

The Honourable Ratna Omidvar
Senator – Ontario



L'honorable Ratna Omidvar
Sénatrice – Ontario

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CANADA

Dear Minister Joly,

I would like to extend my congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs and wish you all the best in your new role.

I am writing to urge the Government of Canada to provide desperately needed funding to keep safe houses in Kabul open. Some of the safe houses, which provide safety to approximately [1,700 people](#) that have received approval to come to Canada, are set to be closed in two weeks because of lack of funding. The safe houses, which were set up for interpreters who helped the Canadian military and for Afghans working with Canadian NGOs, are being funded by veterans, charities, and private donations.

The safe houses were supposed to be a temporary measure - a place for people to shelter before they travelled to Canada. However, since many Afghans haven't been able to leave Kabul, funding is badly needed to keep them open. If these safe houses close, and the people living in them are turned out into the streets, hundreds of people will be at risk of being killed, harassed, or jailed by the Taliban.

According to the [Fifth Estate](#), the Honourable Marco Mendicino, the former Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, promised that funding for these safe houses would be forthcoming. So far, this promise has yet to be fulfilled.

While it is commendable that the Government of Canada was able to airlift many Canadians and Afghan refugees out of Afghanistan before the end of August, hundreds of people have been left behind. Canada has a moral obligation to help the Afghans who supported the Canadian military, NGOs, and the Government of Canada. Funding for these safe houses is a matter of life and death. Canada must do the right thing and keep these safe houses open until the people taking shelter in them can make their way out of Afghanistan.

Yours Sincerely,

The Honourable Ratna Omidvar, C.M., O.Ont.
Independent Senator for Ontario