

Dear [name of representative]

Although the United States has officially left Afghanistan, we have left behind tens of thousands of Afghans who supported US efforts over the last 20 years. As someone who has worked with Afghans on USAID health and development projects, many of these Afghan nationals are people I know personally, people who have shown tremendous commitment to the development of their country and tremendous loyalty to the United States. I know from former colleagues that no major USAID implementing organization was able to evacuate more than a handful of staff. Many were turned away at the airport during a chaotic and dangerous evacuation. It is clear that these people were not prioritized by the evacuation efforts.

Their lives are in danger. They are now forced to live under the Taliban, whom we know are hunting down people associated with the US government. They are forced to live with the threat of ISIS-K and other terrorist groups. They and their families face the ever-present threat of imprisonment, violence or death.

These are the people who have championed health, human rights, women's rights, democracy, governance and a free and transparent media. These are the people who sought to export the best of America, and it is they who have been left behind.

We cannot congratulate ourselves on the end of a "forever war" if we forever abandon those who stood by us. In your position as an elected representative, I exhort you to:

- 1) Do everything you can to ensure the Administration brings to bear all necessary pressure on the Afghan government to ensure freedom of movement for Afghan nationals. The evacuation is not over. The airport and land crossings must remain open and secure.
- 2) Revisit the labyrinthine visa process that has proven not fit-for-purpose. While the SIV visa is available to people who worked on subcontracts, the P2 visa process does not and leaves behind thousands of people who have worked on subcontracts. But ISIS-K and the Taliban do not distinguish between cooperative agreements, contracts and subcontracts: why should we favor some Afghan allies and discriminate against others based on arbitrary contracting mechanisms? Furthermore, the US will not begin processing the P2 visas until potential recipients are able to leave Afghanistan. If they manage that, Afghans are warned that the process could take years. How do we expect people whose lives are in danger, fleeing the country, to be able to support themselves for years in a third country while they go through an elaborate visa process?
- 3) Take every step possible to ensure that US NGOs and contractors are able to continue working in Afghanistan in a safe and permissible manner. It is vital that they are granted a

license to operate legally within the purview of the Office of Foreign Assets Control and provided with the legal protections and clear guidance that enable them to continue the work they do without fear of being later punished by the US government for infringements of ill-defined policy. This should be developed in consultation with those who will do the work. Humanitarian assistance, health and other vital development work must continue. We must not punish the population of Afghanistan for their misfortune to be led by the Taliban.

Thank you for your leadership in this matter,

Sincerely

[name]