

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

You have without a doubt seen the horrific scenes playing out in Afghanistan and Kabul as many attempt to flee the country from impending Taliban rule; we would like to provide some resources below to learn more about this quickly developing situation, as well as ways to support the evacuation and refugee support efforts here in the U.S.

What is happening?

As the U.S. and other Western military forces leave Afghanistan and cease their support to Afghan military forces, the Taliban - a primarily Pashtun movement with large support from Saudi Arabia, preaching an extreme form of Sunni Islam – are advancing and retaking areas from which they were driven approx. twenty years ago. An assessment of the current situation and unfolding human catastrophe in Afghanistan can be found [here](#), and you can learn more about U.S. efforts to evacuate tens of thousands of Afghan civilians and support personnel [here](#). The situation is nothing short of horrendous, affecting tens of thousands of Afghan families, and [this article](#) provides some background on the Taliban and its rapid military advance.

The last twenty years of U.S. and Western involvement have been highly contentious and problematic, but have also allowed the most vulnerable parts of Afghan society to live relatively free of extremist and oppressive religious ideologies. Especially women and girls have been able to make decisions about their own lives, pursuing education, or dressing, speaking, and traveling with some degree of independence. As the Taliban reclaim their former control over various provinces, such freedoms will disappear, and already [signs of oppression based on religious extremism are emerging](#).

What is the role of college campuses?

The Presidents' Alliance – a national organization that brings together colleges and universities around issues of immigration, and of which MSU Denver is a part – [wrote](#) to Secretaries Blinken and Mayorkas urging action to protect Afghan students, scholars, researchers, and their families seeking to come to the United States. The letter included a set of specific recommendations, such as the use of special student relief, flexibility for student and exchange visa requirements, humanitarian parole, Temporary Protected Status, and increasing visa processing capabilities. To assist Afghan refugees in the resettlement and visa application process, the U.S. State Department has also [set up a page](#) to aid in the process, and it is vital that schools and support agencies provide this information to those who could benefit.

How can we help?

As students, staff, and faculty, we can assist as well! While donations of physical items is helpful, they often overwhelm aid organizations and support centers, so financial donations or advocacy efforts are often the best step to take. For example, the [International Rescue Committee](#) is working to raise \$100 million in support of Afghan civilians, while [Women for Afghan Women](#), the “largest women’s organization in Afghanistan,” accepts donations to help provide “safe shelter, resources, and aid to the thousands of women, children, families, and staff.” For other ways to support well-established and trusted organizations in their efforts to bring to safety opportunities to assist financially, please refer to this [Washington Post article](#).

And last, please be on the lookout for upcoming events by [CESA](#) and [Immigrant Services](#) in the near future that aim to provide more information, resources, and a space for processing for this developing international crisis! If you would like to meet in person and learn more about resources or the developing situation, please do not hesitate to reach out to us or schedule an appointment through the link below.

-Your Immigrant Services team Estéfani, Pablo, Nayeli, Angel, and Gregor