

REFUGEE COUNCIL USA

August 20, 2021

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

Dear President Biden,

We are writing to you on behalf of the national refugee resettlement agencies, and other nonprofit organizations which assist in providing direct services to refugee populations, to implore your administration to take immediate and decisive action to urgently evacuate and support Afghans in need of protection—consistent with your remarks today that the United States will stand by its commitments in that regard.

The United States, as the historical leader of global refugee resettlement, has the knowledge, capacity, and community support to welcome displaced Afghans, Afghan allies who assisted the U.S. mission and their loved ones, and other vulnerable Afghans in need of protection. Over the past days, our organizations have seen a surge in public support and inquiries about how to assist Afghans in need, both overseas and in the United States, however they can. The American people are clear: our country's legacy in Afghanistan must be one that centers human rights and humanitarian protection for the most vulnerable.

The time for processing Afghan refugees and allies in-country is over: the US must bring Afghans in need of protection to US territories immediately. Our organizations are prepared to assist processing within the United States. The existing visa and refugee processes take far too long for the urgency of the threat faced by thousands of Afghans. Your administration must create expedited programs for our allies, their families, and other refugees, including human rights defenders (and the women's rights activists among them), NGO staff, and members of ethnic and religious minorities, to bring them directly to safety in the US as soon as possible, and continue administration of these programs until the crisis ends.

We implore you to implement a robust humanitarian response to assist Afghans in danger and expand opportunities for Afghans to seek refuge in the United States. We further urge the administration to increase collaboration and transparency with the resettlement agencies to help manage the Afghan caseload and new arrivals. It is critical that the administration regularly update and provide guidance directly to the resettlement community, implement

quality control to improve processing and service provision, and work collaboratively with resettlement agencies to problem-solve ongoing challenges.

The US must do everything it can to diminish the suffering of Afghan civilians and allies. Our organizations and networks of staff and supporters are prepared to process and welcome Afghan refugees immediately.

Sincerely,



Erol Kekic, Senior Vice President, Immigration & Refugee Program, Church World Service




Demetrio Alvero, Director of Operations, Episcopal Migration Ministries



Tsehaye Teferra, President and CEO, Ethiopian Community Development Council



Mark Hetfield, President and CEO, HIAS



David Miliband, President and CEO, International Rescue Committee



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



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



Jennifer Foy, Vice President of U.S. Programs, World Relief



Paul O'Brien, Executive Director, Amnesty International USA



Chris Palusky, President & CEO of Bethany Christian Services



Nguyen Dinh Thang, CEO & President, BPSOS



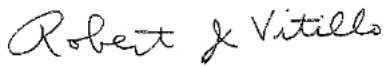
Don Kerwin, Executive Director, Center for Migration Studies of New York



Scott Roehm, Washington Director, The Center for Victims of Torture
Board Chair, Refugee Council USA



Eleanor Acer, Senior Director, Refugee Protection, Human Rights First



Msgr. Robert J Vitillo, Secretary General, International Catholic Migration Commission



Becca Heller, Executive Director, International Refugee Assistance Project



Joan Rosenhauer, Executive Director, Jesuit Refugee Service/USA



Abby Maxman, President and CEO, Oxfam America



Nili Yossinger, Executive Director, Refugee Congress



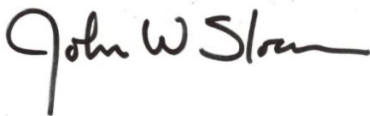
Eric Schwartz, President, Refugees International



Sasha Chanoff, Executive Director, RefugePoint



Karina Ambartsoumian-Clough, Executive Director, United Stateless



John Slocum, Interim Executive Director, Refugee Council USA

CC:

The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary of State

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III, Secretary of Defense

The Honorable Xavier Becerra, Secretary of Health and Human Services

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of Homeland Security

The Honorable Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor

The Honorable Susan Rice, Director of the Domestic Policy Council

Cindy Huang, Director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement

Nancy Izzo Jackson, Senior Bureau Officer, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration