



### -Emergency Services Bulletin-

#### Impact of Afghan Resettlement in the Homeland for Public Safety Personnel

In light of heightened Taliban violence in Afghanistan on 2 August, the Department of State announced a Priority 2 designation granting United States Refugee Admission Program access for certain Afghan nationals and their eligible family members for refugee resettlement in the US. For the public safety community, a significant influx of Afghan evacuees relocating to their area of responsibility could encourage violent extremist to take action and exploit vulnerabilities associated with the large-scale resettlement efforts.

■ The reliance on and desire of violent extremists to communicate and express their beliefs, plans, and intentions with likeminded individuals present unique opportunities for public safety authorities. Source development and coverage of potential threats of violence is vital for the safety of the Afghan evacuees and the public, and the prevention of radicalization and mobilization to violence. Depending on the circumstances of an investigation, an undercover employee or informant may be a natural fit, potentially providing placement and access to report credible information to law enforcement. This underscores the importance of recruiting and drawing on a diverse pool of undercover employees and informants.

**Interacting with the Afghan Community:** As with other refugee initiatives in the US, establishing proactive community outreach mechanisms with resettlement organizations may improve the relationship between Afghan evacuees and the public safety community. This collaboration will foster dialog and trust, which is vital for reporting suspicious behaviors, activities, and incidents to authorities. When responding to calls for service or conducting an interview, public safety personnel should account for gender dynamics as well as cultural sensitivities. Public safety officers should consider a rapport-based approach, taking culture and faith-based sensitivities under consideration, but these sensitivities should not supersede personal or public safety.

- Be familiar with cultural differences when interviewing or questioning an individual. For example, some female witnesses may be reluctant to speak with a male officer without another male relative or acquaintance present.
- Ensure that security checks and physical searches are comprehensive, irrespective of ethnicity, race, gender, or religion.
- Be mindful Afghan evacuees may have endured a high level of trauma abroad, leading to increased levels of posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and other general health-related issues, which may impact their interaction with law enforcement.
- Be aware that individuals may not be familiar with US laws, and different ethnic groups and intertribal relationships can be tense and potentially compromise safety or security.
- Attire may prevent or delay the immediate identification of an individual, and a private screening with a public safety officer of the same gender may be preferred or even required due to cultural or religious-based sensitivities.
- As resources dictate, consider using translators of the same gender as the interviewee.
- Be mindful that eye contact or shaking hands with public safety officers may be frowned upon.

#### RESOURCES

[HVE MOBILIZATION INDICATORS—2019 EDITION](#) is a booklet that provides indicators of violent extremist mobilization described herein are observable behaviors that could help determine whether individuals or groups are preparing to engage in violent extremist activities. (JCAT)

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