



Statement by President Catherine Amirfar  
In Support of Efforts to Evacuate Afghans at Risk

August 17, 2021

The rapid collapse of the Afghan government in the wake of the withdrawal of U.S. and allied forces has put at grave risk the thousands of Afghans who have worked to create a space in which human freedom and the rule of law can flourish, particularly for women and girls.

Some may debate whether the promotion of democracy and human rights should have been the goal of U.S. policy in Afghanistan. But what is beyond debate is that the brave Afghans fighting for human rights have taken extraordinary risks to improve the lives of their fellow citizens, and that these individuals are now in grave jeopardy. Among them are 250 women judges—roughly 10 percent of all judges in the country—as well as women lawyers and activists who stepped up to defend women’s equality and fundamental freedoms for all.

Like the interpreters who assisted the U.S. government, these women, their families, and those who supported them now face brutal retribution at the hands of Taliban forces. By strengthening the rule of law, they have performed a great service to their people and advanced the values espoused by the United States. Yet there is no special visa category that will ensure them safe refuge should they seek it.

We are heartened by today’s statements by the State Department regarding U.S. Government efforts to bring to safety vulnerable Afghans who wish to be relocated but may not be eligible for the SIV program, and we urgently call on the U.S. Government and its allies to take all possible steps to extend their protection to these courageous Afghans and their families.

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