



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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One Year After Afghanistan Withdrawal, Landmarks to Light Up Honoring Fallen U.S. Troops and Afghan Allies

In Response to #AfghanEvac's Call to Action, Afghanistan's Colors Will Illuminate S.D. City Hall, County Administration Center, Convention Center, Balboa Park

San Diego – On the first anniversary of the fall of Kabul and withdrawal of U.S. and allied forces from Afghanistan, San Diego-based non-profit #AfghanEvac is asking local and state leaders for help to honor the fallen and support the continued resettlement of Afghan refugees who fought alongside American troops.

“One year later, we are still mourning the service members who died during the withdrawal of Afghanistan, and we are still struggling to find our Afghan allies a safe home in the U.S.,” said Shawn VanDiver, a Navy veteran and founder of #AfghanEvac.

In an [open letter sent to government leaders](#) on Wednesday, #AfghanEvac asked elected officials to take three simple actions to make sure Americans do not forget the sacrifices made in Afghanistan, and to help Afghans allies displaced by the regime change who are still looking for a permanent home.

Local agencies are already responding to #AfghanEvac's call to action. Tonight and on the evening of August 30, Mayor Todd Gloria has authorized the illumination of San Diego City Hall and County Board of Supervisors Chairman Nathan Fletcher will light up the waterfront County Administration Center. Blue, red, and green will brighten the California Tower and various other civic infrastructure across Balboa Park on these nights as well. The San Diego Convention Center will shine in colors honoring the bond between the American and Afghan people tonight and tomorrow night.

“The war in Afghanistan was a long, difficult battle that took a toll on our servicemembers and the Afghan people,” said Nathan Fletcher, a U.S. Marine Corps. combat veteran and Chair of the San Diego County Board of Supervisors. **“Its conclusion did not end as anyone would have wished, in particular the nearly 200 deaths including 13 courageous American service members from the Abbey Gate bombing. The action we're**

taking to light the County building is our way of showing solidarity with armed forces and the Afghan people, and commemorating the lives lost and those left behind, and recognizing the ongoing struggles of those who survived this war.”

Other agencies and individual San Diegans are encouraged to light their buildings and homes in the colors of the Afghan flag: black, red, and green. If the lighting scheme doesn't support black, it is requested that blue, red, and green be used to represent the special relationship between Afghans and Americans.

“Active duty service members, veterans, and newly arrived Afghans all across our region will see a clear message displayed in our city’s most treasured places: we care about you,” said VanDiver. **“It shows that our leaders haven’t forgotten the nearly 200 Afghans and 13 U.S. service members who lost their lives at Abbey Gate. It shows that we haven’t forgotten our enduring commitment to those Afghans who stood with us, people just like us who believe in the idea of America. It shows that our region is ready to help our Afghan allies to realize their American dream.”**

Illumination is encouraged on the following days:

- August 25th (26th in Kabul) honoring the Afghans and U.S. servicemembers lost at the Abbey Gate bombing on August 26, 2021
- August 30th (31st in Kabul) acknowledging the thousands of Afghans left behind following withdrawal of all U.S. and allied forces on August 31, 2021

The three actions #AfghanEvac is requesting of local and state governments are:

- **Pass a resolution calling on Congress to pass the Afghan Adjustment Act**, a recently-introduced bipartisan bill that will enable newly arrived Afghans to go through the immigration process, undergo all necessary security reviews, and have a path forward to lawful permanent residency in the U.S. Templates are [available at afghanevac.org/draft-resolution](https://afghanevac.org/draft-resolution).
- **Check in with newly arrived Afghans and the resettlement affiliates helping them restart their lives in your local community.** Visiting USAHello.org or afghanevac.org/policy shows ways local and state governments can help to welcome Afghan refugees.
- **Lighting civic infrastructure in honor of Afghans and those lost during the conflict.**

The more than 200 organizations that make up the non-partisan #AfghanEvac coalition work hand-in-hand with government entities operationally and to advocate for ways to provide new Afghan community members with the stability they need to resettle and thrive in their new lives here.

For twenty years, Afghan allies worked and fought side-by-side with U.S. and allied forces through the longest war in American history. The #AfghanEvac coalition is committed to ensuring that their service, partnership, and commitment to American ideals is honored.

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