

Thousands of Afghan refugees face homelessness crisis in UK

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People call on the UK government to settle Afghan refugees in permanent homes. (File photo)

London, July 6 (RHC)-- Thousands of Afghan refugees are at risk of homelessness in the United Kingdom if the government presses ahead with plans to evict them from hotels, local councils have warned. The UK government announced in March that 8,000 Afghans living in the country after fleeing Afghanistan in

August 2021 would have to leave their government-paid for hotels by the end of August.

Under the plan, the vast majority of the refugees will not be offered an alternative place to live and will be expected to support themselves. The Local Government Association (LGA), which represents councils in England, has warned that the timeframe for those needing to find alternative housing is too short.

The LGA said councils would need extra resources to help find and fund the accommodation or there would be a risk of a further increase in homelessness. New LGA chair, councilor Shaun Davies, said at the annual conference in Bournemouth on Monday: “Combined pressures from Government asylum and resettlement schemes are growing on councils.”

“We want to work with the Government to get this right. Not just in a way that best supports the people arriving in the UK but also tackles the unsustainable pressures on our local services and on our communities,” he added.

Councils were told in May that they would receive £35 million to prevent refugees leaving hotels from becoming homeless, and £250 million was set aside by the government for homes for Afghans leaving temporary accommodation.

Meanwhile, a Home Office spokesperson said, “Hotels are not and were never designed to be, suitable long-term accommodation for Afghans resettled in the UK.” The vast majority of refugees, however, will not be offered an alternative place to live and will be expected to support themselves.

One notice sent to those in a hotel housing around 250 Afghan families in West Sussex in May read: “If possession is not delivered up by the Notice Expiry Date, you will be a trespasser, and the Secretary of State for the Home Department shall be at liberty to evict you from the Property.”

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