October 21, 2021

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

Dear Mr. President:

On September 9th, we wrote to you expressing our deep concern about the lives and safety of many vulnerable populations, including women and girls, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) persons in Afghanistan following the August takeover of the country by the Taliban.

Given the extremely precarious situation of LGBTQI Afghans, now living under Sharia law with the threat of death, we urged your Administration to adopt our 10-point policy plan that would in the immediate, medium, and long term protect the safety and security of LGBTQI Afghan refugees, and help their passage out of the country and to safe resettlement.

We were heartened by your pledge to continue to support refugee evacuation and resettlement, and by Secretary Blinken’s similar reassurances to Congress, recognizing the extreme vulnerability of LGBTQI Afghans.

However, since then far too little has been done to enact vital reforms that would save the lives of LGBTQI Afghans, most notably the request to grant them P2 refugee status and to expedite their applications for humanitarian parole. Members of Congress have written twice to Secretary Blinken with similar requests. Meanwhile, there continue to be alarming reports from LGBTQI Afghans about increased violence and persecution.
So today we are delivering to you the names of more than 10,500 Americans and others who have signed on to the 10-point Action Plan as a way of letting you know, Mr. President, that the American people are calling on you to assist LGBTQI Afghans and other refugees now at risk. We urge you and your administration to respond without delay to the atrocities that this vulnerable group of refugees will continue to experience unless you prioritize their expedited admission to the U.S refugee program.

We call on you urgently to commit publicly to resettling LGBTQI Afghans who seek refugee status in the United States. Other countries have made specific commitments to the LGBTQI community and are already in the process of vetting and resettling LGBTQI Afghans. We must do our part too.

We further urge your administration to work with civil society to find expeditious pathways to safety for all the individuals who have been identified as under extreme risk and who are seeking to leave. For many, that will involve refugee resettlement in third countries. But the United States must agree to support that effort and should pledge to resettle at least 1,000 LGBTQI Afghan refugees to the United States before the end of the year. There are citizens in organizations and communities all across this country who have expressed their desire to help those in need, and to assist in their resettlement.

In February, you instructed all Federal agencies to ensure that our diplomacy and foreign assistance are leveraged to protect the human rights of LGBTQI persons everywhere. In that directive, you specifically identified the needs of LGBTQI refugees. The protection needs for LGBTQI Afghan refugees could not be greater. Now is the time to turn policy into action, words into protection. Your leadership on this matter is essential.

Sincerely,

Mark Bromley
Council Chair
Council for Global Equality

JoDee Winterhof
Senior Vice President
Policy and Political Affairs
Human Rights Campaign

Aaron Morris
Executive Director
Immigration Equality

Sunil Varghese
Policy Director
International Refugee Assistance Project

Steve Roth
Executive Director
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Kimahli Powell
Executive Director
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