

## Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Consultative Status with United Nations ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO  
Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO, and UNICEF



### Australian Section

Senator the Hon Marise Payne  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Minister for Women  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

We have watched in alarm as the Taliban have taken over Afghanistan in the past 10 days. As the oldest women's peace organisation in the world, and a steadfastly strong supporter of human rights, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) Australia is gravely concerned for the well-being and safety of all Afghans, especially women human rights defenders, journalists, and others who are specifically targeted for their work and identity.

Many of these women are known to and have worked closely with the Australian government and Australian organisations, in aiding the people of Afghanistan. As Australians, we believe we have a responsibility to stand with Afghan citizens by providing protection, support and shelter to those citizens who are likely to be persecuted by the new regime.

We know that you are already leading an emergency mission on behalf of the Australian Government to evacuate Australian citizens and diplomats from Kabul. We also know that Australia's aid program in Afghanistan has been dedicated to ending violence against women. The Individuals and their families who have worked with these programs are now in grave danger. WILPF asks that you consider providing expedited safe passage and asylum for the above Afghans and their dependents whose lives are at immediate risk. They need to be given priority in the issuance of refugee visas. Their contribution to community resilience will be invaluable to the Australian community.

As advocates for peace and security, WILPF looks to the Australian government to uphold its international human rights obligations, including ensuring safe asylum for all Afghans who have worked ceaselessly over the past 20 years to better human rights for their fellow citizens.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Reynolds  
National President  
WILPF Australia

18 August 2021