October 28, 2021

Jake Sullivan National Security Advisor White House National Security Council 1650 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear Mr. Sullivan:

We, the undersigned leaders of 103 non-governmental organizations in the international development, humanitarian, peacebuilding, refugee, immigration and resettlement, and veterans affairs sectors, write to express our alarm at the estimated tens of thousands of at-risk Afghans who were left behind after the August 31 U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan. These individuals played key roles in efforts to strengthen Afghanistan's government, judiciary, civil society, and media and to protect human rights. For their work, many now face the threat of violent retaliation at the hands of de-facto authorities. Given the urgency of this matter, our community respectfully requests a CEO or Executive-level meeting with you to voice our concerns and hear the Administration's plans to evacuate and resettle at-risk Afghans who remain in Afghanistan.

We call on the Biden Administration to prioritize their safe evacuation before it is too late. Some of these individuals assisted U.S. and allied armed forces. Others worked for or alongside U.S.-based and funded organizations to secure women's rights, establish a free press, or provide desperately needed humanitarian assistance to their countrymen and women. All are now bound by their shared fear for their safety. If the White House does not move to evacuate them with haste, it will leave an indelible stain on this Administration's stated commitment to a foreign policy centered on human rights and its repeated commitments to support at-risk Afghans.

We are disappointed by the Biden Administration's overly narrow list of priority stakeholders for evacuation, which currently includes only: American citizens, legal permanent residents (LPRs), immediate family members of American citizens and LPRs, U.S. Embassy staff, and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants with Chief-of-Mission approval. While these individuals are undoubtedly deserving of U.S. evacuation support, thousands of other Afghans face an immediate need for protection due to their affiliation with the U.S. Government. The failure to prioritize them as well imperils their lives.

We are particularly keen to hear the Administration's plan to systematically process at-risk Afghans that fall outside of the scope of the SIV program, who have been consistently under-addressed over the past several months. We are especially concerned for those Afghans referred by employers to the P-2 designation of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP). The evacuation of these individuals should be seen as no less significant than any other priority evacuees given their work advancing democracy, human rights, and human dignity, and level of risk.

The FY 2022 Continuing Resolution requires the Biden Administration to create a strategy and status on Afghan evacuee resettlement, as well as the Afghan Priority-2 (P-2) program, and to create a plan for augmenting personnel needed for refugee processing or humanitarian parole. Below please find critical recommendations to expedite the evacuation and processing of at-risk Afghans for your consideration. These measures, if promptly taken, would make important strides towards restoring viable pathways to safety for at-risk Afghans and their families. We urge the Biden Administration to:

1. Establish a unified U.S. Government coordinating group for overseas operations to facilitate greater inter-agency coordination and more expeditiously communicate updates to our

- community. This group should include, at a minimum, the U.S. Departments of State, Homeland Security, Defense, Treasury, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.
- 2. Create a humanitarian parole program for Afghan nationals, at minimum for Afghans with U.S. ties or loved ones already in the United States. The U.S. should provide and process filed applications for humanitarian parole and documentation allowing these individuals to travel to the U.S. Waive any fees associated with requesting and applying for humanitarian parole for Afghan nationals.
- 3. Provide travel documents, diplomatic notes, letters of support, or other relevant materials to allow at-risk Afghans to exit Afghanistan and enter "lilypad" countries for processing, and create a mechanism for Afghans in other host countries to enter "lilypads" for processing to the U.S. Many at-risk Afghans do not have valid passports or visas, and the Taliban recently stated they would not allow Afghans to cross the border into third-countries without documentation. As the U.S. government does not currently maintain a diplomatic presence inside Afghanistan, these at-risk Afghans are unable to secure the required documentation. The U.S. must use diplomacy to negotiate safe passage into "lilypad" countries and then onward to U.S. military bases for processing.
- **4. Surge resources and personnel to "lilypad" countries**, particularly those with U.S. military installations, to scale up and expediently process applications. The U.S. Government must press neighboring countries to open their borders to fleeing Afghan refugees. The U.S. Government must incentivize third countries to provide space, housing, and aid for meeting fleeing Afghans' basic needs during the requisite processing period.
- **5. Provide virtual and expedited screening and processing** for all at-risk Afghans, including those who have applied for the SIV, humanitarian parole, and family reunification (such as follow-to-join/I-730) programs, as well as those who are referred to USRAP, including P-1, P-2, and P-3 referrals while in Afghanistan or host countries.
- 6. Identify additional pathways to safety for at-risk Afghans who do not qualify for the SIV or the USRAP P-2 program. This includes, but is not limited to, individuals who do not have a verifiable U.S. affiliation and are not known to the U.S. Embassy but who were engaged in activities that make them targets of Taliban reprisals. Such individuals include civil servants, women's rights advocates, election workers, human rights lawyers, academics, and journalists. We strongly recommend including individuals who worked on U.S.-funded sub-contracts or subgrants as well.

While Afghanistan sinks into a grave humanitarian crisis, credible reports from international human rights monitors, media organizations, and multilateral bodies indicate that the Taliban is targeting Afghans, including those who have worked with U.S. and allied armed forces and women's rights activists, with retaliatory killings and violence. If the U.S. does not bring these vulnerable Afghans to safety, it will have failed to uphold its commitment to human rights and turned its back on the very causes of human dignity and freedom it claims to uphold.

The Administration must act now. We look forward to discussing these recommendations with you in the proposed CEO- or Executive-level meeting.

Signed,



Metra Azar-Salem, Board Member of Afghan Refugee Relief



Mariam Atash, President and Co-Founder of Afghan Women Leading the Way



Haroon Azar, Board Member of Afghan-American Foundation

Mariam Atash, Founder of Afghanistan Advocacy Group



Arash Azizzada Co-Founder/CEO Afghans For a Better Tomorrow



Nana Ahmed, Founder/ CEO of Agents of Hope Training & Information Center



Lisa Herb, President & Executive Director of Alliance for International Women's Rights (AIWR)



Liz Hume, Acting CEO & President of Alliance for Peacebuilding



Mike Jason, Executive Director of Allied Airlift 21



Ardian Shajkovci, Director of American Counterterrorism Targeting and Resilience Institute (ACTRI)



Allan Rosenbaum, President of American Society for Public Adminstration



Brandon Powell, President of American Veterans Committee



Paul O'Brien, Executive Director Amnesty International USA



Robert Kelty, CEO of Amref Health Africa in the USA



Kim Staffieri, Executive Director / Co-Founder of Association of Wartime Allies



Gulalai Ismail, Chairperson of Aware Girls



Chris Palusky, President & CEO of Bethany Christian Services



Richard Brookshire, Board Chair of Black Veterans Project



Nguyen Dinh Thang, PhD CEO & President Boat People SOS (BPSOS)



Debra Boudreaux, Executive Director of Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation



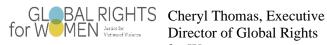
Karen Musalo, Director of Center for Gender & Refugee Studies



Alisa M. Roadcup, Executive Director of Chicago Refugee Coalition



Anne Lynam Goddard, President and CEO of ChildFund International



Director of Global Rights for Women



Richard Santos, President & CEO of Church World Service



Rev. Dr. Sharon G Stanley-Rea, Director of Disciples Refugee & **Immigration Ministries** 



Kate Weckessernglish, **Executive Director of The** Educators' Institute for Human Rights (EIHR)



Dr. Tsehaye Teferra, President and CEO of The Ethiopian Community Development Council, Inc.(ECDC)



Tessie San Martin, CEO of FHI 360



Michael J. Abramowitz, President of Freedom House



Maran Turner, Executive Director of Freedom Now



Diane Randall, General Secretary of Friends Committee on National Legislation



Casey Littlejohn, CEO of G.H.O.S.T (NPS-International)



Farhad Ghafoor, President of **Ghafoor Foundation** 



David A. Weiss, CEO of Global Communities



Dr. Rebecca Thomley, Chief **Executive Officer of Headwaters** Relief Organization



Surita Sandosham, Executive Director of Heartland Alliance International

Dina Francesca Haynes, Professor of Law and Director of Human Rights and Immigration Law Project



Mike Breen, President and CEO of **Human Rights First** 



Srik Gopal, Managing Partner of **Humanity United** 



Fred Tsao, Senior Policy Counsel of Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights



Camille J. Mackler, Executive Director of **Immigrant ARC** 



Sam Worthington, CEO of InterAction



Doug Rutzen, President and CEO of International Center for Not-for-Profit Law



Sanam Naraghi Anderlini MBE, Founder and CEO of International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)



Giselle Carino, CEO of International Planned Parenthood Federation Western Hemisphere Region (IPPFWHR)



Becca Heller, Executive Director of International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)



Zack Baddorf, Executive Director of Military Veterans in Journalism



Jeanne Bourgault, President and CEO of Internews



Jeremy Butler, CEO of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA)



Kristin Lord, President and CEO of IREX



Joan Rosenhauer, Executive Director of Jesuit Refugee Service/USA



Lisa Shuger Hublitz, Assistant Vice President of Jewish Federation of Chicago



Karen Tumlin, founder and director of Justice Action Center



Polly Byers, Executive Director of Karuna Center for Peacebuilding



John A. Bradley, Lieutenant General, U.S. Air Force (Retired), CEO of Lamia Afghan Foundation



Mahnaz M. Harrison, president and CEO Last Mile4D



Krish O'Mara Vignarajah, President and CEO of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service



Tanya Henderson, Founder and Executive Director of Mina's List



Lindsay Church, Executive Director of Minority Veterans of America



Jennifer Dane, CEO of Modern Military Association



Ali Noorani, President & Chief Executive Officer of National Immigration Forum



Marielena Hincapie, Executive Director of National Immigration Law Center



Alina Atash, President of Nooristan Foundation



Bernice G. Romero, Executive Director of the Norwegian Refugee Council USA (NRC USA)



Betsey Mercado, Executive Director of Objective Zero Foundation



Abby Maxman, President & CEO of Oxfam America



Michelle Milligan, Interim Executive Director of Paloonkey



Nikolaj Gilbert, President and CEO of PATH



PhaseZero Michael B. Williams, CEO of Phase Zero Solutions, Inc.



James E. Morgan, CEO of Physicians for Peace



Douglas Jackson, PhD, JD, President/CEO of Project C.U.R.E.

PROMUNDO Gary Barker, CEO & President of Promundo-US



Jims Porter, Board Chair of Refugee Action Network



Nili Sarit Yossinger, Executive **Director of Refugee Congress** 



Jims Porter, Advocacy Director of RefugeeOne



Eric Schwartz, President of Refugees International



SCHOLARS AT RISK Nobert Quinn, Executive Director of Scholars at Risk Network



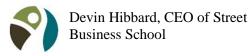
Christine Schwartz, CEO of Service to School



Steven M. Miska, Founder and CEO of SLC Consulting, Inc.



Amy Palmer, President & CEO of Soldiers' Angels





Jared Lyon, President and CEO of Student Veterans of America



Archi Pyati, Chief Executive Officer of Tahirih Justice Center



Edafe Okporo, US Mobilization Director of Talent Beyond **Boundaries** 

William Felder, Director of Tarjoman Relief



Lyla Kohistany, CEO of Task Force Pineapple



Jenna Ben-Yehuda, President and **CEO** of Truman National Security **Project** 



Eskinder Nagash, President and CEO of U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants



Suzanne Barakat, MD, Executive Director of UCSF Health and Human Rights Initiative



Rabbi Jonah Pesner, Director of Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism



John P. Yori, President of United Soldiers and Sailors of America



Sarah Ivory, U.S. President of **USAHello** 



Jayson Browder, Founder and Chairman of Veterans in Global Leadership



Diane Calvi, CEO of Village Enterprise



Lynn Malooly, Executive Director of Water for South Sudan

Kimberly Weichel, President and CEO of Weichel & Associates



Rye Barcott, Co-Founder and CEO of With Honor



Laurie Adams, CEO of Women for Women International



Fay Weber, President of Women Graduates USA



Sarah Costa, Executive Director of Women's Refugee Commission



Carol, Jenkins, President and CEO of World Learning



Myal Greene, President and CEO of World Relief

### CC:

# **Anthony Blinken**

Secretary of State U.S. Department of State

### Ambassador A. Elizabeth Jones

Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts U.S. Department of State

# Uzra Zeya

Under Secretary of State for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights U.S. Department of State

# Alejandro Mayorkas

Secretary of Homeland Security U.S. Department of Homeland Security

# **Lloyd Austin**

Secretary of Defense U.S. Department of Defense

# Samantha Power

Administrator

U.S. Agency for International Development