

U.S. - AFGHAN Women's Council



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.

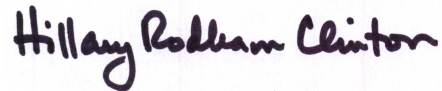
As Secretary Antony Blinken stated in his [August 30th remarks](#), “The Taliban seeks international legitimacy and support. Our message is: any legitimacy and any support will have to be earned. The Taliban can do that by meeting commitments and obligations – on freedom of travel; respecting the basic 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
Representative Lois Frankel, Co-Chair, Women, Peace, and Security Caucus
Representative Michael McCaul, Co-Chair, Women, Peace, and Security Caucus

Additional Signatories:

Council current and former leadership:

Phyllis R. Magrab, Ph.D.

Director of the Georgetown University Center for the Child and Human Development
U.S.-Afghan Women's Council Vice Chair

Ambassador Kelley E. Currie

Former Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues (2020-2021); U.S.-Afghan
Women's Council Co-Chair Emeritus

Ambassador Paula Dobriansky

Senior Fellow, Harvard University Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs;
former Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs (2001-2009); U.S.-Afghan Women's
Council Founding Co-Chair

Ambassador Melanne Verweir

Executive Director, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security; former
Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues (2009–2013); U.S.-Afghan Women's
Council Co-Chair Emeritus

Ruth Bennett

Retired U.S. Diplomat

Former Executive Director U.S.-Afghan Women's Council

Kate Friedrich

Vice President, Government Affairs, Thomson Reuters

Former Executive Director U.S.-Afghan Women's Council (Department of State)

Additional Member Signatories:

Mozhgan Wafiq Alokzai

Founder and CEO of Eagle Online Academy

Mariam Atash, Esq., Managing Attorney, Prime Counsel, PLLC

President, Nooristan Foundation

Ambassador Barbara Barrett

25th Secretary of the U.S. Air Force

Irina Bokova

Former Director-General of UNESCO

Jan Underwood Bradley

Co-Founder, Secretary, and Treasurer, The Lamia Afghan Foundation (LAF)

John A. Bradley

Lieutenant General, U.S. Air Force (Retired), President & CEO, The Lamia Afghan Foundation

Rev. Kathleene Card
Pastor, Peterborough United Methodist Church

Leslie Genier Cunningham
Board Member, Aschiana Foundation and Women for Afghan Women

Connie K. Duckworth
Social Entrepreneur

Stephenie Foster
Partner, Smash Strategies

Dana H. Freyer
Co-Founder and Former Chair, Global Partnership for Afghanistan

Jeffrey Grieco
President and CEO, Afghan-American Chamber of Commerce

Peter H. Grossman, MD
Director of the Grossman Burn Centers; Co-founder of the Grossman Burn Foundation

Rebecca Gray Grossman
Chair and Co-founder of the Grossman Burn Foundation

Sultana Hakimi
Wife of the former Afghan Ambassador to the United States

Nadia Hashimi, MD
Physician, Author, Board Member of Afghan-American Foundation

Jane Horton
Former Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary of Defense

Ambassador Karen Hughes
Former Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

Palwasha Kakar
Interim Director for the Religion and Inclusive Societies Program at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP)

Jill Iscol, EdD
President, IF Hummingbird Foundation, Author of Hearts on Fire

Ambassador Said T. Jawad
Former Afghan Ambassador to the United States; Founder, Foundation for Afghanistan

Shamim Jawad
Founder and President, Ayenda Foundation

Holly A. Kuzmich
Executive Director, George W. Bush Institute

Anita McBride
Executive-in-Residence, School of Public Affairs, American University, Washington,
DC.

Timothy McBride
Co-Founder and Co-Chair, Ayenda Foundation; Senior Vice President for Global Government
Relations at Raytheon Technologies

Pat Mitchell
Managing Partner, Connected Women Leaders

Lael Mohib
Country Director and Founder, Enabled Children

Mary Jo Myers
Founding Member and President Emeritus, Aschiana Foundation

Najia Nasim
Executive Director, Women for Afghan Women

Terry Neese
Founder and CEO, Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women

Khorshied Nusratty
Voices on the Rise: Afghan Women Making the News, Curator
Principal Communications Advisor at Gallup

Ilaha Eli Omar
Humanitarian

Annie Pforzheimer
Former Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Afghanistan; CSIS

Charlotte (Charlie) Ponticelli
Former Senior Coordinator for International Women's Issues, U.S. Department of State

Alia Rasouly, MS, MPH
Founder and Executive Director, WISE Afghanistan

Diana Rowan Rockefeller
Philanthropist

Nilofar Sakhi
Director of Policy and Diplomacy at McColm & Company

Leslie Schweitzer
Chair, Friends of American University of Afghanistan (AUAF)

Zolaykha Sherzad
Founder, Zarif Design

Ambassador Steven Steiner
Retired Foreign Service Officer, Board Member of Friends of the American University of
Afghanistan and Initiative to Educate Afghan Women

Hodei Sultan

Tina Tchen
Lawyer, Activist; Former Chief of Staff to First Lady Michelle Obama and Former Executive
Director of the White House Council on Women and Girls

Manizha Wafeq
Co-Founder and President, Afghan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Heidi A. Waldorf, M.D.
President, Waldorf Dermatology Aesthetics

Sherrie Westin
President, Sesame Workshop

Marna C. Whittington
Retired Philanthropist

Christian Wistehuff
Executive Director, Initiative to Education Afghan Women (IEAW)