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AFGHANISTAN : President Biden Must Ensure We Leave No One Behind
“Please Lord, help [us] save one more”

WASHINGTON DC, August 24 — 31 August marks the cut-off date for the exit of US troops from Afghanistan. President Biden announced on August 24 that he would not extend the US presence, and there are reports that the Biden Administration is already pulling out troops. Yet, he indicated he might still delay the US departure due to the complex logistics of evacuating US citizens, among others. Jubilee Campaign urges the Biden Administration to remain until all of the most vulnerable populations are evacuated or able to find shelter in other parts of the country.

We know that if Afghani Christians, other ethnic and religious minorities, educated women, human rights defenders, judges, and others who disagree with the Taliban's extreme religious beliefs are left behind they will be killed or suffer severe repression. The promises of the Taliban to the contrary are not believable as we hear news that the Taliban terrorists are already tracking down human rights defenders and advocates and are sending threat letters to Christians and other minorities. *Aid to the Church in Need* reported that Taliban sent official, stamped letters to Afghan Christian house church leaders warning that they know where they are and what they are doing. The Taliban consider leaving Islam the crime of apostacy, which is punishable by death – and have no qualms about imposing the penalty.

There are many Afghans who have visas or are eligible for US visas under the Priority 2 designation (P2), Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) or the visa category for qualified spouses and children (under age 21) of U.S. lawful permanent residents (LPR). Many of them, and even US citizens, are unable to make it safely to the Kabul airport. The Taliban announced on August 24 that they will completely block Afghan citizens from reaching the airport. Only people with foreign passports can get through. In addition, some who have travel documents or proof of eligibility have had their documents shredded by the Taliban or by Embassy staff or the individuals themselves for security reasons, leaving individuals with little proof of identity and eligibility.

The Biden Administration must ensure that:

- Evacuation remains open and ongoing as long as possible
- The Kabul airport remains open for evacuation flights
- There is a safe passage into the airport and onto flights

- The US prioritizes and evacuates at-risk Afghans – including the visa categories P2s, SIVs allies, human rights defenders, women, religious minorities especially Christian converts and other vulnerable groups

The US military have shown courage, but the Administration have failed in their policies to support them in their rescue efforts. The Administration must ensure the vulnerable groups are given the time to be processed. No one should be left behind.

We ask President Biden, as a Catholic, to reflect on this verse:

***“If you are slack in the day of distress,
Your strength is limited.
Deliver those who are being taken away to death,
And those who are staggering to slaughter [...]”
Proverbs 24:10-12***

US has a history of heroes – among them Desmond Doss who saved dozen of lives during World War II when it seemed impossible, his prayer during the time: “Please Lord, help me get **one more.**”

We urge the US Administration to do the same.

[Jubilee Campaign is a non-profit organization which promotes the human rights and religious liberty of ethnic and religious minorities in the most oppressive countries. We assist individuals seeking asylum from religious persecution as well as promote the care and well-being of larger groups of refugees fleeing religious and ethnic persecution.]

[For individuals who would like to help – contact your Congressmen and Senators and ask them to apply pressure on President Biden]

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