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One Hundred Eighteenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

March 2, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I write to express concern regarding the administration's willful failure to impose sanctions on members of the Taliban who are responsible for the horrendous treatment of Afghan women and girls.

Under the Taliban's rule, Afghan women and girls have been forced to hide away inside their homes, prevented from working, left out of humanitarian aid deliveries, barred from seeking healthcare without a male escort, banned from receiving an education above the 6th grade, tortured, forced to marry, and blocked from leaving the country. Women's rights defenders in Afghanistan are persecuted, jailed, and murdered by the Taliban.

I am concerned by the administration's muted response to the Taliban's erasure of Afghan women and girls from society. On February 1, 2023, the State Department announced additional visa restrictions under Section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act on members of the Taliban "responsible for, or complicit in, repressing women and girls in Afghanistan through restrictive policies and violence, including the Taliban's decision to ban women from universities and from working with NGOs."¹

However, the next day, State Department Spokesperson Ned Price clarified that *only six* Taliban officials were subjected to this new round of visa restriction sanctions.² In total, *only eight* members

¹ Press Release, U.S. Dep't of State, Actions to Impose Additional Visa Restrictions in Response to the Taliban's Ban on Women's University Education and Working with NGOs (Feb. 1, 2023), <https://www.state.gov/actions-to-impose-additional-visa-restrictions-in-response-to-the-talibans-ban-on-womens-university-education-and-working-with-ngos/>.

² *Department Press Briefing—February 2, 2023*, U.S. DEP'T OF STATE (Feb. 2, 2023), <https://www.state.gov/briefings/department-press-briefing-february-2-2023/>.

of the Taliban are currently legally barred from entering the United States. This is appalling given that the State Department regularly places far more expansive visa restrictions on other malign actors. For example, in October 2022, the State Department announced visa restrictions on “over 500” Nicaraguan regime officials and their enablers for impeding democracy.

Most disturbing, these limited visa restrictions have been the administration’s only response to the Taliban’s horrific treatment of women and girls, despite President Biden’s promise to hold the Taliban accountable. I urge the administration to take more significant steps to respond to the Taliban’s inhumane treatment of women and girls, including by imposing wider visa restriction sanctions against Taliban officials.

Sincerely,



Michael T. McCaul
Chairman
House Foreign Affairs Committee

CC:

Ranking Member Gregory Meeks

Rina Amiri, U.S. Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights