

March 4, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio  
Secretary  
US Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Rubio:

At the outset, I respectfully urge the Department of State to immediately establish a fully operational emergency response system for American citizens affected by the rapidly evolving conflict in the Gulf region. This should include a continuously updated website with clear evacuation guidance and safety updates, as well as fully staffed 24 hour phone lines capable of providing real time assistance to Americans abroad and to families in the United States seeking information about loved ones in the region. In moments of danger and uncertainty, our citizens must have access to reliable information, knowledgeable personnel, and clear direction not only on returning home safely, but also on how to remain safe should they choose to stay or be unable to leave.

On March 2, the Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs issued a “Depart Now” alert urging American citizens in fifteen designated countries and territories in the Gulf region to evacuate immediately due to significant safety risks posed by potential counterstrikes from the Iranian regime following the commencement of Operation Epic Fury.

While the Department advised Americans to utilize commercial transportation, most flights have been canceled, leaving many stranded in the region. Constituents have also informed my office that the State Department’s emergency contact line simply repeats online security updates, offering little substantive guidance or the opportunity to speak with knowledgeable personnel who can assist them in real time.

In this perilous moment, every American seeking to return home should have the opportunity to do so without delay. I acknowledge that the Department has begun chartering flights and assisting citizens with booking seats on available commercial flights. These are important and welcome steps.

However, I strongly urge the Department to deploy its full operational capacity to ensure that no American is left behind. At the same time, some Americans may choose to remain in place or face financial or logistical barriers that prevent immediate departure. These citizens also deserve clear guidance, consistent communication, and practical safety resources.

I encourage the Department to provide updated and explicit guidance for American travelers abroad on evacuation procedures, including designated locations, available safe return airways, and any potential individual costs associated with evacuation flights. Equally important is clear safety guidance for Americans who remain in the region, including recommended precautions, available support services, and instructions on how to seek assistance should conditions deteriorate.

It is also essential that the Department reevaluate its current operational protocols to ensure that Americans in conflict zones have reliable communication channels, direct access to assistance, and timely evacuation options in moments of crisis.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this critical matter and for your continued commitment to protecting American citizens around the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Troy A. Carter Sr.", written in a cursive style.

Troy A. Carter Sr.  
Member of Congress