

# RAF airlifts 102 people who have left Afghanistan to the UK

News story

The RAF has airlifted over 102 people who had already left Afghanistan from a neighbouring third country.



These flights are the first military relocation of eligible Afghans and British nationals since the end of the evacuation from Kabul

The airlifts took place across two flights and both have landed safely in the UK. Those on board will now receive support to begin their lives in the UK under Operation Warm Welcome.

While repatriation flights and individual relocations have been taking place since the end of August, these flights are the first military relocation of eligible Afghans and British nationals since the end of the evacuation from Kabul, known as Operation PITTING.

Those transported include vulnerable Afghans who fall under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) who are eligible for relocation to the UK, and British nationals. Further flights are due to arrive in the UK in the coming weeks with more eligible people on board.

**Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:**

In August we worked tirelessly to airlift more than 15,000 vulnerable Afghans and British Nationals from Kabul to the UK.

As I made clear at the time, our commitment to the Afghan people did not end there. We are determined to do right by those who supported our Armed Forces for so many years and others who are at risk.

These flights mark the beginning of what will be an enduring effort to relocate and support those who need our help.

The UK is working with international partners to ensure that as many routes as possible remain open to support the movement of British nationals and relocation of eligible Afghans to the UK. These flights mark the beginning of the next chapter of that effort.

After arriving in the UK, eligible Afghans will be processed and supported by the Home Office and MoD under Operation Warm Welcome to ensure they receive the support they need to build their lives in the UK. This includes indefinite leave to remain in the UK for those under the ARAP scheme, as well as funding for schooling and healthcare.

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## [UK forges closer defence and security partnership with India, October 2021](#)

- Foreign Secretary to build stronger security and defence links as she visits HMS Queen Elizabeth in Mumbai
- Liz Truss discussing developing security and defence tech, and strengthening defence-related trade with India during her trip
- The visit of the Carrier Strike Group underlines the UK's increasing defence, security and maritime co-operation with India and the wider region.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is forging stronger UK security and defence links with India on her visit to the country, as she visits HMS Queen Elizabeth in Mumbai today.

The ship is the spearhead of the Carrier Strike Group (CSG), a symbol of the UK's world-leading defence capability, whose visit to Mumbai is a clear sign of our growing defence and maritime co-operation with India. While in India the CSG is taking part in the most demanding exercise ever between undertaken between the UK and India, involving all three military services.

During her visit the Foreign Secretary will progress talks to ramp up defence and security ties and boost strategic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. It will take forward joint work agreed by the Prime Minister and Indian Prime Minister Modi in the landmark 2030 Roadmap on maritime security, cyber security and counter terrorism signed earlier this year.

She will also discuss developing innovative security and defence tech with the Indian government to tackle common threats and will talk through

strengthening defence-related trade between the two countries.

The Foreign Secretary sees developing this security and defence relationship with India, the world's largest democracy, as a key part of the UK's Indo-Pacific tilt. She wants to strengthen such links with fast-growing economies and like-minded partners in the region and build "a network of liberty" around the globe. The Foreign Secretary sees India as essential in ensuring a free, open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Closer defence and security partnerships between the UK and India underpin deeper economic ties and make both countries, as well as the wider region, safer. We need to protect our sea and trade routes and, operating from a position of strength, be hard-headed in defending our interests and challenging unfair practices.

The arrival of the Carrier Strike Group in India this weekend represents the UK's Indo-Pacific tilt in action. This is a true symbol of Global Britain, working closely with like-minded partners like India.

The Foreign Secretary will join the Queen Elizabeth Carrier at sea to tour the vessel and observe live exercises involving UK and US F35B fighter jets.

Chief of Defence Staff Sir Nick Carter is also visiting Mumbai to see the Carrier Strike Group in action. He joined his Indian counterpart General Bipin Rawat in Delhi to discuss regional security and laid a commemorative wreath at the National War Museum.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

A strengthened partnership with India is a key pillar of the UK's tilt to the Indo-Pacific. Our Carrier Strike group visit represents an important step towards our goal of establishing a maritime partnership with India in support of mutual security objectives in the Indian Ocean.

The Foreign Secretary will also visit the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai today to lay a wreath at the memorial for those killed in the 2008 terrorist attacks.

This evening, she will welcome senior business leaders and guests from the world of education, film, sport and politics onto HMS Defender, a Type 45 Destroyer, where the UK will showcase its world-leading tech and innovation in defence, healthcare, science and climate.

ENDS

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## £65 million support package for vulnerable renters

- Low income households to benefit from £65 million support package
- Funding comes on top of £500 million helping vulnerable families with essentials over winter
- Ban on evictions during the pandemic and other support has made sure vast majority of households are up to date with rent

Vulnerable renters struggling due to the impact of the pandemic will be helped by a £65 million support package announced by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities today (23 October 2021).

The funding will be given to councils in England to support low-income earners in rent arrears – helping to prevent homelessness and support families get back on their feet.

Renters across the country have been protected throughout the pandemic because of government action, including a ban on evictions and a £400 billion support package for the economy.

Today's extra funding comes on top of the £500 million Household Support Fund, which was announced by the government in September and is helping vulnerable households across the country with the cost of food, energy, water and other essentials.

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Eddie Hughes MP said:

We have taken action throughout the pandemic to support the most vulnerable families, and it is vital we continue to provide support as we enter the winter months.

This new funding will support families that are struggling and help to get them back on their feet as we begin to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The £65 million will be available through the winter months and households at risk of eviction or homelessness should contact their local council if they require support. The fund recognises the impact the pandemic has had on households in the private rented sector with the lowest income.

The government has already provided £310 million to councils this year through the [Homelessness Prevention Grant](#) and this funding will increase that grant by a further £65 million this year. £140 million is also available through Discretionary Housing Payments, which can also be used to prevent

evictions and help people find a new home.

The £500 million Household Support Fund provides £421 million to help vulnerable people in England, with the devolved administrations receiving almost £80 million. The funding is primarily being used to support households with the cost of essentials, although councils have flexibility to best address local needs. At least 50% of the funding is reserved for households with children.

It is for councils to determine the best way to support each household on a case-by-case basis. Any payment is likely to be paid directly to the existing landlord, or a new landlord if the money is being used to support a household to find a new home.

The government is grateful to landlords for their support and the funding will mean more of them will be able to reach agreements with existing tenants.

In September the government launched a [£500 million support fund for vulnerable households over winter](#).

Councils received an additional [£310 million to tackle homelessness](#).

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## **COP26 sources 80% of food from Scotland for its sustainable menus**

- Menus at COP will be affordable and with a strong focus on sustainability
- Eighty percent of food to be served at conference will be seasonal and sourced from Scotland
- Sustainable measures at the heart of approach

COP26 delegates will be served sustainable, locally-sourced food at the upcoming climate summit in Glasgow, the UK confirmed today.

Overall, 95 percent of the food will be from the UK, largely sourced from Scotland, and be seasonal. This will put sustainability at the heart of catering for the summit, reducing emissions and promoting environment-friendly food production.

COP26 will set an example for other large-scale international events, in terms of food sourcing, by taking a number of measures to ensure a sustainable approach:

- Ingredients will be replicated across the conference's menus to ensure produce can be repurposed for other meals, if necessary, to avoid food waste.

- The cups used to serve drinks will be reusable and it is estimated that this approach will save up to 250,000 single use cups.
- Suppliers are setting high standards for sustainable food production, from Edinburgh's Mara Seaweed, which is abundant and entirely sustainable and does not require fertilizer, fresh water or soil to grow, through to Benzie's carrots and potatoes who use wind turbines to power their cool storage, biomass to provide heating and actively recycle the water they use.

In line with the international nature of COP26, we will be using Scottish produce to deliver an international inspired menu. There will even be a Scottish fusion to certain international dishes such as the 'Scotch beef ramen'.

COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma said:

"There will be a tremendous amount of work to be done at COP26, with many hours of negotiations and long days, so the choice of food that we serve our visiting delegations, staff and all our volunteers, is very important.

"It is exciting to see such innovation in the menus that will be on offer and to understand the thought and effort that has gone into making dishes both healthy, sustainable and suitable for different diets and requirements.

"We very much look forward to giving our international visitors a flavour of the wide-ranging cuisine the UK has to offer."

Kevin Watson, Business Director, SEC Food said:

"We have worked hard to create low carbon menus that are accessible to all. We hope our sustainable food strategy will shape menus of the future as we all work to protect our planet. As well as providing great tasting and nutritious food, our menus are focused on local and seasonal sourcing, with a plant-forward approach. We have been delighted to showcase and work with so many local Scottish suppliers and our teams are looking forward to supporting the event."

**Ends.**

**Note for editors:**

- The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow from 31 October to 12 November 2021.
- The COP26 summit will bring parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.
- The UK is committed to working with all countries and joining forces with civil society, companies and people on the frontline of climate

change to inspire climate action ahead of COP26.

- The ISO 20121 Event Sustainability Management System is an international standard which sets out the requirements to establish, maintain and continually improve an event sustainability management system (SEMS).
- Our approach is guided by 7 Sustainability Governing Principles; actively manage potential impacts on the environment and local community and identify opportunities to deliver environmental and social value, provide an accessible and inclusive setting for all, encourage healthy living, ensure a safe and secure atmosphere, encourage more sustainable behaviour, promote the use of responsible sources and responsible use of resources throughout the supply chain, and leave a positive legacy.
- The UNFCCC secretariat (UN Climate Change) is the United Nations entity tasked with supporting the global response to the threat of climate change. UNFCCC stands for United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Convention has near universal membership (197 Parties) and is the parent treaty of the 2015 Paris Agreement. The main aim of the Paris Agreement is to keep the global average temperature rise this century as close as possible to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The UNFCCC is also the parent treaty of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol.

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## **British Ambassador visits Petén and welcomes renewed forestry concessions in Guatemala**

The British Ambassador to Guatemala, Nick Wittingham, visited Petén on October 22 to participate in the delivery ceremony of three Community Concession Extension Contracts for 25 years in the Maya Biosphere Reserve (RBM), in Petén. Additionally, two new Community Concession Management Units were awarded.

The National Council of Protected Areas of Guatemala (CONAP), the governing body of biodiversity in the country, authorized these concessions that allow generating income, health, education, among other benefits to about 10,000 direct beneficiaries and approximately 50,000 indirect beneficiaries within the communities. At the same time, this scheme allows different actions to be carried out in favour of the protection, conservation, management and sustainable use of biological diversity.

The event was chaired by the President of the Republic, Alejandro Giammattei;

the Director of CONAP, Carlos Martínez; the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources, Mario Rojas; the Departmental Governor of Petén, Luis Burgos; William Popp, Ambassador of the United States, Romeo Ruiz Armento, Ambassador of Mexico; Thomas Peyker, Ambassador of the European Union; Alejandro Santos, Country Director of Rainforest Alliance; Marcedonio Cortave, Director of ACOFOP; Marcial Córdova Álvarez representative of the community organizations Arbol Verde, AFISAP and Laborantes del Bosque.

During his intervention, Ambassador Whittingham highlighted that the concessions constitute a milestone in the conservation efforts of the largest block of continuous tropical forest in the north of the continent. The MBR is an important buffer zone for reducing emissions and its contribution to combating climate change is invaluable.

The UK is calling for urgent global action in response to United Nations reports on the science of climate change, which say the planet has warmed more than previously estimated. COP26, to be held in a week in Glasgow, will seek to increase global climate ambition and take immediate action to help cut emissions in half.

Progress has been made globally since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015. More than 85 new or updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) have been submitted through 2030, representing more than 110 Parties, to establish how the countries will reduce their emissions and tackle the climate crisis. The United Kingdom hopes that Guatemala can soon make an announcement along these lines and join other environmental initiatives in the framework of COP26.

Meanwhile, the UK remains committed to Guatemala's efforts to protect its biodiversity and tackle the effects of climate change. Between 2020 and 2022, the United Kingdom will have invested more than US\$1 million in projects in Petén to address issues linked to the protection of biodiversity, combat illegal trafficking of species and bring development opportunities to vulnerable communities.

Last September, the UK also announced a [Biodiversity Landscapes Fund](#) that over seven years will invest US\$20 million in the Northern Triangle of Central America, including the RBM. The Fund is part of the UK's commitments ahead of COP26 and builds on the successes achieved at the G7, where its leaders pledged to protect and conserve 30% of the world's land and oceans by 2030.

Currently, the RBM has 12 Concessions, totalling around 500 thousand hectares, of which 10 of these were granted to local community organizations and 2 granted to industrial companies between the nineties and the beginning of this century. This was done in compliance with the Protected Areas Law and the Peace Accords signed in Guatemala in 1996.