

Afghan Applicants Undergo Full Security Checks Before UK Relocation

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Afghan nationals applying under the UK's Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) must pass full national security vetting before being allowed to resettle, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has confirmed.

Defence Minister Lord Coaker stated that a successful ARAP eligibility decision from the MOD does not automatically guarantee relocation to

the UK. Once an applicant is deemed eligible, the MOD forwards the case to the Home Office, which then conducts biometric enrolment and rigorous security screening before granting indefinite leave to remain.

This two-stage process highlights the government's priority to maintain national security while delivering on commitments to former Afghan personnel who supported British forces. "As with all those arriving in the UK, all those found eligible for ARAP have to undergo robust security checks, including for national security. If they don't pass these checks, they are not granted indefinite leave to remain," Lord Coaker clarified, confirming that no applicant is exempt from vetting procedures.

The update comes amid ongoing scrutiny over ARAP's implementation, with delays and legal challenges affecting hundreds of applicants. However, ministers insist that while the UK remains committed to honouring its obligations, it must ensure the safety and integrity of its borders through strict vetting standards.

The ARAP scheme was introduced to support Afghans who directly assisted the UK military effort, such as interpreters and support staff. Yet concerns have been raised about the number of applicants still awaiting relocation, particularly following the withdrawal from Kabul in 2021.

The government maintains that its dual-stage approach is necessary. The MOD assesses whether applicants meet the criteria for assistance, but final approval rests with the Home Office, which applies the same national security protocols used across other immigration categories.

The assurance from Lord Coaker reinforces a consistent message: that while the UK will continue to offer protection to eligible Afghan allies, no

shortcuts will be made on matters of national safety. The vetting process, though time-consuming, is considered vital to preserve public confidence in the ARAP scheme and broader immigration practices.