

Advocating for Special Immigrant Visas

On this Veterans Day, while we honor those who have served and currently serve in the U.S. military, we also want to stand with Iraqi and Afghan nationals who have assisted U.S. forces in mission essential efforts in the region. These nations risk their lives and their families' lives serving alongside U.S. forces. Because of this they may qualify for a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) because of the persecution and threats they face due to the sacrifice they have made.

If you are interested in learning more about SIVs and ways you can lift up their voices in advocacy and to educate Members of Congress, feel free to visit the [Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project website \(http://refugeerights.org/policy-impact/special-immigrant-visa/\)](http://refugeerights.org/policy-impact/special-immigrant-visa/) and join in on their ongoing efforts. Below are a couple of critical ways to educate your Member of Congress today:

- The State Department is out of Special immigrant Visas for our Afghan allies. These visas enable those who provided mission-essential assistance to our troops, and who are now in harm's way as a result of their loyal service, to come to safety in the United States. **We need to call on Congress to allocate enough SIVs before the end of the calendar year to save those who saved our troops.** As of now, over 9,000 Afghan allies remain in the backlog, in the crosshairs of the Taliban.
- **We must also call on Congress, the State Department, and the Administration to reopen refugee resettlement out of Iraq.** Since the rise of ISIS, the U.S. Government ceased evacuating endangered Iraqis--just when their lives are in more danger than ever. Some of the most vulnerable, whose life rafts have been taken away by the U.S. Government, include religious minorities, such as Christians, Assyrian Christians, and Yazidis; allies of the United States; and women at risk. Our country cannot abandon to mass execution these endangered people exactly when they need us most.

