



Thousands of Afghans who have worked with American troops and diplomats here, often at great risk, have become stranded for years in a murky wait to emigrate to the United States, despite government efforts to speed them from potential threats in Afghanistan.

One American initiative to substantially increase the number of visas available to Afghan workers, the Afghan Allies program, has fallen especially short of its goals. Since the program began in 2009, about 2,300 Afghans have applied for those visas, but the American Embassy in Kabul has finished reviewing only two cases. One was rejected.

"The record is not great," said David D. Pearce, assistant chief of mission at the embassy. He said that officials had asked Washington for more resources and that the new ambassador, Ryan C. Crocker, had placed a renewed focus on resolving the backlog.

"We're going to break this logjam," Mr. Pearce said. "It's going to move."

The long, uneasy wait has frustrated many Afghans employed by the United States, who said they felt neglected after risking their safety and that of their families to work with Americans in war-torn sections of the country. The Taliban have brazenly killed Afghan civilians, even children, with ties to coalition forces.

Some applicants said their paperwork had been lost, or that interviews had been promised but never scheduled. Many echoed a similar complaint: They had simply heard nothing and had no idea whether their applications had been approved or rejected.

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