

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 4, 2022

Sean O'Donnell  
Acting Inspector General  
Department of Defense  
4800 Mark Center Dr.  
Alexandria, VA 22305

Dear Acting Inspector General O'Donnell,

We write to you with concern over new allegations raised by a Department of Defense (DoD) whistleblower. This information may show the Biden Administration's failure to vet those evacuated from Afghanistan was even worse than the public was led to believe. The following allegations demand an immediate investigation by your office.

You previously issued a report titled "Evaluation of the Screening of Displaced Persons from Afghanistan."<sup>1</sup> Among other things, you found that "Afghan evacuees were not vetted by the National Counter-Terrorism Center (NCTC) using all DoD data prior to arriving in" the United States.<sup>2</sup> In particular, we were troubled to learn that DoD "personnel identified Afghans with derogatory information in the DoD [Automated Biometric Identification System] database who were believed to be in the United States."<sup>3</sup> At the time of the report, DoD "personnel had identified 50 Afghan personnel in the United States with information in DoD records that would indicate potentially significant security concerns,"<sup>4</sup> but we understand that number has risen to at least 65. These individuals need to be immediately located, fully vetted, and, if appropriate, deported.

A patriotic whistleblower paints an even darker picture. According to new allegations, 324 individuals evacuated from Afghanistan were allowed to enter the United States, despite appearing on the DoD's Biometrically Enabled Watchlist (BEWL). The BEWL—commonly known as "the watch list"—identifies individuals whose biometrics have been collected and determined by analysts to be threats or potential threats to national security, including known suspected terrorists (KST).<sup>5</sup> This is in addition to the reportedly 65 individuals who are known to have entered the country without adequate vetting.

Furthermore, the whistleblower alleges that political appointees at the National Security Council (NSC) and DoD instructed agency personnel to cut corners when processing evacuees in Afghanistan and at staging bases in Europe, also known as "lily pads." According to the whistleblower rather than administer fingerprint tests on all ten fingers, personnel were told to abbreviate their tests in order to promote the rushed evacuation from Afghanistan.

Finally, it is alleged that personnel at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) who work on vetting Afghan evacuees have been authorized to delete old biometric data, whenever they personally believed that such information is out of date. This is a troubling development that could threaten national security and public safety.

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<sup>1</sup> DODIG-2022-065 (Feb. 15, 2022), <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Feb/17/2002940841/-1/-1/1/DODIG-222-065.PDF>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 10.

<sup>5</sup> <https://irp.fas.org/doddir/army/atp2-22-82.pdf>.

We write to request you open an immediate investigation into these alarming allegations and specifically respond to the following:

1. How many BEWL matches were generated by biometric submissions from Afghan evacuees?
  - a. How many of these individuals were denied entry into the United States?
  - b. How many of these individuals were admitted into the United States?
  - c. How many of these individuals are currently in the United States?
2. How many BEWL matches were generated by evacuees after their arrival into the United States?
3. What steps have been taken to identify, vet, and, if appropriate, deport these BEWL matched individuals from the United States?
4. How many BEWL matches were for individuals designated as known suspected terrorists?
5. Have those who remain on the BEWL been investigated by the FBI or other law enforcement entities?
6. Did political appointees at NSC or DoD instruct personnel to administer abbreviated fingerprint tests to Afghan evacuees? If so, were all Afghan evacuees ultimately administered 10-finger tests?
7. Under what conditions may agency personnel delete biometric information? Has any biometric information associated with Afghan evacuees been deleted?

Sincerely,



Josh Hawley  
United States Senator



Ron Johnson  
Ranking Member  
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations

cc: Secretary, Department of Defense  
Secretary, Department of Homeland Security  
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigations  
Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security