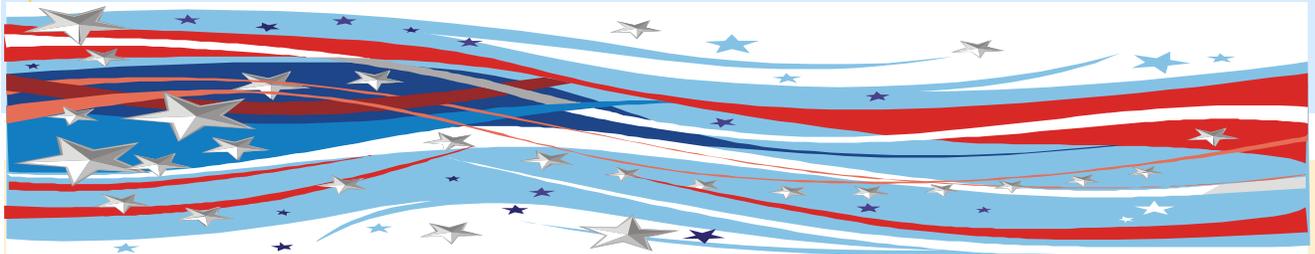


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# VETERANS' DAY 2014

## *Honoring America's Partners*

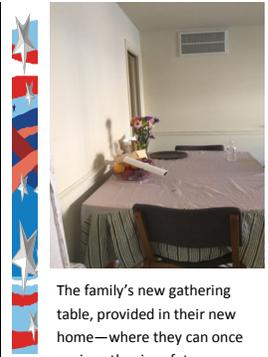


In Afghanistan and Iraq, U.S. government personnel and soldiers have depended daily on in-country interpreters, guides, finance professionals, and others who protect U.S. troops and support their missions. These nationals and their families daily risk their lives to support U.S. interests, and thus often become special targets of the Taliban, Al-Qaida, ISIS, or others due to their affiliation and employment with the U.S.

The Iraqi and Afghan Allies Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) programs began in 2008 and 2009 to recognize U.S. responsibility to protect our courageous partners. Iraq and Afghan nationals who worked with U.S. troops and who now face persecution and threats because of this are given a chance to find peace and safety in the U.S. through SIV status. This Veterans' Day, as we honor U.S. Veterans, may we also stand with and honor those who have worked and shared dangers with them—and are now living as neighbors among us!

**STORY OF AN SIV PARTNER:** Mr. Fnu and his wife, two young boys, and infant girl arrived from Afghanistan into Virginia this Fall after serving together with the U.S. government in Kabul, Afghanistan. Mr. Fnu assisted the United States in Afghanistan by driving and transporting US Embassy personnel to various appointments and engagements. Because of his partnership with the United States, he and his family's lives were in constant danger from the Taliban forces. Persons from the U.S. who worked with him in Afghanistan described him as a hard worker who maintained a very professional demeanor. To avoid the threats on his life, it was necessary for him and his family to escape his homeland—and with the benefit of a Special Immigrant Visa, he resettled in the U.S. Now in the Richmond area, it is his desire that his entire family continues schooling and learns to speak English well. While he works to support his family, he hopes that in the future he will be able to accomplish his dream of obtaining a college degree.

*Story provided by Church World Service affiliate office, Richmond, VA.)*



The family's new gathering table, provided in their new home—where they can once again gather in safety.

### **AS WE WELCOME SIVS IN THE U.S., WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO TO SUPPORT THEM?**

**U.S. Representative Earl Blumenauer, Oregon 3rd District, wrote in the Nov. 3, 2014 Huffington Post:**

"Another important part of sustaining our global leadership and ensuring national security is protecting our allies. We have the opportunity to build on modest success earlier this Congress to make sure we are not leaving behind Afghan and Iraqi translators who bravely served US forces to suffer torture and execution at the hands of the Taliban, Al-Qaida, or ISIS. The SIV program seeks to provide safe refuge for Iraqi and Afghan men and women who have provided "faithful and valuable service" to the U.S. Government and face an "ongoing serious threat" as a consequence....However, we're in serious danger of running out of visas by the end of the year. "

Backlog and delay means not just weeks or months, but years, for those who risked their lives to help the U.S. mission. They live in fear and hiding, knowing they or their families could be killed at any moment. We need to authorize more SIVs and make sure the ones that we have are getting out in a timely manner. We can't wait."

**ACT NOW!!: CALL YOUR CONGRESSIONAL LEADER NOW,** and ask them to increase visa numbers for SIVs from Afghanistan and Iraq, and to ensure cases currently backlogged are expedited to allow safety for their families.

*Also, contact the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project at [refugeerights.org](http://refugeerights.org) to continue to assist our Afghani and Iraqi partners.*

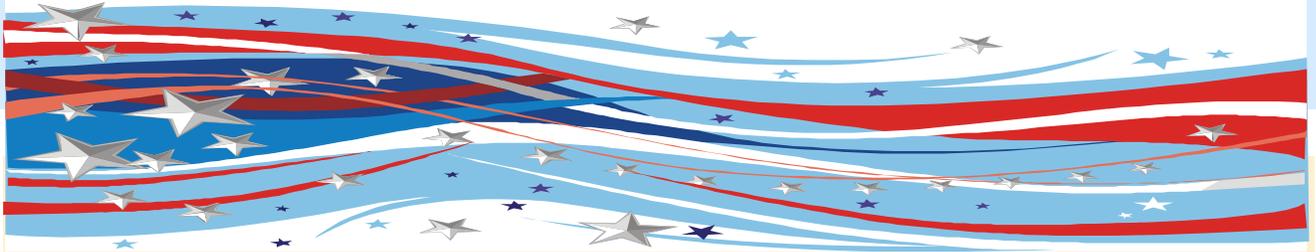
*Compiled by Interfaith Immigration Coalition affiliates. Story provided by the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project. For more resources, see: [refugeerights.org](http://refugeerights.org), or [interfaithimmigration.org](http://interfaithimmigration.org).*

# VISA

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# VETERANS' DAY 2014

## *Honoring America's Partners*



### Veterans' Day Prayers for U.S. Soldiers & SIV Neighbors

God, who called Abraham and Sarah to travel to a new land so all families of the earth might be blessed, we remember on this Veterans' Day all armed services professionals who have travelled the world with hopes to secure freedom.

For those who have experienced dangers in their quests, we pray your comfort for their families.

God, who provided Aaron to help Moses and gave Ruth to encourage Naomi, we thank you on this Veterans' Day for international partners throughout many eras who have served together with the U.S. to fill gaps, guide personnel through jungles and deserts, and light a pathway to next steps.

For Americans targeted for violence, and foreign nationals at risk because they are allies with them, we pray your presence of protection.

God, who taught us to love our neighbors as much as ourselves, and to cross the street like the Good Samaritan to help the suffering who are different from us, we thank you on this Veteran's Day for those who have crossed continents in hopes to serve a cause of justice and for those in those other continents who have crossed boundaries and risked to unite in common cause.

Now, with grace and compassion, wrap your arms of refuge around all government and military personnel today in harm's way throughout the world. For those seeking healing from memories of past traumas experienced, open our arms to offer love for veterans returned, and welcome for immigrant partners who have come seeking safety among us. Strengthen us to be family for newcomers we encounter, offering security and hope through our community.

*Written by IIC Partner, Rev. Dr. Sharon Stanley-Rea, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

*Director of Refugee & Immigration Ministries. For More Resources, see: [Interfaithimmigration.org](http://Interfaithimmigration.org)*

**VISA**