

July 20, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Hon. Antony J. Blinken  
Office of the Secretary  
U.S. Department of State  
Harry S. Truman Building  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear President Biden and Secretary Blinken:

We are a coalition of U.S. news organizations that have provided the American people and the world with coverage of Afghanistan for the past two decades. We write today to seek the U.S. Government's humanitarian assistance for those Afghans who have worked with the U.S. media as journalists, interpreters, and support staff and now fear retaliation from the Taliban for having courageously associated themselves with the American press. For those who fear reprisals, there is a critical need for a special visa program to allow them and their families to find safety in the United States.

Much attention has been given in recent weeks to the plight of Afghans who worked for the U.S. Government and the expansion of the Special Immigration Visa program to assist them in seeking relocation and safety in the United States. The SIV program properly recognizes both their service and this country's commitment to provide safe harbor to people who advanced America's interest in Afghanistan. The SIV program does not reach those Afghans who have served U.S. news organizations. Yet they and their families face the same threat of retaliation from the Taliban, which views the American press as a legitimate target. The Taliban has long conducted a campaign of threatening and killing journalists.

We urge the Biden Administration to support the creation of a visa program for Afghans who worked with the U.S. press and now seek safety in the United States. There is precedent for such an initiative. In 2008, Congress passed, and President Bush signed, legislation extending special immigration consideration to Iraqis who had worked with the U.S. news media. That program reached both journalists and support staff and extended to their immediate family members. The same sort of program is needed now for Afghanistan.

We do not have a reliable count at this time of the number of our Afghan colleagues who are in danger. But the number is undoubtedly modest – we estimate fewer than 1,000 people – because of the small number of news organizations that have operated in Afghanistan and the relatively small size of our operations.

The need for action is urgent. Designing and implementing a program and then processing applications will inevitably take time. Meanwhile, the withdrawal of U.S. forces is moving forward rapidly. We are doing what we can as private organizations to assist our former and current Afghan colleagues but our capacity to provide relief is limited. Without the assistance of the U.S. Government, many of these

Afghans face grievous harm and death for having done nothing more than lent their labor and skills to making certain the world knew what was going on in their country while U.S. troops were there for the past twenty years.

We thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

ABC News  
The Atlantic Monthly Group LLC  
The Boston Globe  
Buzzfeed, Inc.  
CBS News  
Center for Investigative Reporting, Inc. (d/b/a "Reveal")  
CNN  
Dow Jones & Company, Inc.  
First Look Institute, Inc. ("The Intercept")  
FOX News Media  
Hearst Corporation  
Los Angeles Times Communications LLC  
The McClatchy Company, LLC  
National Public Radio, Inc.  
NBCUniversal News Group  
The New York Times Company  
The New Yorker  
Politico LLC  
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VICE Media Group  
The Washington Post

Committee to Protect Journalists  
News Media Alliance  
Radio Televisión Digital News Association  
Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press