



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Inspector General Robert P. Storch announced today that the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DoD OIG) released the "Evaluation of DoD Support to Other Agencies' Requests for Screening of Displaced Persons from Afghanistan." The report examines how DoD personnel supported the screening process for Afghan evacuees as the Afghan government fell to Taliban militants in 2021.

The OIG found that DoD personnel supported other Federal agencies' requests for screening Afghan evacuees by conducting biometric enrollments of approximately two-thirds of all Afghans at staging bases overseas, and by conducting screening interviews of Afghans who were identified as a match to the DoD's biometrically enabled watch list (BEWL). In addition, analysts at the U.S. Army's National Ground Intelligence Center (NGIC) conducted biometric assessments of all watch list evacuees, as well as biographic analysis of over 84,000 Afghan evacuee records.

However, we found that, for a number of reasons, the DoD's NGIC did not consistently follow the DoD BEWL Guide and NGIC's standard operating procedures when deciding to remove or retain some Afghan evacuees from the BEWL. As a result, it might have removed from the list some Afghan identifies that should have been retained on it. The Department of Homeland Security used the BEWL as at least one consideration for its screening and vetting analysis. We further found that, in its after action review, the NGIC did not find any instances in which the removals were unjustified, though it was clarifying the justification listed for a number of them.

IG Storch stated, "The OIG's review revealed that the DoD generally was successful in providing support for other agencies' requests for screening of displaced persons from Afghanistan, though we identified areas for NGIC and the DoD to improve its policies and procedures to ensure that the process operates as intended."

Specifically, the OIG recommends that the NGIC update its standard operating procedures, review all Afghan evacuee records, and make corrections to records removed from the DoD watch list, where appropriate. In addition, we recommended that the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security revise or replace DoD policy to reflect management responsibility over the DoD watch list requirements, and review and approve the new standard operating procedures for the DoD watch list. DoD officials agreed to take action to address our recommendations.