September 9, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House, Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20500

Vice President Kamala Harris
The White House, Office of the Vice President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20500

Secretary Antony Blinken
United States Department of State
2201 C Street NW, Washington, DC 20520

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield
United States Mission to the United Nations
799 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017

Administrator Samantha Power
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20004

Dear President Biden, Vice President Harris, Secretary Blinken, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield, and Administrator Power:

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 States to take immediate action at the United Nations working with its multilateral 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 States must work with its UN and 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 States must urge the UN to 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 States must work with the UN and 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 States and its UN 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 United States should urge the UNHCR and all host countries to immediately deem all Afghans abroad as refugees and provide them expedited assistance.

As Secretary Antony Blinken stated in his August 30th remarks, “The Taliban seeks international legitimacy and support. Our message is: any legitimacy and any support will have to be earned. The Taliban can do that by meeting commitments and obligations – on freedom of travel; respecting the basic rights of the Afghan people, including women and minorities; upholding its commitments on counterterrorism; not carrying out reprisal violence against those who choose to stay in Afghanistan; and forming an inclusive government that can meet the needs and reflect the aspirations of the Afghan people.”

The members of the U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council urgently call upon the U.S. Government, the United Nations Security Council, and 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 DeGioia  
Co-Chair,  
U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council  
President, Georgetown University

Additional signatories below.

CC:  
Senator Bob Menendez, Chairman, Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Senator James Risch, Ranking Member, Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Representative Gregory Meeks, Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee  
Representative Michael McCaul, Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee  
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