



Round Table Testimony: Elizabeth Lynn

Chairman Mast, ranking member Crow, and committee members, thank you for this opportunity. My name is Elizabeth Lynn. I served in the Air Force and the Navy Reserves. In 2011, I deployed to Afghanistan as a Combat Advisor, where I worked closely with members of the ANA at FoB Gamberi. I am still working to get my interpreter out of Afghanistan.

As the US left, he emailed me and said simply, “please apologize me if I die.”

Today, I am a Director at Operation Recovery, where I lead our Afghanistan and Resettlement missions.

In warfare, we destroy bridges to harm our enemies. In 2021, we destroyed a bridge that harmed our allies, our service member community, and our nation.

For two decades, countless Americans like myself and like many of you, members of this Committee, devoted their lives to building a critical bridge of trust with our Afghan allies. We fought shoulder to shoulder with people who detested the Taliban and everything they represent. An entire generation of Afghan allies grew up believing in American ideals of freedom and democracy.

Our allies are now paying for their service with bloodshed.

One Afghan ally [documented](#)¹ a series of [targeted executions](#)² through text messages and video:

“he was commando in ghazni province [...] arrested [...] and then [...] tb killed him [...] One of his friends was hogtied and murdered, then drug into the street and villagers were forced to hit him with rocks until he looked like a giant blood splatter. The brother of the man in the video was forced by Tb to drink acid, he also died. [...] This was when they arrested him last week [...] the village was ordered to beat him with rocks until he was this pile of tissues. His son was there and watched the whole thing.”

The Special Operations veteran who received these videos, and who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, describes this retaliation as the most horrific carnage [he has seen](#)³ in his life.

¹ Video Exhibit A

² Photo Exhibit D

³ Video Exhibit A



What will this veteran tell his children, when they ask him if they should follow in his footsteps and join the military?

Another ally who worked closely with us – and who provided significant aid to American families trapped in Afghanistan after the withdrawal – was [abducted and tortured](#)⁴. I quote: “They beat me with wire cables, and [hung weights from my testicles](#)⁵.” Unlike the Americans he helped, this ally is still trapped in Afghanistan, despite applying for Humanitarian Parole more than two years ago.

How likely are his friends and family to step up and help people like me, if we have to go back?

Since the US withdrawal, Operation Recovery has received more than [800 formal reports](#)⁶ like these. Our organization is tracking more than 7,000 Afghan allies. 2,190 are a part of the Afghan Special Operations community – people uniquely trusted, who worked closely with US forces for decades. We even turned [to them](#) for help evacuating American personnel in Kabul!

This retaliation is happening to many close allies, such as the interpreters who also faithfully served. Unlike them, men and women who served in the Special Forces are not eligible for SIV status. Some that worked directly with Americans are eligible for Priority 1 and Priority 2 programs. Despite being opened to Afghan allies more than [two years ago](#), they have only recently begun to process and are – quite frankly – being outpaced by Taliban atrocities.

Some had sponsors who applied for Humanitarian Parole on their behalf. Unfortunately, applications from those still trapped in Afghanistan appear to have been categorically denied. During a [five-month period in Fiscal Year 2022](#)⁷, less than one percent had been approved.

The lack of safe, legal passage for these families is effectively a death sentence. It is also a stain on the conscience of many veterans, public servants, and citizens. And most of all, it is dangerous.

⁴ Humanitarian Parole Application Submitted on Behalf of US Ally Targeted Specifically by Taliban: B

⁵ Threat Report Y

⁶ Selected Threat Reports Section

⁷ <https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/23789512/humanitarian-parole-for-afghans-17-march-2022.pdf>



We must stand by those who have aided us and strengthened our global standing. Untold future allies will inevitably look towards our actions today when determining whether or not to entrust us with their “hearts and minds”. The long-term security of service members and our nation may very well be determined by whether we honor our Nation’s promise to Afghan allies.

Let us do what is right. For our allies, for our veterans, and for the success of our nation.

I welcome your questions and look forward to continued dialogue after today’s hearing.

Thank you members of the committee.