

150,000 Afghans who helped the US could be left stranded after the August 31 deadline, new estimate suggests



A crowd gathering on the tarmac of Kabul's airport. WAKIL KOHSAR/AFP via Getty

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- US evacuation flights from Afghanistan will stop on August 31.
 - The US is reportedly evacuating people from Kabul at a rate of 20,000 a day.
 - Based on one estimate, 150,000 Afghans who worked with the US could be left behind.

As many as 150,000 Afghan nationals who helped the US military could be stranded after August 31, data from a new estimate published in The New York Times suggests.

The US is to cease all evacuations from Afghanistan on August 31, in line with President Joe Biden's plan to have all troops out of the country before the 20th anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

Pentagon spokesman Admiral John Kirby said Wednesday that the US hoped to evacuate around 100,000 people by August 31.

But, as of Wednesday, at least 250,000 Afghans who helped the US military are still in Afghanistan, according to an analysis of Department of Defense data conducted by the Association of Wartime Allies, which was cited by The Times. The estimate is based on annual DOD reports on Afghan employment, The Times said.

The US is currently evacuating people at a rate of 20,000 a day, The Times said. At that rate, around 150,000 Afghans eligible for expedited visas would be left behind, based on that estimate.

Many of the 250,000 are entitled to Special Immigrant Visas and Priority 2 visas as a result of working with or for the US military in Afghanistan since 2001.

As of 3 a.m. Thursday, 82,300 people have been evacuated from Afghanistan since August 14, the day before the Taliban took Kabul, White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre tweeted.

The International Rescue Committee estimated earlier this month that about 300,000 Afghans "have been affiliated with the US mission," but the Association of Wartime Allies said a top-end estimate indicates that as many as one million Afghans could be eligible for the expedited visas.

On Monday, the director of the CIA, William Burns, held a secret meeting with Taliban leader Abdul Ghani Baradar in Kabul, The Washington Post reported.

While the CIA has refused to say what the meeting was about, The Post reported that it was "likely" the meeting included talks about Biden's plans to end evacuations on August 31.

On Wednesday, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said as many as 1,500 American civilians were still in Afghanistan.

Source:

<https://www.businessinsider.com/150k-afghans-helped-us-military-likely-left-behind-estimate-suggests-2021-8>

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