

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 23, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

President Biden:

We write regarding credible reports that your administration's withdrawal from Afghanistan facilitated the transport and trafficking of child brides and other Afghan girls subject to sexual abuse by Afghan men. We are deeply concerned that your withdrawal has imported an acute human rights crisis to our country, in part because you and your administration appear to have been wholly unprepared for the scope and nature of the operation.

The Associated Press reported on the basis of internal Department of State documents they obtained that "U.S. officials at intake centers in the United Arab Emirates and in Wisconsin have identified numerous incidents in which Afghan girls have been presented to authorities as the "wives" of much older men." Yahoo News subsequently reported on the basis of internal Department of Homeland Security documents they obtained that the dynamic suggested "desperate families trying to find ways to get their children out of the country" who were exploited by Afghan men to coerce marriages and sexually abuse girls. Some of these Afghan men reportedly exploited the withdrawal process itself – and more specifically their access to the United States – to facilitate their abuse.

On September 14, Secretary Blinken confirmed in testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations that there have been cases where administration officials have witnessed and separated over concerns related to such abuse and trafficking, and that he was personally aware of a "handful" of them.

These reports about trafficking and the horrific treatment of Afghan girls are in addition to reports that an Afghan male convicted of rape who had previously been deported was brought back during the evacuation. Such failures are why a group of Senators are demanding answers about what steps are being taken to vet individuals evacuated from Afghanistan.

Child marriage, sexual abuse, and domestic abuse are widespread in Afghanistan but illegal in the United States, but your administration has had no policy for dealing with these issues: the State Department requested "urgent guidance" but as late as August 27 had not received it. In any case the United States has a moral obligation to ensure that our foreign policy is not complicit in human trafficking, sexual slavery, and abuse. But just as with the crisis at the southern border, where your policies continue to abet documented instances of human trafficking and sexual abuse, your chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan appears to have facilitated horrific abuses.

It is imperative that the Department of Defense, the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) investigate whether and to what extent these reported incidents of child trafficking from Afghanistan are occurring and to provide a full public accounting of the United States' role in evacuating offenders.

Please provide full responses to the following questions by September 30, 2021.

1. How many instances of human trafficking, polygamous marriages, and “child brides” have the Department of Defense, the Department of State or DHS identified?
2. How many cases have there been in which the Department of Defense, Department of State, DHS or other government officials separated people due to concerns related to human trafficking, polygamous marriages, or “child brides”?
3. In light of statutory authority under Title 8 of the United States Code Section 1227 to remove individuals who engage in smuggling, trafficking, marriage fraud, crimes of moral turpitude, child abuse, and domestic violence, has DHS deported these offenders?
4. What steps have the Department of Defense, the Department of State or DHS taken to investigate reports of human trafficking, sexual abuse, child marriages, including opportunistic marriages facilitated by the evacuation process itself, among Afghan evacuees?
5. To what extent is the Department of Defense, Department of State or DHS coordinating with other agencies to deter future instances and punish past instances of human trafficking among those evacuated from Afghanistan?
6. What actions has or will DHS take to address, such as through detention or deportation, the individuals who have engaged in human trafficking, polygamy, or sexual assault during the evacuations?
7. What steps, if any, has the Department of Defense, Department of State or DHS taken to address child exploitation, including forced marriages and other sexual exploitation, inside transit and intake centers in the United States?
8. For reports of rape, sexual assault, or other sexual abuse, where did these acts occur? What guidance or orders have been issued to military bases, in particular the Wisconsin National Guard, if they witness or receive reports of a minor being sexually assaulted or abused by another Afghan evacuee, including by those claiming to be married to the victim?
9. Will DHS commit to deport individuals evacuated from Afghanistan who have violated 8 U.S.C. § 1227 by committing the following offenses: smuggling, § 1227(a)(1)(E); marriage fraud, § 1227(a)(1)(G); crimes of moral turpitude, § 1227(a)(2)(A)(i); crimes of domestic violence, stalking, and child abuse, § 1227(a)(2)(E)(i); and trafficking, § 1227(a)(2)(F)?

In addition, please provide any requests for guidance submitted by the Department of State concerning human trafficking, sexual abuse, and fraudulent or underage marriages associated with the evacuation of Afghanistan, and any guidance provided by any federal agency on these topics.

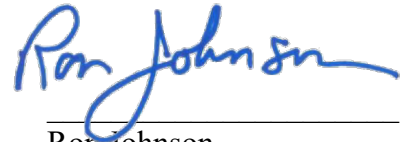
I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,



---

Ted Cruz  
United States Senator



---

Ron Johnson  
United States Senator



---

Tom Cotton  
United States Senator



---

Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator