides¹ or who were part of “polygamous families”² were transported to the United States. One report cited multiple instances of underage brides being trafficked to Fort McCoy Army base in my state,³ and another suggested that the problem is so widespread that U.S. diplomats sent a cable expressing grave concern, seeking “urgent guidance”⁴ on how to proceed. Still other reports revealed cases of Afghan women and girls being raped and forced to marry older men to get out of the country.⁵ Even worse, these predators were apparently evacuated with their victims in tow – with some no doubt now present in the United States.

The American people have repeatedly been assured by the Biden administration that Afghan nationals are being “fully vetted,” despite thousands of individuals – many without visas or even basic identity documents – clearing screening procedures that normally take months or years in just days or weeks.

These troubling reports of child sex trafficking and polygamy, coupled with previous reports of Afghan nationals with possible connections to terrorist groups⁶ and at least one convicted rapist who had been previously deported making their way on to evacuation flights,⁷ only serve to fuel growing doubts about these assurances.

Nearly a month after the evacuation began, it remains unclear exactly how and where evacuees are being vetted. One administration official told a news outlet in August that all screening takes place in third countries like Qatar and Kuwait,⁸ but Pentagon spokesman John Kirby appeared to contradict that claim the same day, saying that arrivals would continue the process at sites inside

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/02/politics/afghan-women-trafficking-taliban-escape/index.html>

² <https://nypost.com/2021/09/03/growing-fears-child-brides-brought-to-us-in-afghan-evacuation/>

³ <https://apnews.com/article/middle-east-child-trafficking-27d93a340c4834d497eb36e22bb72f42>

⁴ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-9956217/Male-Afghan-evacuees-bringing-child-brides-US.html>

⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/02/politics/afghan-women-trafficking-taliban-escape/index.html>

⁶ <https://www.foxnews.com/politics/one-hundred-afghan-evacuees-flagged-for-possible-terror-ties-report>

⁷ <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/aug/30/convicted-rapist-reached-us-afghan-evacuation-flig/>

⁸ <https://www.politico.com/news/2021/08/18/afghan-refugee-debate-fractures-gop-506135>

the United States.⁹ We've also seen cases of Covid-19 and a measles outbreak among evacuees at Fort McCoy,¹⁰ raising questions about the effectiveness of health screening procedures.

The American public deserves clear answers to the questions that the administration's conflicting and often contradictory statements regarding the now-accelerated vetting process raise – particularly given that the Afghan government no longer exists, and thus cannot confirm the identities, backgrounds and claims put forward by Afghans seeking legal status in the U.S.

Making matters worse, thousands of Afghans have reportedly been allowed to enter the country through “parole”¹¹ – sidestepping standard visa rules – and in many cases are under no obligation to remain inside the bases where they are currently being held.¹²

In light of the foregoing concerns, and the fact that the number of Afghans held at Fort McCoy has increased substantially in just the last two weeks, I would like you to answer several questions.

- Have any cases of adult Afghan men married to minors been detected at Fort McCoy and other U.S. installations where evacuees are being housed?
- How many cases of polygamous families have been detected at Fort McCoy and other U.S. installations where evacuees are being housed?
- How many cases of forced marriages have been detected at Fort McCoy and other U.S. installations where evacuees are being housed?
- Have any couples or families involving an adult Afghan male and a minor bride or brides that have been detected been allowed to leave Fort McCoy and other U.S. installations where Afghans are being housed?
- Have any Afghans at Fort McCoy or other U.S. installations where Afghans are being housed sought or been treated for sexual assault or other injuries or trauma sustained after their arrival in the United States? If so, how many and at which installations? Are such incidents reported to local law enforcement authorities?
- What procedures does the administration follow to identify and detect cases of child sex trafficking both before and after evacuees have arrived in the United States?
- What procedures does the administration follow to confirm paternity or familial relations when an adult Afghan male arrives with minor female Afghan(s) they claim are relatives?
- What procedures does the administration follow to identify and detect instances of polygamy when adult Afghan men arrive with more than one adult female?

⁹ <https://www.fox6now.com/news/afghanistan-refugees-wisconsin-fort-mccoy>

¹⁰ <https://tennesseestar.com/2021/09/09/measles-outbreak-among-afghan-refugees-at-fort-mccoy-in-wisconsin/>

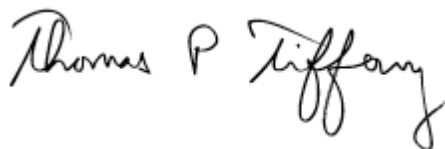
¹¹ <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/kabuki-vetting-of-afghans/>

¹² <https://www.foxnews.com/media/unvetted-afghan-refugees-wisconsin-military-base>

- When a case involving a child bride is identified, how does the administration proceed? Is the perpetrator turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement for deportation?
- When a case of polygamy is identified, how does the administration proceed?
- How does the administration verify marriage claims? If Afghans claiming to be married lack documentation to prove the union, how do immigration authorities verify the claim?
- When a case involving a forced marriage is identified, how does the administration proceed? Is the perpetrator turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement for deportation?
- How does the administration verify the actual age of Afghan arrivals, particularly in cases where the alien lacks verifiable identity documents issued by the Afghan government?
- My office has received reports from personnel at Fort McCoy of “family groups” of as many as 35 Afghans. How do immigration officials verify familial relationships in large groups of this kind?
- What procedures does the administration follow to verify the nationality of arriving evacuees given the large number of foreign fighters present in Afghanistan at the time of the country’s collapse, if the arriving alien does not have Afghan government issued identity documents? Have any non-Afghans been detected among evacuees at any U.S. installation to date? If so, how many, and at which installations?
- Do resettlement organizations receive guidance or training on how to spot forced marriages, child brides, sexual abuse and cases of polygamy? Are they obligated to do so? If so, do government officials audit these organizations to ensure they are performing due diligence, and are the organizations required to report suspected instances of forced marriages, child brides, sexual abuse and cases of polygamy?
- Are resettlement organizations permitted to engage in spiritual or faith related discussions with Afghan nationals as part of the resettlement process?
- Are resettlement organizations directed to facilitate smoother assimilation of Afghan nationals by providing education related to American social and cultural norms?

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas P Tiffany". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Tiffany
Member of Congress