August 23, 2021

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

Please save Afghanistan's most vulnerable and at-risk communities before it's too late. This includes the remaining less than 300 Afghan Sikhs and Hindus.

As you know, Afghan Sikhs and Hindus have been religiously persecuted for generations. Under prior Taliban rule, Afghan Sikhs and Hindus were considered infidels and non-believers. At one point in the 1970s, there were an estimated 700,000 Sikhs and Hindus in the country; however, as a result of decades of targeted eradication from the Taliban and ISIL, less than 300 remain. This community faces impending genocide unless they are immediately evacuated.

On May 14, 2020, you wrote a campaign statement declaring that you "stand with the Sikh and Hindu communities in Afghanistan seeking safety for their families and the freedom to practice their faiths, and urge the Department of State to consider the request for emergency refugee protection." This statement was made after an ISIL targeted attack on a Kabul gurdwara (Sikh house of worship) killed 25 Sikhs and injured 8 more on March 25, 2020. The following day, the funeral procession was targeted with bombs, and survivors were given an ultimatum to permanently leave or face imminent death.

Since January 2021, the Sikh Coalition has worked with your administration to try and safely resettle the small remaining Afghan Sikh and Hindu community. In fact, prior to your withdrawal announcement, some of these Afghan Sikhs were referred for the U.S. Humanitarian or Significant Public Parole Program because the State Department recognized the imminent danger if they remained in the country. However, so far, none of these families have received safe passage to the United States. On August 17, 2021, the State Department confirmed to the Sikh Coalition that the group of nearly 300 Afghan Sikhs and Hindus were referred for evacuation, but since then we have received no compelling information to suggest that their evacuation is being prioritized.

Our urgent first request remains that the United States prioritize the evacuation of Afghan Sikhs and Hindus immediately and also provide clarity to the Sikh Coalition on these individuals' visa statuses.

We recognize that the U.S. evacuation list is long and there are numerous complicated and competing interests surrounding who receives priority evacuation. That said, if the United States will not prioritize

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the immediate resettlement of these Afghan Sikhs and Hindus, there are three urgent alternatives for your administration to act upon:

1. Direct the Joint Operation Center to allow all Afghan Sikhs and Hindus into the Kabul airport immediately. Once inside the airport, there are multiple third-party governments and NGOs working to secure their safe evacuation if the United States is unable to do so at this time.
2. Canada has made a long-term commitment to taking 20,000 Afghan refugees, including these Afghan Sikhs and Hindus. To facilitate this, immediately instruct the State Department to request that Canadian authorities work on the evacuation of Afghan Sikhs and Hindus and the necessary visas for their resettlement.
3. India has also made a commitment to taking Afghan Sikhs and Hindus. To facilitate this, immediately request that Indian authorities prioritize flights for the evacuation of these individuals. *While India is not a viable long-term resettlement option for these families as they may yet again face religious persecution, everyone recognizes that the immediate need is to temporarily resettle these vulnerable people anywhere outside of Afghanistan.*

Ensuring the safety of Afghanistan's Sikhs and Hindus is a moral obligation to the United States and the fate of these families is an issue of high importance to members of the United States Senate and House, and more than 300 organizations and faith groups, among other NGOs. We are requesting your leadership in ensuring that the United States resettles these vulnerable religious minorities, even if that means to a third-party country.

Most respectfully,

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cc: Hon. Antony Blinken, Secretary of State
Hon. Tracey Jacobsen, Afghanistan Task Force Director
Hon. Ely Ratner, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs