



US WOMEN'S CAUCUS AT THE UN

June 29, 2021

Administrator Samantha Power
U.S. Agency for International Development
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20523-1000

Dear Administrator Power,

We would like to congratulate you on your recent appointment as Administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. We are thankful to have a leader with your long UN diplomatic experience and your visionary commitment to human rights at the helm of that vital agency for development.

We write today to express our solidarity with Afghan women and girls during this precarious time with the imminent withdrawal of US troops. As a coalition of US-based NGOs committed to women's human rights, we are very concerned that the hard-fought gains for women and girls in Afghanistan are eroding day by day as the Taliban's influence is gaining.

While we applaud the \$266 million in humanitarian assistance that was recently announced by the Administration, we ask you, as head of USAID, to remind officials of the commitments embodied in the US Strategy for Women, Peace, and Security. Those commitments mandate the inclusion and protection of women in efforts to promote a stable and lasting peace and the equal access of women and girls to US government assistance programs. We expect the US to follow through on its promises to provide diplomatic and economic assistance to support a peaceful future for all Afghans, including women and girls.

We ask that your agency work with officials to develop rules and standards by which future aid is contingent upon the Afghan government honoring commitments to protect women's equal rights as guaranteed in the Afghan constitution, such as girls' education, women's employment, and access to medical care.

The US has spent millions of dollars and far too much American blood to now abandon its ally without putting into place some safeguards and accountability measures for those we leave behind. Women and girls have been in the crosshairs in that country's conflicts for decades and they deserve better.

We applaud your recent discussion of concerns about Afghan women and girls with President Ghani and encourage you to continue to use your authority to be a voice of influence for the women and girls of Afghanistan.

With appreciation,

The Rev. Susan H. Lee, Ph.D.
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