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The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

November 25, 2021

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

My name is Friba Rezayee. I competed in judo at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games as the first Afghan woman in the history of Afghanistan and the International Olympic Committee to do so. I am now a Canadian citizen and founder of Women Leaders of Tomorrow where we use sport and education to empower women.

I am writing regarding the ongoing, deadly threat to my fellow Afghan female athletes by the Taliban and the urgent need for your action and public support. I was heartened by Canada's promise to ensure that women athletes will be evacuated, but as you will see from the numbers below, Canada falls short of other countries in terms of the actual numbers who have safely been resettled in Canada.

The situation in Afghanistan is dire as it relates to women's sports and rights. Several members of our teams have been threatened with judgement in a Sharia law court operated by the Taliban, with punishments as high as 100 lashings publicly or the death penalty. A female member of the volleyball team, Majabeen Hakimi was murdered under highly suspicious circumstances exactly at the same time as the Taliban captured the government. This has been excessively reported by the international media.

Many men's sport teams, as well as male employees of the National Olympic Committee and other sport federations were successful in leaving the country and are still being evacuated.

Sadly, most of our female athletes and teams have been left behind. They're in hiding, terrified of the deadly consequences of being found. Lack of Canadian interest in prioritizing Afghan women's sports teams has contributed to discrimination against them, and to the danger they now face.

The IRCC breach of 636 people who applied for refugee status has made life much more perilous for them. One athlete, who made it to another country, where she is still in fear, was contacted by a criminal who posed as the IRCC: She gave him all her contact information. Now she has had to flee her safehouse and find somewhere else to hide.

In early November four elite women athletes, including myself, wrote to Minister of Immigration Sean Fraser (letter attached) and provided the following numbers: To our knowledge, only 8 soccer players and 2 female soccer coaches, 3 runners, 1 snowboarder and 1 cricketer have been evacuated to Canada. We have not had any response from Minister Fraser.

We estimate comparative numbers as shared among the advocates with whom we liaise:

- CANADA: **15** female athletes

- AUSTRALIA: **45** female soccer players, **4** female soccer coaches, **2** female referees, **8** taekwondo athletes, **2** para-athletes, and **1** karate athlete.
- PORTUGAL: **22** female soccer players
- SWITZERLAND: **30** female cyclists
- U.K: **35** female soccer players

The Taliban government forbids women's sport and considers it to be contrary to their strict interpretation of Sharia law. For them it is a sinful act, and they have declared their intent to suppress all athletic participation of women outside the home. In fact, the first foreign diplomacy move made by the Taliban was to release an official decree on September 19, 2021 banning women from participating in or playing sports.

Afghanistan's national team athletes are known to the Taliban. They carry the job title athlete in their passports. The Taliban knows who they are and are hunting them down door to door, looking for women who were once athletes and advocated for women's rights. If Canada does not safely extract them, they will die.

In order to help save the lives of these young women, we request the following:

- Immediately secure Canadian visas for verified Afghan female athletes. (We have verified lists)
- Assure safe passage to airports and assign charter flights evacuating the Afghan female athletes daily. We have worked with those carrying out similar flights. We know they want to work with Canada: All that is needed are Canadian visas.
- Enact emergency measures to issue Temporary Resident Permits to female refugee athletes. There should be no bureaucratic red tape impeding the Afghan female athletes.
- Waive the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) card requirement to allow for prompt women's rights groups and reduce potential administrative roadblocks.

Canada played a vital role in Afghanistan advancing women's rights and empowering women and girls. Canada also worked to protect all human rights and helped the people of Afghanistan believe in the principals of democracy. It is devastating to see our rights and freedoms extinguished overnight.

Please find **below the names of many prominent Canadian individuals and organizations across the world of sport and human rights, including Canada's Olympic gold medalists women's soccer**, who support my call for immediate and sustained actions to ensure a safe evacuation and the granting of visas to these young women and girls who put their lives on the line to promote a new Afghanistan, one that was strong, free and empowered women. Afghan female athletes need your urgent response and assistance to assure our safety, and to save the legacy of women's sports in Afghanistan.

I look forward to working with you to ensure women's rights are upheld, and our athletes are safe.

Sincerely,

Friba Rezayee



Executive Director
Women Leaders of Tomorrow

Joined by:

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| Kadeisha Buchanan | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Ashley Cathro | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Allysha Chapman | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Diana Matheson | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Sabrina D'Angelo | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Jessie Fleming | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Vanessa Gilles | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Julia Grosso | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Jenna Helstrom | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Jordyn Huitema | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Cloe Lacasse | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Marie Levasseur | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Erin McLeod | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Victoria Pickett | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Nichelle Prince | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Quin | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Jade Rose | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Deanne Rose | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Sophie Schmidt | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Desiree Scott | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Kailen Sheridan | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Christine Sinclair | Captain 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Nikayla Small | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Evelyne Viens | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Amanda West | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |
| Sura Yekka | 2020 Tokyo Olympics gold medalist Canadian Women's Soccer Team |

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| Khalida Popal | Founder and Director, Girl Power, former Captain, Afghanistan Women's National Football Team |
| Paulina Tomczyk, | General Secretary, EU Athletes |
| AthletesCAN Board of Directors of November 1, 2021 (The Canadian Association for National Team Athletes) | |
| Pierre-Luc Laliberté, | Canoe/Kayak National Team, President AthletesCAN |
| Bo Hedges, | Paralympic Gold Medalist Wheelchair Basketball, Director, AthletesCAN |
| Allison Forsyth, | Alpine Skiing Olympian, Director, AthletesCAN |
| Liam Smedley, | Canoe/Kayak National Team, Director, AthletesCAN |
| Hollie Duncan, | Curling National University Team, Director, AthletesCAN |
| Celina Toth, | Diving Olympian, Director, AthletesCAN |
| Camille Bérubé, | Swimming Paralympian, Director, AthletesCAN |
| Erin Willson, | Artistic Swimming Olympian, Director, AthletesCAN |
| Rob Law, | Lawn Bowls National Team, Director, AthletesCAN |
| Rob Koehler | Director General, Global Athlete (International athlete-led organization and movement) |
| Paul Melia | President and CEO, Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport |
| Paulina Tomczyk, | General Secretary, EU Athletes |
| Nancy Hogshead-Makar | Olympic and World Champion, Swimming, human-rights lawyer, Founder and CEO, Champion Women |
| Pam Boleter | President, WomenCAN International, former Team USA/National Champion canoeist |
| Pam Hrick | Executive Director and General Counsel, LEAF (Women's Legal Education and Action Fund) |
| Jillian Drouin | Heptathlete National team, Women Athletes Rep to Athletics Canada, former board member, AthletesCAN |
| Nikki Dryden | Swimming Olympian, Human Rights lawyer, Equality Rights advocate |
| Joy Fera | Rowing Olympian and Alpine Ski champion (master's) |
| Laura Robinson | Cycling National Team; Rowing National Champion, Equality Rights advocate |
| Gay Wise | Founding Chair, Women's Bicycling Voice, Canadian Cycling Association, Equality rights advocate |

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| Marion Allan | Ret. Honourable Justice, BC Supreme Court (1988-2012) |
| Karen Bellehumeur | Human Rights lawyer |
| Bronwyn Drainie | Author, retired editor-in-chief, Literary Review Canada |
| Mary Eberts | Human Rights Lawyer, Officer of the Order of Canada, Equality Rights advocate |
| Cheryl Grace | Town Councilor, Founding member, Huron Shores Refugee Support Group |
| Cheryl Hardcastle | Former Parliamentarian, Vice Chair SDIR (International Human Rights) |
| Farrah Khan | Manager, "Consent Comes First", X University |
| Patricia Marshall | Co- founder, METRAC, Co-chair Canadian Panel on Violence Against Women, Equality Rights and Safety advocate |
| Joy Masuara | Doctor, Internal Chair, Women Transforming Cities, Equality Rights advocate |
| Joanie McEwen | Lawyer and Arbitrator, Equality Rights advocate |
| Marilou McPhedran | Senator, Member of the Order of Canada, Human Rights and International Law lawyer and Professor, Human Rights advocate |
| Cathy Miller Refugees | Ret. Reverend, Anglican Church of Canada, member of Meaford Welcoming |
| Yuka Nakamura | Assistant Professor, School of Kinesiology and Health Science, York University |
| Vicki Parashak | Professor, School of Human Kinetics, University of Windsor |
| Helen Penfold | Past President, Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario; Past President, Canadian Federation of University Women North Toronto, current Advocacy Committee Convenor of CFUW North Toronto |
| Helen Poizner | Ret. Chair, National Social Action Committee/Canadian Council of Reform Judaism, Human Rights advocate |
| Colleen Purdon | Founding Member, Welcoming Communities Grey-Bruce, Retired ED, Owen Sound Women's Shelter, Equality Rights advocate |
| Andrea Reimer | Former Councilor, City of Vancouver |
| Lois Segal | NFB Director Baseball Girls, Lecturer English and Film, Dawson College |
| Gail Vanstone | Associate Professor and Coordinator, Humanities and Culture & Expression Programs, York University |
| Jennifer Wade | Order of BC, Honourary Doctorates: UNBC, UVI, SFU, Human Rights advocate |
| Jan Wong | Co-founder, Asian Canadian Women's Alliance, Author, ret. Professor and Journalist, Human Rights advocate |

Ellen Woodsworth Former Councillor, City of Vancouver, founder of Women Transforming Cities, International Speaker, Human Rights and Equality Rights advocate

Kristyn Wong-Tam Toronto City Councillor