



One Hundred Seventeenth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Foreign Affairs
2170 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
www.foreignaffairs.house.gov

November 9, 2022

Ms. Katrina Fotovat
Senior Bureau Official
Office of Global Women's Issues
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street Northwest
Washington D.C., 20520

Dear Ms. Fotovat,

As you are aware, Congress has the constitutional duty to conduct oversight of federal agencies such as the Department of State. In exercising that duty, Members of this Committee have been deeply troubled over the failure of the Biden Administration to match words with deeds regarding the situation of Afghan women and girls. While Secretary Antony Blinken claims to be “committed to the advancement of Afghan women’s entrepreneurship, employment, and educational opportunities in Afghanistan and around the world,”¹ the reality is that this Administration presided over an evacuation and a series of policy decisions that have been catastrophic for them. Today, Afghan women are being erased from society, girls can no longer attend school after age 12, and the Taliban is dragging the country back to the repressive and harmful practices that horrified the international community more than two decades ago. It has been clear for the past year that this Administration had no real plan to protect the rights of Afghan women post-withdrawal, and that the evacuation itself failed them.

To that end, following is a list of questions and documents we are requesting from the Secretary’s Office of Global Women’s Issues (S/GWI).

Please provide responses no later than Friday, December 9, 2022:

1. What was S/GWI’s role in the evacuation of women in Afghanistan in 2021?
2. Statistics from State indicate that a mere 25 percent of those evacuated from Kabul by the US government last August were women. How does your office account for this disparity? Was anyone from S/GWI assigned to any of the operational Task Forces during the evacuations? If not, why? If so, which Task Forces, and what were the roles?

¹ Tweet by @SecBlinken, Sept. 20, 2022, 12:38 pm.

3. What policy actions were taken by State to ensure that women were given at least an equal opportunity to evacuate from Afghanistan?
 - a. Did S/GWI develop and/or supply lists of at-risk women to other parts of the United States government, such as the Department of Defense or National Security Council, for priority protection and evacuation? Please provide all such lists and drafts of the same.
 - b. What criteria did S/GWI use to select women to prioritize in evacuations? Please provide all internal guidance regarding selection criteria.
 - c. How many women on S/GWI lists were evacuated during the main evacuation; how many have been evacuated since that time? (Please provide the total number on list, and/or sex-disaggregated data for males and females, for the purpose of comparison.)
 - d. How many International Women of Courage award recipients (past and present, first and second places) have been evacuated from Afghanistan? How many remain?

4. What has S/GWI done since the U.S. withdrawal to assist women in Afghanistan?
 - a. Please clarify how responsibilities are shared between GWI and Rina Amiri, the U.S. Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights.
 - b. Please provide Ms. Amiri's travel schedule since assuming her current role.
 - c. Please provide a list of all meetings Ambassador Amiri has had since assuming her role.
 - d. What have been Ambassador Amiri's tangible successes on behalf of Afghan women and girls during her engagement with the Taliban? What is the relationship between Ms. Stephenie Foster, the women's issues lead for the CARE Team, and S/GWI?
 - e. Please explain and detail the efforts S/GWI is working regarding the UN Taliban Travel Ban and the U.S. Mission to the UN's handling of this matter in the Security Council.
 - f. Please provide information regarding GWI's relationship with the U.S. Afghan Women's Council, and a detailed accounting of any S/GWI funds that have supported the Council. Please also provide additional information on the newly launched U.S.-Afghan Consultative Mechanism, including why this mechanism was housed at USIP instead of under the auspices of the Council and the rationale for creating an additional platform.

5. What specific programs is S/GWI currently operating, or planning to operate, to support women in Afghanistan?

Please respond to these questions no later than by Friday, December 9, 2022.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael T. McCaul". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rep. Michael T. McCaul (TX-10)
Ranking Member
House Foreign Affairs Committee