

October 15, 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

Congratulations on your re-election.

In the past two months, Canadians from coast to coast to coast have been working tirelessly to support Afghans who we have partnered with over the past twenty years and to support them in this challenging moment. Our Afghan partners are surviving the best they can in an uncertain and often life-threatening situation; some are in hiding, others are struggling to buy food, and all are worried about their safety. It has been a difficult time for us in Canada with desperate messages arriving at all hours while communications from our government have not kept pace with the rapidly changing situation.

The international community must act now to save lives and protect those most at risk both within Afghanistan, in border regions, and along asylum routes. Based on conversations with our Afghan partners, the Government of Canada should:

- **Establish** safe evacuation routes and processes for women activists, LGBTIQ+ people, members of ethnic minorities, journalists, disability rights activists and human rights defenders and their families, in addition to Canada's interpreters and their families. Evacuation supports should be expanded to include those who do not have a 'significant or enduring relationship to Canada' but are in grave danger.
- **Assign** Afghan refugees prima facie refugee designation similar to the Syrian refugee resettlement initiative in 2015.
- **Accelerate** the pace of resettlement to meet the urgency and challenges of the current situation, aiming to achieve the 40,000 Afghan refugee target within the next year.
- **Improve** communications (including speed and clarity) with Afghans on the status of their applications (special immigration measures, refugee status, relocation, etc.) and options.
- **Provide** emergency funding for safe houses, digital security, protection, basic needs, and security of Afghans who supported Canada and those at risk of reprisals including women and LGBTIQ activists and others who have worked to advance their rights, including activists now in asylum in third countries using recognized organizations who can deliver this support effectively and securely, taking direction from Afghan women's organizations.
- **Develop** immediate measures to deliver on the Canadian promises of support for Afghan women rights advocates, women human rights defenders, and LGBTIQ rights defenders. Canada's feminist foreign policy demands robust measures and investments to support the proposals and ambitions of Afghan women to play significant and meaningful roles in deciding the future of their country. Canada can also work with others to ensure that all multilateral assistance to Afghanistan includes both a gender analysis

and strong measures to support women in all their diversity.

- **Recognize** that decades of conflict have left many Afghans with disabilities that may hinder their access to services within Afghanistan and their ability to leave dangerous situations. All initiatives must include measures to address these barriers.

We recognize the efforts of the Canadian government to date, including the \$50 million pledged in humanitarian support, the recent increase in the number of Afghan refugees that will be accepted to 40,000, and the evacuation initiatives to date. However, more is desperately needed. As each day passes, there are more and more questions about how Canada will help and when help will come. This is a test of Canada's feminist foreign policy.

We call on you to take immediate action.

Please reply to chair@wpsn-canada.org

Organizations

Amnesty International Canada
Canada for Africa Group
Canadian Christian Relief & Development Association
Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW)
Canadian Infantry Association
Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan
Conference of Defence Associations
Cooperation Canada
Equality Fund
Federation of Medical Women of Canada
Global Sunrise Project
International Women's Rights Project
Mines Action Canada
Ontario Council for International Cooperation
Ottawa Neoliberal
Oxfam Canada
Results Canada
Sudanese Women Rights Action
Toronto Neoliberal
Womens' International League for Peace and Freedom, Nanaimo Chapter
World Vision Canada
WUSC

Individuals (Organizations listed for identification purposes only)

Allison Pytlak (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom)
Ana de Oliveira (Cooperation Canada)
Andrea Siew

Anne Barberi
Benedicte Santoire (University of Ottawa)
Carole Doucet
Carolyn Gasser (Royal Canadian Legion)
Céline Fūri
Craig Damian Smith, PhD (Senior Research Associate, CERC in Migration & Integration, X
University)
Crystal Lo
Diane Brown
Doris Buss (Department of Law and Legal Studies, Carleton University)
Dr. Karen Breeck (Women Veteran Research and Engagement Network)
Edith Guilbert
Gabriel Arrigo (Ottawa Neoliberal)
Gary Verburg (World Renew)
Hélène Grégoire
Jo Rodrigues
Kathryn Fizzell (Queen's University)
Luna KC
Maliha Hamidi (Carleton University)
Mary Scott
Maryruth Belsey Priebe
Maya Eichler (Mount Saint Vincent University)
Melanie Lindayen (Equality Fund)
Monique Cuillerier
Nahid Azad (Federation of Medical Women of Canada)
Nayeon Kim
Neena Sachdeva
Patricia Warshawski
Robyn Waite (Results Canada)
Sarah Khan
Steve De Quintal (TSU)
Sunitha Bisan (WPSN-C)
Yin Brown

cc: The Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of International Development
The Honourable Marco Mendicino, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship