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Alex Ruff, MSC, CD, MP

Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound

MP Ruff calls on federal government to take action to support Afghan interpreters

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Owen Sound, ON -- Alex Ruff, Member of Parliament for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound issued the following statement calling on the federal Liberal government to take action to support former Afghan interpreters, cultural advisors, and personnel locally employed by the Canadian government:

“Many of my former Canadian Armed Forces colleagues, the Conservative Party of Canada, and other Canadians have been calling for the federal government to show leadership and take immediate action to support Afghan interpreters, cultural advisors, and their families who are at risk by the Taliban as a result of the ongoing withdrawal of the United States’ military from Afghanistan. I’m publicly lending my voice to this call for action.

“Having had the privilege to work with many interpreters and advisors during my own deployments in Afghanistan, including in combat, these are Afghans who risked their lives daily to support our Canadian soldiers, diplomats, and other personnel. The risk they took supporting Canada did not end when Canadian personnel withdrew from Afghanistan in 2014.

“I’ll remind the Canadian government, and all Canadians, that the Taliban do not follow international law. During my deployment in 2007, my combat team escorted an Afghan National Army company to Ghorak to reinforce an Afghan National Police outpost. Just prior to our arrival, a local eight-year-old boy was hung, and his father beheaded by the Taliban, solely because the boy delivered bread to the police. While talking with my own interpreters at that time, they shared their concerns explaining that this is the reason why many used aliases and always kept their face covered during interactions, in order to protect themselves and their families. I share this horrific tragedy to highlight why action must be taken immediately to protect those who took on significant risk to support efforts to fight the Taliban.

“According to current sources, there are at least 115 former interpreters, cultural advisors, and locally employed persons and their families that supported Canada; although it has been estimated there are closer to 400-500 Afghans who need Canada’s help.

“In the past, Canada had a special immigration program which needs to be quickly updated and reinstated along with immediate collaboration with our allies to coordinate evacuation efforts for Afghans and their families who are at risk as a result of their support to Canadian personnel. This is the least we can do. The Canadian government must act now.” #UnitedInLeavingTogether

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