

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 4, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

We write to demand you urgently initiate appropriate crisis response and assisted departures to ensure the safety and protection of American citizens who are now caught against their will in the fallout of President Trump's reckless war of choice against Iran that has triggered retaliatory attacks against military and civilian targets in multiple countries. As President Trump himself admitted in the Oval Office yesterday, there was no evacuation plan for Americans in the region because "it happened all very quickly." As a result, American citizens across the Middle East have been left without adequate support or communications and without viable options to leave the region as your department provides conflicting guidance to both shelter in place and to immediately depart via commercial means—which appear to be largely out of reach for most of our impacted constituents.

We urge you to immediately ramp up your efforts to communicate and coordinate with the Americans who are caught in this widening conflict by opening a crisis intake form to facilitate better, direct communication with Americans who are seeking to leave the region to get to safety. Although we have seen announcements from various administration officials that assisted departure plans are in progress, our constituents remain in the dark. You must take more concrete steps to facilitate the departure of these citizens in danger. While we have seen our friends and allies facilitate charter flights and your department has made announcements about facilitating charter flights, our constituents have experienced conflicting information about how to access evacuation support and if that support is available. Americans deserve a government that steps up to help them through times of crisis, not turn their back on them to fend for themselves.

The rapidly changing situation has also created increased risk to our U.S. Embassy personnel and their families across the Middle East, as your department has been forced to close Embassies and abruptly shift between authorized and ordered departure statuses. Although these options can be standard responses to unpredictable crises, this crisis is of President Trump's own making, and the regional reaction has appeared to spin outside your control and has compounded the risks to our people. The rapidly changing Embassy statuses raises questions of your department's ability to effectively enable our own people to depart to safety or whether diplomats remain at risk alongside their families, despite being directed to urgently leave.

Accordingly, we request you not only quickly take these actions but also provide the following information for us no later than March 6, 2025.

1. Please confirm when you will open a crisis intake form and what decisions led to the delay between relying on STEP only and moving to crisis intake.
2. What is the status of planned charter flights to facilitate departure for American citizens across the region? How are you determining which countries in the region require assisted departures to evacuate private U.S. citizens?
3. Are you planning to facilitate assisted departure from all 14 of the countries and regions from which the Department has advised immediate evacuation?
4. What metrics are you using to evaluate use of charter flights versus military flights to support assisted departures?
5. Given frequent airspace closures, describe what other avenues, such as ground transport, you are considering for facilitating potential evacuation support for American citizens.
6. Describe what planning you did for Embassy personnel and their families to facilitate their timely evacuation in the lead up to being placed on authorized or ordered departure.
7. Provide the status of Missions on authorized and ordered departure and to what extent those personnel and families seeking to depart have been able to do so.
8. How many Americans are currently in the 14 countries and regions from which the Department has advised immediate departure? How many Americans in these locations have requested departure assistance from the Department?

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



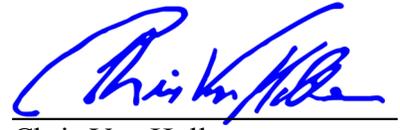
Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



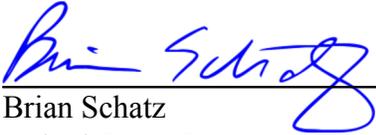
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator