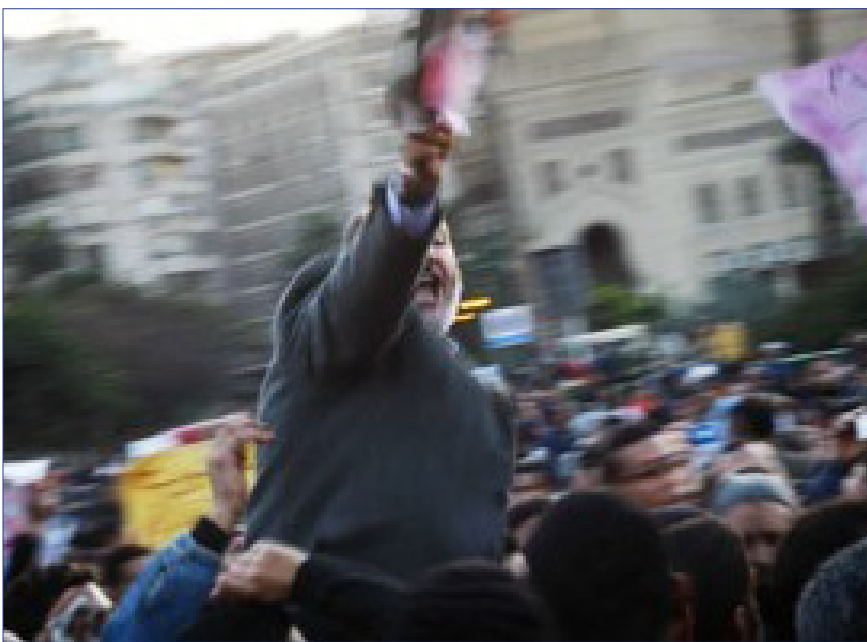


The Business Of Evacuation In Egypt



Protests in Cairo, Jan. 31, 2011

Thousands of foreign nationals have reportedly crammed into the Cairo airport for evacuation from the turmoil in Egypt. But a select group of them started leaving last Friday, when the protests first reached a boiling point.

Privileged diplomats? Nope. They're clients of Global Rescue, a Boston-based firm that specializes in providing security, evacuation and medical services to clients in some of the world's hot spots. The company is under contract to evacuate approximately 200 people from Egypt, primarily in Cairo and Alexandria. Most are corporate clients—Global Rescue won't release client names without permission—though some are affiliated with academic institutions, and not all are Americans. As of Monday morning, about 25% of the firm's clients had been evacuated, says Global Rescue founder and CEO Daniel Richards. The remainder are expected to be out by Tuesday night.

The U.S. State Department estimates that there are approximately 52,000 Americans living, working or traveling in Egypt at any one time. Most of them will likely remain in the country. However, as of Monday afternoon, 2,600 Americans had requested to be evacuated. The procedure is fairly simple: show up at the airport with valid travel documents, including your passport. (More information is available [here](#).)

But getting out requires a bit of patience. U.S. officials expected to put roughly 1,200 Americans on nine different flights Monday. They're being

shuttled to Turkey, Greece and Cyprus, where they're on their own in finding lodging, with some tips from consular officials. More of the same on Tuesday. "We'll be doing this until the last American who wants to get out gets out," says Rosemary McRay, a State Department spokeswoman. However, says Global Rescue's Richards, with so many people seeking evacuation, "getting to the front of the line to try to get out could take a lot of time."

In Egypt Global Rescue has dispatched its security personnel—mainly former Navy SEALs and special operations veterans—to provide security to the firm's clients and escort them to "collection points" (i.e. airports) where they can then leave the country. Richards won't say whether the firm's employees in Egypt are armed. "They are properly equipped to deal with security situations as they develop," he adds.

For now, the airports in Egypt are open to private companies like Global Rescue, but it's not clear if they'll remain that way as the situation unfolds. If they close, Richards says Global Rescue has contingency plans to evacuate clients by sea or by land. He notes that the firm has been in contact with U.S. authorities to make sure Global Rescue's evacuation efforts don't disrupt what the government is trying to do.

Evacuation isn't exactly cheap. Americans who are evacuated with State Department help are required to repay Uncle Sam for the lift, which is generally priced at the cost of a one-way commercial flight from Cairo. Global Rescue's basic individual plan for medical and security assistance, which includes evacuation from danger zones, is \$655 a year. (Student and short-term plans, as well as plans that are for medical assistance only, are cheaper.) Corporate memberships run anywhere from several thousand dollars to seven figures a year, says Richards. The firm will also quote you a price if you find yourself in a dangerous situation and need assistance.

Richards started Global Rescue after a spending nearly a decade as an investment banker and private equity investor on Wall Street. After analyzing the travel insurance industry's performance, he said in a recent interview, he came to the following conclusion: "They're very good at taking your money and not giving it back and not providing great service."

He was also able to forge a relationship with doctors at Johns Hopkins University, who provide consultation for Global Rescue's medical related missions. Last year the firm completed roughly 400 missions across the map, including earthquake relief in Haiti.