

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF LOS ANGELES GAINS ASYLUM APPROVAL FOR NEARLY 350 AFGHANS

IILA Gains Asylum Approval for Nearly 350 Afghans, Reaching 150 Case Approval Milestone, Further Supporting U.S.'s "Operations Allies Welcome."

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, US, June 11, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When 76,000 Afghans were airlifted out of Kabul, Afghanistan, in August 2021 amidst its fall, many relocated to Southern California. [International Institute of Los Angeles](#) (IILA) initially welcomed and resettled 900 [Afghan](#) allies by February 2022, and announces today that 90% of the [asylum](#) cases filed for Afghan families have been approved.



The Afghan Legal Representation Project (ALRP) Team

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Cambria Tortorelli, Executive Director, IILA

The Afghans airlifted out were part of the U.S.’s “Operations Allies Welcome.” After risking their own safety to support American efforts to build democratic foundations in Afghanistan, they faced the stress of having their temporarily approved legal status expire without a streamlined legal path forward.

Navigating a convoluted and backlogged immigration system while meeting essential needs is a hurdle for most asylum seekers, and it often requires professional legal help. Nonprofit IILA provides these types of legal and support services, and launched Afghan Legal Representation Project (ALRP) in May of 2022 to fill this gap

and provide essential legal support. The approval of 150 asylum cases represents clients with varied stories of heroism and resilience. Clients range from advocates of women's rights and civil rights attorneys to translators for U.S. personnel, security guards, journalists, and high-ranking

Afghan government officials.

"Recent presidential actions to suspend asylum claims between ports of entry may be an aggressive stance with political ramifications," said Cambria Tortorelli, Executive Director of International Institute of Los Angeles. "We are not a political organization; we are a service provider. Our work ensures refugees, asylum seekers, and asylees can get assistance, have pathways to work and care for their families, and contribute to our community in meaningful ways. We help provide a strong foundation for new arrivals to thrive. This support is not only crucial for our new neighbors. It also ensures that our Southern California community is enriched and strengthened."

Many of IILA's Afghan clients still have close family members left behind in Afghanistan. IILA Immigration Attorney Joelene Konnersman reports, "The hardest part about this work is knowing that families are still separated. I have clients who have never seen their children because they were born after their fathers left Afghanistan, and other clients who have had loved ones kidnapped or killed by the Taliban because of their work supporting the United States in Afghanistan. We file applications to reunify their families, but the U.S. immigration system is painfully slow and frustrating."

As the project continues its services, IILA seeks to ensure that Afghan and all immigrant clients it serves have access to the essential support needed to grow and thrive in the United States. IILA calls on the community to continue to learn how asylees contribute to our wider community. For resources for education and advocacy, visit <https://www.iilosangeles.org/advocacy/>.

International Institute of Los Angeles (IILA) is a nonprofit founded in 1914 to help newly arrived immigrants in Los Angeles. IILA's mission is to provide skills, abilities, and resources to help families become self-sufficient and to promote cross-cultural understanding. IILA employs over 165 staff that provide child care, legal aid, employment assistance, transportation, nutrition, case management and other services to refugees, immigrants, survivors of human trafficking, and low-income working families. In 2023, IILA served 57,630 clients. For more information, visit



The Afghan Legal Representation Project (ALRP) Team at Work



International Institute
of Los Angeles

International Institute of Los Angeles Logo

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