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Afghanistan Withdrawal Hearing  
Appendix #1 to Written Testimony

### **Thoughts on the Afghanistan Collapse as it Impacts Women and Girls**

During the chaos of the collapse in Kabul, Task Force Pineapple assisted a range of at-risk Afghan Allies to safety. One of them was one of the most wanted women in Afghanistan, Minister of Women's Affairs Hasina Safi.

She was on the run as the city fell, and the Taliban were hot on her heels. Minister Safi's initiatives she led to bring women into prominence were an affront to the Draconian Taliban Regime. Escaping Afghanistan was her only option to avoid death.

Ambassador Kelley Currie, Former Ambassador at Large for Global Women's Issues, and other female guides made multiple attempts to contact the Department of State, for assistance. In the end, no diplomatic efforts were made to bring Minister Safi into HKIA>

Instead, she was guided remotely, by volunteers, through the open sewage canal of the "Pineapple Express" and pulled into HKIA by members of the 82nd Airborne Division.

As March 8th is International Women's Day, it seems fitting to submit a separate submission to HFAC in honor of the women and girls living under the oppressive Taliban Rule.

Since August 2021, Afghan women have been systematically forced into marriage, abducted, raped and even assassinated by their new de facto authorities, the Taliban.

The Taliban have banned women from parks, gyms, university and school beyond grade 6. Most recently, the Taliban banned women from working in non-governmental organizations taking away half of the population's economy in a country where there are a majority of women-headed households after 40 years of Afghan men fighting and dying in war.

Brutally imposed social restrictions such as mandatory burqa coverings, restricted access to health care and education and prohibiting women from appearing in public places without a male chaperone are again a daily reality for Afghan women, like it was in the 1990s.

So I want to remind everyone here on International Women's Day what we helped build - 'shona ba shona' - with our Afghan friends and particularly Afghan women who rose from the ashes of the 1990s with great strength:

From 2001 through August 2021

Afghan women musicians, artists, journalists and businesses thrived; it was not easy but their strength and determination was globally recognized

Six million girls went to school while over a hundred thousand graduated university.

Female enrollment in high school grew from 6% in 2003 to 40% in the years before we exited.

By 2020, 21% of Afghan civil servants were women, compared to none during the first Taliban reign (1996 - 2001); 16% were senior managers. 27% Afghan women represented constituencies as parliamentarians

Over four thousand women served in the Afghan police and army that collapsed.

It's never been easy for women in Afghanistan. But the situation is now devastating. On International Women's Day I would ask two things of this Committee and this Investigation as it pertains to Congress:

1. Consider bringing in female witnesses from both the US and Afghanistan Communities to shed light on the terrible realities this abandonment of our allies has had on the oppression of women throughout Afghanistan.

2. Press Department of State for a clear way forward to advocate for the Afghan Women whose lives have been crushed by this abandonment.

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