



**Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office**

**Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP**  
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**The Baroness Anelay of St Johns**  
Chair, International Relations & Defence Select  
Committee

**The Lord Gilbert of Panteg**  
Chair, House of Lords Communications & Digital  
Committee

House of Lords  
London  
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14 October 2021

Dear Baroness Anelay and Lord Gilbert,

Thank you for your letter of 15 September about the safety of Afghan journalists. Like you, I am profoundly concerned about the danger they may face.

The UK remains committed to Media Freedom, and to championing democracy and human rights around the world. That is why as part of Operation Pitting, 71 journalists and others working for various Afghan media organisations, together with 216 of their dependents (totalling 287) were evacuated.

The recently announced Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS), aims to provide those put at risk by recent events in Afghanistan with a route to safety, including journalists. The scheme will prioritise those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for values such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech, and rule of law. It will also support vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT individuals.

We have committed to welcome around 5,000 people in the first year of the scheme and up to 20,000 over the coming years. We will work with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to identify those we should help. This is in addition to the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme, which has already settled thousands of Afghans who have worked with the UK government, and their families.

Anyone who resettles through the ACRS will receive indefinite leave to enter or remain in the UK, and will be able to apply for British citizenship after 5 years in the UK under existing rules. The scheme is not yet open, but further details will be announced in due course.

Best wishes,

**THE RT HON ELIZABETH TRUSS MP**