



International Refugee
Assistance Project

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 15, 2019

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IRAP APPLAUDS BIPARTISAN SUPPORT PROTECTING U.S. ALLIES IN AFGHANISTAN, CONDEMNS BORDER WALL SPENDING

(New York, NY) - The [International Refugee Assistance Project](#) (IRAP) welcomes Congress' decision to include 4,000 visas to Afghan allies who are at risk for providing faithful service to the United States in the funding bill. IRAP is deeply grateful to our congressional champions for providing relief to thousands of Afghan partners. At the same time, IRAP condemns the President's decision to declare a national emergency to construct a border wall.

"We are thankful that Congress has acted to protect Afghan partners who face persecution because of their service to the U.S. Government," said **Betsy Fisher, IRAP's Policy Director**. "Our local partners provide mission-essential support to U.S. troops, diplomats, and humanitarian workers and should be protected from threats that they face as a result."

The Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) program, established in 2009, provides a lifeline for America's most trusted allies: Afghans who worked for the United States as interpreters, security personnel, cultural advisors, and in other capacities, and who are often targeted and threatened by the Taliban and local militias as a result of their service. Today's decision to approve these visas demonstrates that the United States continues to stand with our Afghan partners.

At the same time, IRAP is dismayed by President Trump's decision to declare a national emergency on the southern U.S. border to fund a border wall.



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Betsy Fisher added: “People fleeing from life-threatening circumstances and violations of their human rights have the right to seek safety, whether they are fleeing from militia attacks in Afghanistan because of their service to the United States or from organized crime in Central America. Despite the Trump Administration’s many attempts to circumvent the law, both U.S. and international law protect the right to seek asylum.”

IRAP extends its gratitude to congressional champions who support Afghan partners, including Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC), Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS) and Armed Services Ranking Member Jack Reed (D-RI); and House champions Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-IL), Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA), and Armed Services Chairman Adam Smith (D-CA) and Ranking Member Mac Thornberry (R-TX). IRAP also notes its gratitude for the leadership of the late Senate Armed Services Chairman John McCain. IRAP is deeply grateful for the leadership and bipartisan efforts of these champions to advance this important national security program. IRAP is also grateful to advocates Beena Patel and Josh Andrews of FaegreBD, Scott Cooper of Human Rights First, and Refugee Council USA.

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