Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 30, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Hegseth:

We write to raise concern over reporting that servicemembers and their families are continuing to face significant hardship following their evacuation from Naval Support Activity Bahrain (NSA Bahrain) in March this year.[1] Additionally, we seek to better understand how the incapacitation of NSA Bahrain has impacted U.S. operations in the Iran War and the broader Middle East. In an August town hall, Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Daryl Caudle, said that the Navy would not be using NSA Bahrain for the foreseeable future.[2] This is significant not only for the thousands of servicemembers and their families personally involved, but also because NSA Bahrain is a critical logistics hub that has served as the headquarters for U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. Navy Fifth Fleet since 1995.

Servicemembers and Their Families are Not Receiving Adequate Support

As you know, President Trump launched the Iran War on February 28th before evacuating the roughly 8,300 military personnel, DoD civilians, and their families stationed at NSA Bahrain. Families were authorized to evacuate only after the war started, subjecting them to the Iranian retaliatory strikes that heavily damaged the base.[3] Since March, these evacuees have been under constant emotional, financial, and psychological stress. Some have had to move across continents, stay in temporary lodging for months, enroll their children in a new school mid-year, pay out of pocket for significant costs associated with a move and more, all often without access to belongings they were forced to leave behind. While the Department of Defense has provided safe haven entitlements to offset the cost of living for evacuees, this funding is scheduled to be terminated in November or after the 180th day of receiving the entitlement, before many have found permanent housing and transportation.[4]

In a recent town hall, Navy officials relayed that your Department of Defense leadership had denied a request to extend the safe haven entitlements, and that each evacuee had to seek individual approval from the Acting Secretary of the Navy.[5] This is unacceptable. To make matters worse, the signing of a lease is being used as a

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[1] MS NOW, "'I was terrified': Military families describe their harrowing evacuation from a Navy base in Bahrain," Priya Sridhar, October 20, 2026, 'I was terrified': Military families describe their harrowing evacuation from a Navy base in Bahrain.
[2] Navy Times, "Navy not returning to damaged Bahrain base 'anytime soon,' top officer says," Riley Ceder and J.D. Simkins, September 1, 2026, Navy not returning to damaged Bahrain base 'anytime soon,' top officer says.
[3] Stars and Stripes, "Military families navigate hasty evacuation as missiles fly in Middle East," Alison Bath and Lara Korte, March 11 2026, Military families navigate hasty evacuation as missiles fly in Middle East | Stars and Stripes.
[4] MS NOW, "'I was terrified': Military families describe their harrowing evacuation from a Navy base in Bahrain," Priya Sridhar, October 20, 2026, 'I was terrified': Military families describe their harrowing evacuation from a Navy base in Bahrain.
[5] MS NOW, "'Violence every day': Navy warns families evacuated from Bahrain base region remains dangerous," Priya Sridhar and Lily Becker, October 21, 2026, 'Violence every day': Navy warns families evacuated from Bahrain base region remains dangerous.

triggering event for termination of the safe haven entitlement. This is bad policy. Although a family may have signed a lease for a permanent residence, they may still have to use a rental vehicle or stay in temporary lodging while they wait for their household goods to arrive from overseas. Requiring servicemembers to pay out of pocket for expenses that were forced upon them by your mismanagement of the Iran War is wrong. You must fix this.

Loss of NSA Bahrain and U.S. Presence in the Middle East

As the Iran War reaches the ninth month, our constituents have expressed increasing concern about the cost of the conflict and the lack of transparency surrounding U.S. operations and strategic goals in the region. Because NSA Bahrain was a critical logistics hub for U.S. Central Command, we require a better understanding of how the severe damage to the base has impacted U.S. operations. In August, the New York Times reported that the U.S Navy is now resupplying from Diego Garcia, an island in the Indian Ocean 2,200 miles away from the Persian Gulf.[6] We have significant concerns about the morale and welfare of the troops deployed to the region, especially in light of the reporting on the conditions onboard the USS Gerald R. Ford and USS Abraham Lincoln, which both served record breaking deployments.

In executing the Congress's oversight authority under Article I of the Constitution, we request answers to the following questions by November 13, 2026.

1. Why was the Navy's request to extend the safe haven entitlements for evacuees denied?
    a. Who made this decision?
2. Why are safe haven entitlements for evacuees being terminated before the arrival of household goods?
3. What will the Department of Defense do to ensure that evacuees from NSA Bahrain are not paying out of pocket for living expenses incurred by the evacuation?
    a. What processes, if any, are in place for evacuees to receive reimbursement for expenses incurred, and how many reimbursement cases are pending?
4. Given the damage to NSA Bahrain, which logistic hub (or hubs) has the Department of Defense been using amidst the Iran War?
5. What has been the operational impact of the loss of NSA Bahrain?
6. Does the Department of Defense intend to repair and rebuild NSA Bahrain?
    a. If so, how much is the expected cost for such work?
    b. What is the financial cost of the damage to NSA Bahrain?

Very respectfully,

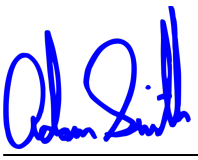
Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

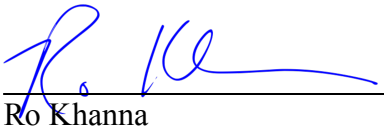
[6] New York Times, "Navy Carrier Problems are Tied to Attacks on U.S. Base Early in War," John Ismay, August 14, 2026, Navy and USS Lincoln's Problems Are Tied to Attacks on U.S. Base Early in War - The New York Times.



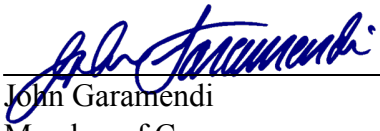
Patrick Ryan
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services



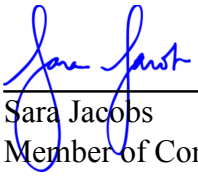
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



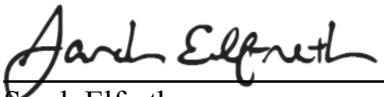
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



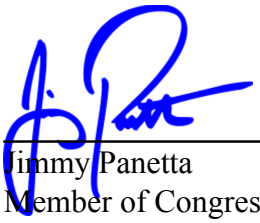
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



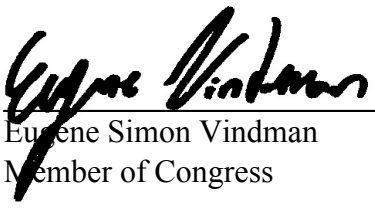
Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



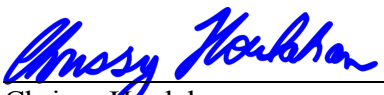
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
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Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

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Derek T. Tran
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Maggie Goodlander
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Kirsten Gillibrand
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George Whitesides
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William R. Keating
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Marilyn Strickland
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