



Mina's List is deeply troubled by USCIS's recent directive to "[review and re-interview](#)" all refugees admitted to the U.S. between January 2021 and February 2025. This population has already been heavily vetted after fleeing violence in their home countries, often spending months or even years being processed and following every legal requirement of the U.S. immigration system. Re-processing them is an unnecessary and inefficient use of resources. Given our work with Afghan women, we are also extremely concerned about the indefinite freeze on immigration processing for Afghan nationals specifically and the [prioritization](#) of their detention and deportation.

Four years ago, after the U.S. and NATO withdrew from Afghanistan following the US-Taliban deal that led to the Taliban seizing control, the Afghan women political leaders and civil society activists Mina's List had long supported found themselves under immediate threat. These were women who had dedicated their lives to peace, justice, human rights, and equality. Overnight, they became targets on kill lists.

Afghan women leaders were falling through the cracks—overlooked by broader evacuation efforts and pushed to the back of the line, despite being among those most at risk under Taliban rule. In those devastating days, we did what U.S. policy failed to do: we moved to evacuate the Afghan women most at risk. A coalition of women-led organizations and global partners worked relentlessly to bring thousands of women to safety—judges, journalists, parliamentarians, human rights defenders—many of whom had been excluded from U.S. evacuation pathways that overwhelmingly favored men in military or contractor roles.

A small but powerful cohort of these women ultimately resettled in the United States, starting life from the scratch. In the years since, they have built new lives—healing from trauma, supporting their families, contributing to their communities, and continuing their lifelong mission to empower Afghan women everywhere.

Today, however, they are once again unsafe: the new USCIS refugee review policy—initiated *before* the recent tragic and senseless shooting of National Guard members in Washington DC—places refugees vetted by and admitted under the previous administration, including Afghan women, under renewed scrutiny and threat of losing their legal status. Women who were evacuated because they were being hunted by the Taliban are now being told that the safety promised to them may be revoked—not because of anything they have done, but simply because of when they arrived.

This policy does not acknowledge who these women are. Long before they reached U.S. shores, Afghan women were the backbone of peace and civil society: founding the modern-day women's rights movement, shaping national coalitions, writing peace plans, and designing the architecture for a more just and inclusive Afghanistan. These are not women who threaten security. They create it.

Since the tragic shooting, anti-refugee—and specifically anti-Afghan—rhetoric has only magnified the danger. Afghan women must not be scapegoated for political gain, nor forced to live in fear because entire communities are cast as suspect.

The Afghan women who arrived here did so because they were being hunted for the very values this country claims to uphold—education, equality, justice, and human rights. They helped build a more hopeful future for Afghanistan and continue that work in exile. They must not be punished for surviving.

And they cannot return. The women and girls of Afghanistan now live under the most oppressive regime in the world. The Taliban have issued hundreds of edicts banning women from education, employment, public life, health care, and freedom of movement—conditions the UN has recognized as systematic persecution. Deportation or loss of legal status would send Afghan women back to a regime determined to erase them. The women leaders here in the U.S. would be specifically targeted and at risk of violence by the Taliban.

They deserve protection, not suspicion.

Safety, not threats.

Stability, not uncertainty.

Mina's List calls on the U.S. government to:

- Reverse the refugee review directive and protect Afghan women already vetted by and admitted to the United States.
- Halt any policy actions that could result in deportation or loss of legal status for Afghan women leaders and human rights defenders.
- Reject xenophobic and anti-refugee rhetoric that endangers vulnerable communities.
- Reaffirm U.S. commitments under the Women, Peace and Security Act, groundbreaking legislation signed by President Trump in 2017, honoring the contributions and sacrifices of Afghan women leaders in peace and security.

Afghan women stood with the United States for decades.

Now, the United States must stand with them.