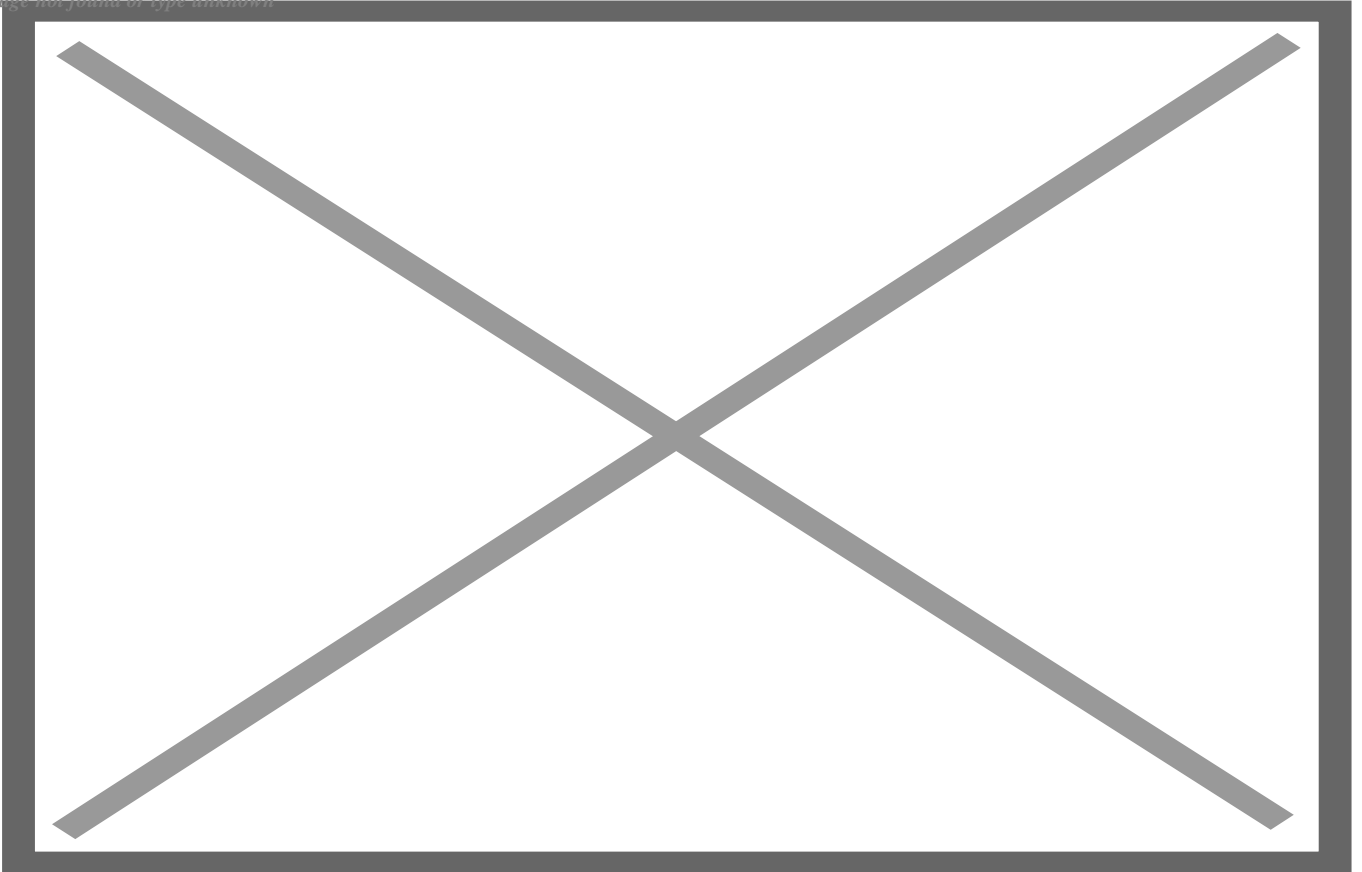


First German plane evacuated only seven people from Kabul

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First German plane evacuated only seven people from Kabul. French planes on tarmac. File photo

Kabul, August 17 (RHC)-- The first German military plane to land in Kabul since the Taliban takeover has evacuated only seven people, the government said on Tuesday, due to chaos at the Afghan capital's airport.

Germany, which had the second-largest military contingent in Afghanistan after the United States, wants to airlift thousands of German-Afghan dual nationals as well as rights activists, lawyers and people who worked with foreign forces.

Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer said the A400M transport plane undertook a “breakneck landing” on Monday evening, its main aim being to bring in German soldiers to secure the evacuation. “We have a very chaotic, dangerous and complex situation at the airport,” she told broadcaster ARD. “We had very little time, so we only took on board people who were on-site.”

Only seven made it because the plane had to leave quickly and other Germans could not get into the airport without protection from German soldiers, a foreign ministry spokesperson said. “Admission of people from the civilian part of the airport was not made possible by the partners exercising security responsibility at the airport,” the spokesperson said.

With 600 soldiers due to take part in the evacuation, Germany hopes to be able to get more people out in the coming hours. Flights resumed early on Tuesday after evacuations were suspended the day before as people crowded the runway trying to flee after the Taliban seized power.

Germany is waiting for U.S. permission to fly a second aircraft in from Tashkent, Uzbekistan, which it is using as a hub. Kramp-Karrenbauer hoped the airport could be kept open for several days so as many people as possible could be evacuated. “Those are not only German citizens, they are also local staff, at-risk people. We will also support other countries,” she added.

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