

# *Canada to deploy special forces to assist Afghan embassy evacuation*

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Kabul, August 13 (RHC)-- Canadian special forces troops will be deployed to help evacuate diplomatic staff from Ottawa's embassy in Afghanistan, according to multiple reports, following similar moves by the US and UK amid a devastating Taliban offensive.

The special operators will work alongside British and American counterparts to ensure civilian personnel leave the country safely as fighting ramps up, unnamed Canadian officials told the Associated Press, CBC and Global News on Thursday night.

While the officials did not say how many troops will be sent, a source told CBC that the government does not plan a large presence, suggesting it would be smaller than Washington or London's embassy deployments, which include 600 British and 3,000 American soldiers.

A number of Afghan nationals who worked for the Canadian government, as well as their families, also hope to be evacuated along with Canadian citizens, but officials have not decided on where they should go, Global News reported. A planeload of Afghan workers was sent to Canada earlier this month amid the Taliban's latest offensive, while the government says it's resettled more than 800 Afghans over the last decade.

The rapid evacuations were ordered earlier on Thursday as Taliban fighters continue a relentless offensive across Afghanistan, seizing around a dozen provincial capitals over the last week, including Kandahar on Thursday, the country's second-largest city and formerly the home of Canada's military mission.

Later in the evening, a Taliban spokesperson declared the militant group had also captured Lashkar Gah, capital of Helmand province, claiming the major southern city is now "under the complete control of the mujahideen" and that large numbers of government troops had surrendered after suffering "heavy casualties."

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