

U.S. - AFGHAN Women's Council



September 9, 2021

Secretary-General António Guterres
United Nations
UN Headquarters, S-3800
New York, NY 10017

Dear Secretary-General António Guterres:

We are writing with an urgent request from the members of the [U.S.-Afghan Women's Council](#) regarding the dire situation that is unfolding in Afghanistan before our eyes. With the formal withdrawal of U.S. forces on August 30th, we are witnessing the rapid collapse of Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban as the security and humanitarian situation continues to deteriorate on a massive scale, greatly imperiling Afghan women and girls, who have made tremendous gains over the past 20 years.

We call on the United Nations to take immediate action working with the U.S. Government and its international partners to protect Afghan civilians, particularly women and girls, who are very vulnerable and lack the protective mechanisms that were previously in place. Already there are stories of Afghan women and former U.S. allies being threatened, beaten and executed in the wake of U.S. and NATO forces leaving Afghanistan.

Our immediate concerns are the following critical areas:

- 1) The United Nations must work with the United States and its multilateral partners to ensure the unimpeded flow of aid into Afghanistan through a humanitarian corridor.
 - Food security supply chains must be sustained and supported through international assistance.
 - Safe delivery of medicines and vaccines to treat COVID-19 and disease must be ensured to all -- women, men, girls and boys.
- 2) The United Nations must negotiate the creation of and enforce a humanitarian corridor from Afghanistan to its neighboring countries.
 - Humanitarian organizations and staff require a safe and protected land corridor to deliver aid into the country and address the crisis.
 - Concurrently, Afghans must be provided a safe land corridor to seek refuge.
- 3) The United Nations must work with the United States and its international partners to ensure that rights of Afghan women and girls are protected and that they can safely voice their concerns without reprisal.
 - Ensure protection from human rights violations and physical harm.

- Humanitarian assistance must be provided equally to Afghan women and men, girls and boys.
- 4) The United Nations and its partners must sustain the financing of Afghanistan markets and development through a functioning banking and financial system.
- Urgent action is required to prevent the collapse of the Afghan economy and supply chains.
 - Non-governmental organizations must be allowed to access the funds necessary to support basic humanitarian programs, including health and education systems, women's empowerment and related programming.
- 5) The UNHCR and all host countries should immediately deem all Afghans abroad as refugees and provide them expedited assistance.

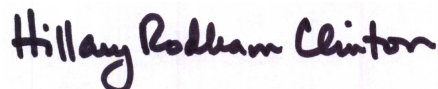
The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi has [urged the international community to help](#) the many millions in need in Afghanistan and in neighboring countries, saying that although thousands had managed to flee, “there will still be millions who need the international community to act.”

The members of the U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council urgently call upon the United Nations Security Council, UNHCR, UN Women and its international aid partners to work together to ensure that humanitarian assistance, food, medicine, and financial aid are delivered quickly and efficiently to the many millions in need in Afghanistan and those Afghans who have taken refuge in host countries. We have no time to waste to avert a massive humanitarian disaster.

Signed,



Mrs. Laura Bush
Honorary Co-Chair,
U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council



Secretary Hillary Rodham Clinton
Honorary Co-Chair,
U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council



John J. DeGioia
Co-Chair,
U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council
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Additional signatories attached.

CC:

Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of the United States to the United Nations

Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Russia to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Estonia to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Kenya to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Niger to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Norway to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Viet Nam to the United Nations
UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UN Women
UN Human Rights Council

Additional Signatories:

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