



PRESS RELEASE

Vietnam Veterans of America

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VVA Urges President to Make Exception for Iraqi and Afghan Interpreters

"We're disturbed to hear that Iraqi and Afghan interpreters who worked alongside our troops through our nation's longest wars are being prevented from entering the United States," said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America. "As a generation, Vietnam veterans have lived with decades of regret from having seen this happen before. We cannot remain silent and allow history to repeat itself."

As ISIS, Al Qaeda, and the Taliban have persisted throughout the Middle East, they have frequently targeted civilians who have cooperated with Coalition Forces. President Trump's memorandum, placing a blanket ban on immigration from Iraq and Afghanistan makes these men and women easy targets. George Washington once said, "The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional to how they perceive veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by our nation." The same logic applies to our interpreters, who risked not only their own lives, but the lives of their families to protect American troops and support our mission.

"America must fulfill her promise to Iraqi and Afghan nationals who served alongside US troops that we promised safe harbor to--not only because it is a moral necessity--but because it sends a message that America keeps its promises to its allies. We strongly urge President Trump to consider the effects that this ban on Iraqi and Afghan interpreters will have on our long-term strategic goals, and to immediately create an exception for foreign nationals who have served alongside our men and women."

"Vietnam Veterans of America is the nation's only congressionally chartered veterans' service organization dedicated to the needs of Vietnam-era veterans and their families. VVA's founding principle is "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

