



INTERNATIONAL  
**RESCUE**  
COMMITTEE

**White House Advocacy:  
The International Rescue Committee's Afghanistan Campaign**



# Agenda

## Overview of the IRC

Brief history of the organization and our programming; will also cover history of IRC's digital advocacy program

## Congressional Asks

Discussion around U.S.-based advocacy asks targeting Congress once Afghans arrived in the U.S. and ties to the White House CTAs

## IRC in Afghanistan

Brief history of IRC's work in Afghanistan since 1988 and a brief overview of the situation from 2021 to today

## Performance

- Lessons learned

## Afghanistan Campaign

- Review CTAs
- Creative examples
- Obstacles for digital campaign

## Q & A

Q & A section to be moderated by Josh Finley

# Who We Are



## Founding

Founded in 1933 at the bequest of Albert Einstein

## Operations

- Operate in 52 countries; 22k staff
- Presence in 28 U.S. cities
- Reached 32.9 million clients in FY22

## Clients

We serve refugees, asylum seekers, and others facing forced displacement

## Sample of Services

Primary health care consultations  
Treating acute malnutrition  
Early childhood education



# IRC's digital advocacy program

- Program was formalized in 2018 after a pilot program was run to see if there was interest from existing IRC supporters in taking digital advocacy actions
- Majority of digital actions from July 2018 – August 2021 focused on refugee resettlement, asylum and integrations
- Began using Phone2Action October 2020 for SMS and action pages only
- Program size before August 2021:
  - SMS contacts: 30,894\*
  - Email contacts: 157,499\*



# Afghanistan Advocacy



# IRC in Afghanistan

- Began work in Afghanistan in **1988**, launching relief programs for people displaced by the invasion of the Soviet Union
  - The majority of the country is reliant on foreign humanitarian aid and NGOs
- Currently work with thousands of villages and communities across nine provinces, with Afghans making up more than **99%** of IRC staff in the country
- In Afghanistan, IRC has 4800 staff including volunteers and community workers. 33% of our staff are women who work in the health and education sectors



## President Biden must act now to protect at-risk Afghans

Afghanistan is on the precipice of a humanitarian catastrophe. The country is experiencing one of the world's fastest-growing humanitarian crises and mounting threats to civilians and aid workers alike. There is a limited window of opportunity to respond to the new realities on the ground. Humanitarian needs in Afghanistan were already some of the largest in the world at the start of the year, and now the situation is rapidly worsening by nearly every measure. 18.4 million people in Afghanistan require humanitarian aid – a doubling since last year. Already, around 550,000 people have been displaced by conflict this year, and displacement levels are soaring. Women and children represent 80% of Afghans who have been forced to flee since May and 75% of those in need of aid.

The reality is that the majority of Afghans in need of aid and protection will remain in Afghanistan. President Biden and his administration must maintain their commitment to needs inside of Afghanistan while doing everything possible to facilitate a rapid, safe and orderly departure for all eligible U.S.-affiliated persons in need of protection. The situation in Afghanistan is rapidly evolving and highly uncertain. The Biden Administration must take immediate action.

### Email the White House today!

Title \* ▼


Full Name \*

Address \*

Zip \* city and state not required

Phone \*

Email \*



Subject: Afghans need immediate aid and access to protection

Around 550,000 people have been displaced by conflict in Afghanistan this year and displacement levels are soaring.

18.4 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance - 75% of those people are women and children.

By providing my mobile number and email address, I agree to receive mobile and email alerts from the International Rescue Committee. You will always be able to unsubscribe or change your communication preferences. Read our [privacy policy](#).

Share with Others

 [Twitter](#)  [Facebook](#)

© 2021. All rights reserved. Subject to [Privacy Policy](#).

# Phase One

## Public policy objectives

1. policy changes to help Afghans stuck in Afghanistan find refuge in the U.S. or Europe
2. policy objectives to help those Afghans who were left behind in-country





Take action >

Friend, this cannot wait. It will only take a moment of your time to [take action](#).

The humanitarian situation in Afghanistan continues to deteriorate rapidly. Already, around 550,000 people have been displaced by conflict this year and displacement levels are soaring.

Many Afghans say they fear for their lives as violence continues to increase.

**URGENT: President Biden must act swiftly to protect at-risk Afghans.**

**Friend, join me in urging him to act now to protect Afghans in need of safety — including people who risked their lives to help the U.S.**

**The lives of countless Afghans depend on it.**

TAKE ACTION »

The rapidly escalating need for protection in Afghanistan shows how imperative it is for the Biden Administration to take immediate action to help the estimated 18.4 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

It is the responsibility of President Biden **to do everything possible** to immediately facilitate safe and orderly departure for all eligible U.S.-affiliated persons in need of safety and protection. **The lives of countless Afghans depend on the U.S. government acting promptly to resume processing and dramatically accelerate this process.**

**While our advocacy team in D.C. continues to push the Biden administration, I'm asking you to join our team of advocates — who have already contacted the White House over 19,000 times — to urge President Biden to take action. This issue is too urgent for the administration to delay.**

TAKE ACTION »

Thank you for your swift action today.

— Melinda, International Rescue Committee



Thank you

Friend,

We're reaching out to you to report back about our emergency work in Afghanistan — and to say thank you for your dedication to the people of Afghanistan and others struggling through the world's worst humanitarian crises.

It's because of you that we're able to continue our life-changing programs in crisis zones worldwide and respond so quickly to humanitarian emergencies, like the one unfolding in Afghanistan. **This week has been filled with pain, fear and dread for the Afghan people. Together, we watched with horror as Afghanistan fell.**

**But there were also signs of hope — like the tremendous outpouring of support we received from you, Friend, and thousands of other compassionate IRC donors.**

Here's an exclusive update on our work in Afghanistan and how we're putting your support to use:

- **A lifeline:** The IRC began responding in Afghanistan in 1988, and now works with thousands of villages across nine provinces, with Afghans making up more than 99% of IRC staff in the country. The current humanitarian response is nothing short of a lifeline in a country where half the population requires life-saving aid and faces a dangerous and uncertain future.
- **Critical aid and health services:** Our teams support displaced families with shelter, clean water and sanitation, and other critical aid. We are also prioritizing health services and responding to the needs of vulnerable populations, including women and girls.
- **Emergency cash assistance:** Many people are living in parks and cramming into small public buildings, unable to provide their families with essentials, such as food, water or sanitary products. The IRC will help them buy essential goods and meet their basic needs.
- **Education in Emergencies:** We create safe learning spaces and offer community-based education. As part of our emergency response, we will prioritize our education in emergencies programming and restoring a sense of normalcy and learning for children.
- **Resettlement:** The IRC has resettled more than 16,000 Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) recipients since Congress established the program in 2006 — helping to ensure that these families are given a chance to seek safety and rebuild their lives in the United States. IRC's resettlement agencies have welcomed approximately 500 Afghans over the past few weeks and are preparing to receive thousands more.

**Thank you for standing with us — and for being a beacon of hope. Your dedicated support is what makes a rapid emergency response like this one possible.**

We are so grateful for you, Friend.

— The IRC Emergency Response team

**P.S. Do you have a minute to spare? With just a few clicks, you can urge President Biden to act now to protect at-risk Afghan families — <https://act.rescue.org/YRqH9p> (It would mean a lot if you added your name, Friend. Thank you.)**

# Phase Two

Began to include asks towards Congress in our public messaging to supplement ongoing asks to the Biden administration



## Afghan refugees deserve to be set up for success

As the United States begins to welcome Afghan refugees to their new communities, it is critical that they have the necessary resources and opportunities to transition successfully to life in the U.S. Across the country, there is historic, bipartisan public support for welcoming Afghans. Congress has an opportunity now to support Afghan allies by voting for legislation that would make Afghan evacuees eligible for the same services provided to all other refugees arriving in the U.S. from across the globe. In this moment of unified support for Afghan refugees, Congress must pass the Biden Administration's request for Afghanistan Evacuation and Resettlement assistance without delay, and give our recently arrived neighbors the tools they need to thrive in their new communities.

## Email your members of Congress today!

Title \* ▾

Full Name \*

Address \*

Zip \* city and state not required

Phone \*

Email \*

Send Email

Subject: Afghan refugees need services and opportunities for success

My name is [@advFirst] [@advLast] and I'm from [@advCity], [@advState]. I am writing to urge you to include the Administration's proposed Afghanistan Evacuation and Resettlement provisions in the continuing resolution.

As we begin to welcome Afghan refugees relocating to the United States, it is critical that we do all we can to

By providing my mobile number and email address, I agree to receive mobile and email alerts from the International Rescue Committee. You will always be able to unsubscribe or change your communication preferences. Read our [privacy policy](#).

© 2023. All rights reserved. Subject to [Privacy Policy](#).

Phase Two\* *see if P2A can play  
embedded video:*



# Phase 3

- Began to advocate on Afghan arrivals to the U.S. by introducing more localized actions targeting Congress
- Two main U.S.-focused asks from September 2022 to now
  1. Boost humanitarian aid funding for Afghanistan
  2. Pass the bipartisan Afghan Adjustment Act (AAA)



## Tell Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act

More than 76,000 Afghans have been welcomed to the U.S. under Operation Allies Welcome under a special process called "humanitarian parole." This allowed Afghans to be admitted to the U.S. quickly and enables them to stay in the U.S. for up to two years but does not guarantee a path to lawful permanent residence or eventual citizenship. Despite meeting the definition of a refugee, these Afghan evacuees find themselves under a cloud of legal uncertainty.

Congress can remedy this situation and provide long-term support to our new Afghan neighbors by passing the bipartisan Afghan Adjustment Act. The Afghan Adjustment Act will provide a pathway to lawful permanent status for these evacuees—the same legal footing they would have enjoyed had they been resettled to the U.S. as refugees.

After a harrowing and life-threatening experience saving themselves and their families from violence, people should not be further traumatized. Join the International Rescue Committee in asking your members of Congress to cosponsor the Afghan Adjustment Act.



Email your members of Congress today

Title \* ▾

Full Name \*

Address \*

Zip \* city and state not required

Phone \*

Email \*

Click to send your emails →

By providing my mobile number and email address, I agree to receive mobile and email alerts from the International Rescue Committee. You will always be able to unsubscribe or change your communication preferences. Read our [privacy policy](#).

Share with Others  
[Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)

© 2022. All rights reserved. Subject to [Privacy Policy](#).



# Campaign Performance

# Digital Campaigns Performance

- Advocates sent over 60,000 emails, made 375 phone calls and tweeted nearly 1,000 times to the White House and their members of Congress.
- The SMS and email advocacy action campaign brought in 37,000 new advocates (mainly organic), 24,000 of which contacted their elected officials.
- These campaigns helped the digital advocacy program grow significantly. Overall there was a 62.9% increase in advocates taking action and 248.5% increase in legislator connections year over year.
- 19.8% of all subscribed advocates are considered highly engaged (aka acted on more than one campaign). 4.1% of all subscribed advocates have acted on five or more campaigns (36.7% increase YoY).



# Non-digital successes

- President Biden signed an executive order to free up \$3.5 billion in frozen assets for the Afghanistan humanitarian response
- The Treasury Department provided clarity on sanctions and a general license that authorized commercial and financial activity in Afghanistan (IRC was the only NGO who advocated for this)
- World Bank Board approved the release of \$1B of the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund to support Afghans
- President Biden announced the extension of Temporary Protected Status for Afghans, allowing Afghans to find safe haven in the US.
- Most importantly, as a result of IRC's intense advocacy, millions of Afghans are able to receive critical aid and thousands are able to seek refuge in the United States

 Any Questions?



# Learn More

## Contact Me

Melinda Frimpong  
*Digital Advocacy Senior  
Officer*  
[melinda.frimpong@rescue.org](mailto:melinda.frimpong@rescue.org)  
(347) 306-6101

## Sign Up

Text RESCUE to 35565 to  
join our mobile list and  
receive the most up-to-date  
alerts

To join our email list,  
please go to  
[https://help.rescue.org/si  
gnup](https://help.rescue.org/si<br/>gnup)

## Read More

Please visit [rescue.org](https://rescue.org)  
to find out more about  
the International Rescue  
Committee as well as  
learn about specific  
programming based on  
geographic location

# Thank you

Copyright © International Rescue Committee