

August 24, 2021

The Hon. Llyod J. Austin III, Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense
Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Re: AFGHAN INTERPRETERS

Dear Secretary Austin,

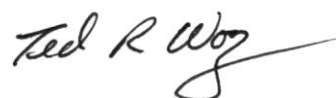
In light of recent events following the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, with the Afghan president having fled Kabul and the Taliban once again in control of the country, we know the U.S. government has been under significant pressure to safely and swiftly evacuate American citizens, and then end its presence in the country.

However, on behalf of the American Translators Association (ATA), the largest association of professional interpreters and translators in the world, we urge you to also prioritize evacuating Afghan interpreters and their families to a safe location outside Afghanistan immediately.

Acting swiftly is strategically important because linguists are essential in the global war on terror, and their safety is inextricably tied to the safety of us all. Afghan interpreters in particular have placed their lives on the line countless times over the 20-year span of the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, protecting our troops and diplomats from harm, helping navigate culturally sensitive and dangerous situations, contributing to improving the quality of life for Afghans and American troops alike. They deserve your attention now.

A strong U.S. presence, both by the Department of State and the U.S. military **MUST** stay in country until every translator and interpreter, and their families, who assisted U.S. forces and who wishes to leave the country is safely evacuated. Anything less would constitute a breach of President Biden's promise that those who helped the U.S. military "are not going to be left behind" and would be a moral and political failure by the United States. No 'terp left behind!

Sincerely,



Ted Wozniak, President
American Translators Association