



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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7 September 2021

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for your letter dated 1 September 2021 expressing concerns for our colleagues remaining in Afghanistan.

I and my senior colleagues have, from the onset of this crisis, been deeply concerned with the safety and security of all staff members in Afghanistan, and have been in daily contact with UNAMA, with Headquarters and with Member States on the matter. We are acutely conscious that Human Rights Section staff are often at higher risk because of the nature of their work and profiles, while other staff carry further exposure on account of their gender or ethnic or religious affiliation, and the speed with which the situation on the ground made circumstances especially challenging.

I am pleased that over 1/3 of UNAMA's national human rights staff is now in a position of safety. Each case has its own particularities and complexities, and my team and I remain wholly engaged to achieve equally satisfactory outcomes for all remaining staff, prioritizing the most vulnerable. To this end we continue to be in regular contact with the concerned individuals and coordination mechanisms within the UN system.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michelle Bachelet".

Michelle Bachelet
High Commissioner for Human Rights

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7 September 2021

Dear Mr. Smith and Mr. Bali,

Thank you for your letter and I can assure you that OCHA regards the security of our staff as one of our highest priorities. The Secretary-General has also expressed his appreciation for the important work our staff do every day.

OCHA staff will never be exposed to an unacceptable level of risk in the course of their work coordinating the delivery of the UN and international community's humanitarian mandates.

I have followed the staffing in Afghanistan and have only approved staff to stay when they are immediately required to ensure lifesaving support reaches the people of Afghanistan and the risk is commensurate with criticality of their functions. International Staff who can operate from outside the country have been evacuated and National Staff have been offered the opportunity to relocate; an offer that has been taken by some while others feel safer remaining in their communities. National Staff and their families who are at unacceptable risk due their roles and functions with the UN have been, and continue to be, supported in leaving Afghanistan.

All remaining OCHA staff are working and residing in compounds that fully meet the approved security risk management measures for Afghanistan. They also have all required equipment, including; personal protective, communications and armored vehicles for travel (where required). It is worth noting that the security measures in Afghanistan have been enhanced in line with the current security environment and analysis and assessment of the risk continues as the situation evolves.

As you are aware the situation in Afghanistan is dynamic and changing and you can be assured that we are collaborating closely with DSS and all agency security advisors in Afghanistan and at the HQ, to ensure everything reasonable is being done to manage the risk to staff.

Yours sincerely,



Martin Griffiths

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
and Emergency Relief Coordinator

Mr. Bradford Smith
Executive Secretary
UNOG Staff Coordinating Council
Geneva

Mr. Mohamed Bali
Deputy Executive Secretary
UNOG Staff Coordinating Council
Geneva