

Welcome to the Reuters.com BETA. Read our Editor's note on how we're helping professionals make smart decisions.

[Read more](#)



Sign In

Register



August 26, 2021 3:28 AM EDT Last Updated 6 days ago

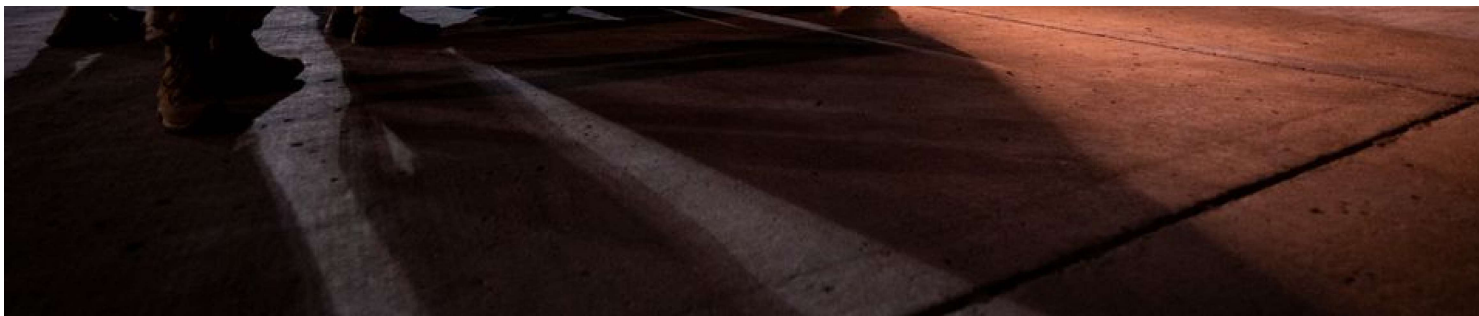
Asia Pacific

UK sees very credible threat of imminent IS Kabul airport attack

By Michael Holden

2 minute read





Airman assist Afghan evacuees onto a shuttle, August 23, 2021, at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar. Picture taken August 23, 2021. U.S. Air Force/Senior Airman Noah D. Coger/Handout via REUTERS/Files

LONDON, Aug 26 (Reuters) - There is "very, very credible" intelligence that Islamic State militants are planning an imminent attack on those gathering at Kabul airport in an attempt to flee Afghanistan, British armed forces minister James Heapey said on Thursday.

Late on Wednesday, Britain's foreign ministry advised people not to travel to the Kabul Hamid Karzai International Airport where thousands are waiting for flights out of the country ahead of an Aug. 31 deadline when the United States and its allies will pull out their remaining troops.

[read more](#)

Heapey confirmed that intelligence of a possible suicide bomb attack by IS militants had become "much firmer".

"There is now very, very credible reporting of an imminent attack, and hence why the Foreign Office advice was changed last night, that people should not come to Kabul Airport, they should move to a safe place and await further instructions," Heapey told BBC radio.

In later remarks he said: "I can't stress the desperation of the situation enough. The threat is credible, it is imminent, it is lethal. We wouldn't be saying this if we weren't genuinely concerned about offering Islamic State a target that is just unimaginable."

Heapey said there were still very large crowds of desperate people outside the airport which was "a real concern for everybody".

"I think there is an appetite amongst many in the queue to take their chances, but the reporting of this threat is very credible indeed. There is a real imminence to it."

He said that Western nations were relying on the Taliban for security outside the airport, and that despite the warnings there were a large number of people still waiting there.

"There is every chance that as further reporting comes in, we may be able to change the advice and process people anew, but there is no guarantee of that," he said.

Britain has already evacuated more than 12,000 people from Afghanistan since its rapid fall to the Taliban and was planning 11 more flights on Thursday.

"We think there's around 400 eligible people, mostly British citizens/dual nationals, in country. Clearly, we are working hard to find routes to safety for them," Heapey said.

"I just have to be really honest with people and say that there is every possibility, as we've been saying all the way through, that we won't get everybody out, and the security situation worsening as it has, makes that more likely."

Reporting by Michael Holden and David Milliken; Editing by Kate Holton

Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)

More from Reuters



NZ reports first death linked to Pfizer vaccine

Five stories you need to know about today

Afghan refugees in Italy worry for family left behind

Pentagon 'assessing' reports of civilian casualties following...



Sign up for our newsletter

Subscribe for our daily curated newsletter to receive the latest exclusive Reuters coverage delivered to your inbox.

[Sign up](#)