

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 30, 2021

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

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Mayorkas:

We appreciate the continued efforts to evacuate American citizens, Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) applicants, Priority 1 and 2 designees, vulnerable Afghans, and their families, including more than 200 journalists and support staff, from Afghanistan. As evacuation efforts continue and we welcome Afghans into the United States, we encourage you to take steps to help Afghan journalists resettle and continue their important work.

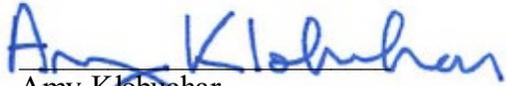
Afghan journalists served alongside their American counterparts for 20 years, risking their lives to report the truth and to hold government leaders accountable. As the Taliban takes over, there are concerns that given their long history of attacks on journalists, the Taliban will eliminate a free and open media and continue to suppress, imprison, and violently target the press.

We urge the Administration to expand partnerships with members of the media, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and other concerned governments in an effort to support employment opportunities for Afghan journalists who can use their accreditations and skills to continue to provide open and transparent news on Afghanistan. Their knowledge of Afghanistan and the region is invaluable and their skills should be used to provide news not only to the people in Afghanistan but to inform those outside of the country about current events in Afghanistan. This is especially important in light of recent reports by Reporters Without Borders that the Taliban has begun imposing “very harsh constraints” on Afghan media, and an estimated 100 private media companies have shut down operations in response to the Taliban.¹

The U.S. is stronger and safer when our values—including defense of a free press—are protected at home and advanced as a central component of our foreign policy. We appreciate your efforts to ensure the safe evacuation and resettlement of U.S. and Afghan citizens who have supported U.S. efforts in Afghanistan, and we look forward to working with you to ensure we continue to support the fundamental values of a free press in the U.S. and around the world.

¹ RSF. (2021, August 24). *New (unofficial) oppressive rules imposed on journalists in Afghanistan*. Reporters Without Borders. <https://rsf.org/en/news/new-unofficial-oppressive-rules-imposed-journalists-afghanistan>

Sincerely,


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


Mitt Romney
United States Senator

CC: Secretary Xavier Becerra, Department of Health and Human Services