

April 21, 2026

General Randall Reed
Commander
U.S. Transportation Command
508 Scott Drive
Scott Air Force Base, IL 62225

Dear General Reed:

I write to you to request additional information on the role of U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) in supporting the evacuation of American civilians from the Middle East in the wake of the Trump administration's launching of an illegal and unconstitutional war against Iran. I am seeking clarification on TRANSCOM's support during the evacuations, and on your discussion of this support during a March 12 Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) hearing.¹

The Trump administration appeared to have been caught flat-footed when tens of thousands of Americans were attempting to evacuate the Middle East after it launched its war against Iran on February 28.² Americans in the Middle East described confusion, chaos, and disorganization when they sought departure assistance from State Department.³ It was not until March 2, three days after Iranian strikes had already hit several countries in the region, that the State Department finally told Americans in over a dozen countries in the region to "DEPART NOW" "due to serious safety risks."⁴ This warning came after much of the region's airspace was already fully or partially closed due to the war, making it even more difficult for Americans to evacuate to safety.⁵

¹ Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, "At Hearing, Warren Slams State Department and DoD's Failure To Evacuate Americans From Middle East," press release, March 12, 2026, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/at-hearing-warren-slams-state-department-and-dods-failure-to-evacuate-americans-from-middle-east>.

² USA Today, "Americans struggling to evacuate Middle East say State Dept. unhelpful," Callie Carmichael, March 25, 2026, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2026/03/25/americans-stranded-middle-east-iran-war/89289977007/>; Wall Street Journal, "Americans Stranded in the Middle East Say U.S. Left Them to Fend for Themselves," Stephen Kalin and Vera Bergengruen, March 6, 2026, <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/americans-stranded-in-the-middle-east-say-u-s-left-them-to-fend-for-themselves-a2f84b17>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Post on X by Assistant Secretary Mora Namdar, March 2, 2026, <https://x.com/AsstSecStateCA/status/2028588420403241021>; The Washington Post, "Where Iran has retaliated across the Middle East, according to satellite images and videos," Meg Kelly and Abbie Cheeseman, March 1, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2026/03/01/where-iran-strikes-middle-east-images-video/>; Institute for the Study of War, "Iran Update Evening Special Report, February 28, 2026," Kelly Campa, Benjamin Schmida, Adham Fattah, et al., February 28, 2026, <https://understandingwar.org/research/middle-east/iran-update-evening-special-report-february-28-2026/>.

⁵ The Washington Post, "State Dept. scrambles to aid stranded Americans amid attacks, airport closures," Adam Taylor, Dan Lamothe, and Sammy Westfall, March 4, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/03/03/iran-embassy-closures-stranded-americans/>.

President Trump admitted on March 3 that the administration had no evacuation plans for Americans abroad because “it happened all very quickly”⁶ and the Trump administration initially told Americans not to rely on the U.S. government for evacuation assistance.⁷ One American reported that she didn’t hear from the State Department for over a week after enrolling in its Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), which is where the State Department directs Americans abroad to enroll to “[h]elp the embassy or consulate contact [them] if there’s an emergency like a natural disaster, civil unrest, or a family emergency.”⁸ I led the Massachusetts delegation in a letter to the State Department demanding answers for these failures,⁹ and I have continued to hear from constituents stunned by the chaos they or their loved ones experienced when they sought assistance from their government to evacuate the Middle East.

The Department of Defense (DoD) and TRANSCOM have stepped up to help in similar crises in the past. After war broke out in Lebanon in 2006, the State Department requested support from the DoD in just two days.¹⁰ The day they requested support, the State Department and DoD began to develop “a plan to move American citizens from Beirut to Cyprus with helicopters, U.S. military ships, and contracted commercial ships.”¹¹ With TRANSCOM’s assistance, “State and DOD successfully evacuated nearly 15,000 American citizens from a war zone to the United States in less than a month.”¹²

In March, TRANSCOM told my office that the State Department had not yet requested any support from TRANSCOM for the evacuation of American civilians working for non-U.S. government entities.¹³ When you appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee on March 12, in response to questions that I asked about whether the State Department requested support for evacuating the tens of thousands of American citizens who had been trapped in the region, you indicated that “on the 28th of February, the Department of State made a request to

⁶ Post on X by Kyle Griffin, March 3, 2026, <https://x.com/kylegriffin1/status/2028886904762970216/>; The Hill, “Trump on lack of Middle East evacuation plan: ‘It happened all very quickly,’” Ashleigh Fields, March 3, 2026, <https://thehill.com/policy/international/5765069-donald-trump-middle-east-evacuation-plan/>.

⁷ Post on X by Assistant Secretary of State Dylan Johnson, March 3, 2026,

<https://x.com/ASDylanJohnson/status/2028889324456923210/>; Post on X by Kathryn Watson, March 3, 2026,

<https://x.com/kathrynw5/status/2028927838402027610/>; Al-Monitor, “After launching Iran war, White House scrambles to evacuate stranded Americans,” Elizabeth Hagedorn, March 3, 2026, [https://www.al-](https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2026/03/after-launching-iran-war-white-house-scrambles-evacuate-stranded-americans)

[monitor.com/originals/2026/03/after-launching-iran-war-white-house-scrambles-evacuate-stranded-americans](https://www.al-monitor.com/originals/2026/03/after-launching-iran-war-white-house-scrambles-evacuate-stranded-americans); Post on X by Jonathan Karl, March 4, 2026, <https://x.com/jonkarl/status/2029186616686711145>.

⁸ USA Today, “Americans struggling to evacuate Middle East say State Dept. unhelpful,” Callie Carmichael, March 25, 2026, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2026/03/25/americans-stranded-middle-east-iran-war/89289977007/>; U.S. Department of State, “Smart Traveler Enrollment Program,” <https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step>.

⁹ Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, “After Trump Starts War in Iran, Warren Leads Massachusetts Delegation in Pressing Rubio on ‘Complete Failure’ to Help American Citizens Evacuate Middle East,” press release, March 5, 2026, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/after-trump-starts-war-in-iran-warren-leads-massachusetts-delegation-in-pressing-rubio-on-complete-failure-to-help-american-citizens-evacuate-middle-east>.

¹⁰ U.S. Government Accountability Office, “State Department: The July 2006 Evacuation of American Citizens from Lebanon,” June 7, 2007, p. 7, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-07-893r.pdf>.

¹¹ *Id.*, p. 2.

¹² *Id.*

¹³ Office of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, “At Hearing, Warren Slams State Department and DoD’s Failure To Evacuate Americans From Middle East,” press release, March 12, 2026, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/at-hearing-warren-slams-state-department-and-dods-failure-to-evacuate-americans-from-middle-east>.

[TRANSCOM] for that, and we have provided some assistance.”¹⁴ You also stated that “as we receive a tasking and the opportunities to [care for the citizens that we have in harm's way], TRANSCOM is responding” and that “as we are able and the conditions permit with CENTCOM, we are involved in all the coordination to meet our citizens where we can get to them and then transport them to safety.”¹⁵ You further indicated that TRANSCOM had helped to airlift out “hundreds” of Americans.¹⁶ There was a significant discrepancy between what my office was told prior to the hearing and the information you provided in the hearing. And more than a month after that hearing, my office has yet to receive any information from your command to support your testimony.

The American people have a right to know whether the Trump administration used all the tools at its disposal to evacuate Americans out of the Middle East after President Trump launched an illegal and unconstitutional war that put the lives of Americans across the region in danger. To better understand TRANSCOM’s role in evacuating American citizens from the Middle East since the Trump administration launched its war against Iran, I request answers to the following questions no later than May 5, 2026:

1. What support has TRANSCOM provided to evacuate State Department personnel or other U.S. government personnel from the Middle East in preparation for and since the launching of Operation Epic Fury on February 28? Please provide a list of what TRANSCOM has been tasked with, the tasks it has completed and the dates on which they were completed, and any tasks that are still ongoing.
 - a. What TRANSCOM resources have been used to evacuate these individuals? Please include the number of TRANSCOM personnel; the equipment used, including the number of flights; and the estimated cost of the use of these resources.
2. How many State Department personnel or other U.S. government personnel has TRANSCOM provided evacuation support from the Middle East for in preparation for and since the start of Operation Epic Fury? Please describe the nature of this support, including what type of transportation State Department personnel and other U.S. government personnel were provided, the departure place and destination of the transportation, the date of the transportation, and the number of State Department personnel and other U.S. government personnel that TRANSCOM provided evacuation support for in each case.
 - a. Please provide a breakdown of this information by week since February 28, 2026.
3. What capacity does TRANSCOM have to evacuate American civilians in Lebanon, if the reported ceasefire in Lebanon does not hold?¹⁷ Please describe any resources TRANSCOM has available to assist with evacuations from Lebanon.
4. What support has TRANSCOM provided to evacuate American civilians who are not U.S. government personnel from the Middle East in preparation for and since the start of Operation Epic Fury? Please provide a list of what TRANSCOM has been tasked with, the

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*


¹⁷ The Washington Post, “10-day ceasefire in Lebanon begins as Israel agrees to U.S.-backed deal,” Suzan Haidamous, Susannah George and Adam Taylor, April 16, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2026/04/16/trump-iran-israel-lebanon-ceasefire-talks/>.

tasks it has completed and the date on which they were completed, and any tasks that are still ongoing.

- a. What TRANSCOM resources have been used to evacuate these individuals? Please include the number of TRANSCOM personnel; the equipment used, including the number of flights; and the estimated cost of the use of these resources.
5. How many American civilians who are not U.S. government personnel has TRANSCOM provided evacuation support from the Middle East for in preparation for and since the start of Operation Epic Fury? Please describe the nature of this support, including what type of transportation the Americans were provided, the departure place and destination of the transportation, the date of the transportation, and the number of Americans that TRANSCOM provided evacuation support for in each case.
 - a. Please provide a breakdown of this information by week since February 28, 2026.
6. On what date(s) did the State Department request support from TRANSCOM to evacuate State Department personnel or other U.S. government personnel from the Middle East in preparation for or since the start of Operation Epic Fury? Please describe the nature of the support that the State Department requested from TRANSCOM and a copy of any written requests.
7. On what date(s) did TRANSCOM receive request(s) for support from the State Department to evacuate State Department personnel or other U.S. government personnel from the Middle East in preparation for or since the start of Operation Epic Fury? Please describe the nature of the support that the State Department requested from TRANSCOM and a copy of any written requests.
8. On what date(s) did the State Department request support from TRANSCOM to evacuate American civilians who are not U.S. government personnel from the Middle East in preparation for or since the start of Operation Epic Fury? Please describe the nature of the support that the State Department requested from TRANSCOM and a copy of any written requests.
9. On what date(s) did TRANSCOM receive request(s) for support from the State Department to evacuate American civilians who are not U.S. government personnel from the Middle East in preparation for or since the start of Operation Epic Fury? Please describe the nature of the support that the State Department requested from TRANSCOM and a copy of any written requests.
10. Did TRANSCOM prepare any potential evacuation plans for State Department personnel or U.S. government personnel from the Middle East in preparation for Operation Epic Fury? If so, please describe the nature of these evacuation plans and the date on which they were completed.
11. Did TRANSCOM prepare any potential evacuation plans for American civilians who are not U.S. government personnel from the Middle East in preparation for Operation Epic Fury? If so, please describe the nature of these evacuation plans and the date on which they were completed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator