

Network for evacuated Afghans, rejected Afghan asylum seekers and Danish-Afghans

Concept note, June 2022

Background

After the Taliban takeover in August 2021, Denmark succeeded in evacuating around 1,000 Afghans during the hectic days before the airport in Kabul closed. The majority of those were registered on the so-called "list of Danes". Others have been added later via Islamabad.

The Danish government passed a Special Act for this group, which mainly consisted of people who had been employed at the Danish embassy or by the Danish military. A smaller part had been working for international NGOs or organizations or had been highly placed in the Afghan legal system. In total, 908 applied, including children.

The argument for the Special Act was a fast case processing and less rigid criteria to ensure they would get a permit to stay. However, the result was very disappointing: a long waiting period of 7-8 months in the asylum camps led to 828 being granted a residence permit which could not be extended after the initial 2 years. 54 did not meet the criteria and got rejected under the Special Act. The evacuees have been spread all over Denmark. To ensure their future, half of the group has applied for asylum on the side (472 so far), and those cases are not yet decided. Over 200 have left Denmark again after being offered a more stable future in the UK or the US.

For many years, Denmark has had a lower asylum recognition rate for Afghans than the rest of EU: during the first half of 2021, only 3% of Afghan asylum seekers were granted asylum, and in 2020 the percentage was 16 compared to EUs average of 58%. Many rejections must be expected in the future, even if it will not be possible to deport anyone to Afghanistan by force as long as Taliban is in power.

About the new network

The evacuees and the rejected Afghans find themselves in a very vulnerable situation, being in obvious danger in their home country but not being offered a secure future in Denmark. At the same time, the evacuees form a very resourceful group: many having worked in the administration and actively fought for democracy and human rights, against Taliban and against corruption. But they have no network in Denmark and feel very frustrated about their future. The ones who are rejected are even more vulnerable, living in the isolated camps without any income. For both groups, Danish-Afghans who have lived here for many years can be a great support, as they are generally resourceful and well integrated. Danish NGOs can contribute to the network with practical solutions and experience within legal and political issues.

The network will consist of the following groups:

- Evacuated Afghans
- Rejected Afghan asylum seekers
- Danish-Afghans, of which many are born and raised here
- Civil society organisations working within the refugee area

The initiative has been launched by the following associations: The Danish UN Association, Refugees Welcome, Rapolitics and DAKDIF.

The new network has several goals which will complement each other:

- Social support and activities, both regional and national (in charge: DAKDIF)
- Legal aid and counselling (in charge: Refugees Welcome)
- Political work, especially aiming at re-opening the Special Act and extending beyond the 2 years and including the rejected ones (in charge: The Danish UN Association)

Activities could be:

- Meetings; local, regional or national
- Mentor networks/ friendship families
- Information campaigns (rights, consequences etc.)
- Advocacy for political changes

Read more:

The Danish UN Association / FN-forbundet: <https://www.fnforbundet.dk/>

DAKDIF: <https://www.facebook.com/dakdif2021/>

Refugees Welcome: <https://refugeeswelcome.dk/>

Rapolitics: <https://rapolitics.dk/>

Immigrantmuseet: <https://immigrantmuseet.dk/>