



October 7, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris,

On the anniversary of the October 7, 2023 massacre in Israel, we are reminded not only of the devastating impact of terrorism but also of the alarming increase in conflict-related sexual violence under your administration. From 2022 to 2023, such violence has **surged by 50%**, with the atrocities committed on October 7 contributing to those grim statistics. Women and girls have been targeted in unspeakable acts of brutality, and this crisis cannot be ignored and unchallenged.

It is imperative that the Biden-Harris administration resoundingly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls. This condemnation must begin by clearly defining who women and girls are in both domestic and foreign policy contexts, ensuring that protections are developed and enforced accordingly. Without clear definitions, the efforts to protect these vulnerable populations will remain fragmented and ineffective.

In 2023 alone, the **United States provided** \$150 million in economic development assistance and \$114.2 million in humanitarian assistance for Iraq—a country where a **proposed bill could allow girls as young as nine to marry**. This potential legalization of child marriage directly endangers young girls and signals a regression in human rights. Meanwhile, in Afghanistan, **draconian laws continue to restrict the rights of women and girls**, silencing their voices in public, denying them education, and prohibiting their movement without a male relative. Yet the U.S. remains the largest international donor to Afghanistan, providing approximately **\$2.9**

billion in funding to the United Nations, other international organizations, and NGOs operating in the country since August 2021.

Our tax dollars are being funneled into oppressive, theocratic regimes that systematically disenfranchise and endanger women and girls. On this somber anniversary of the October 7 massacre, which also tragically demonstrated how **U.S. funds were misused** to finance terrorism, it is clear that this must stop. The Biden-Harris administration must take decisive action to ensure that U.S. aid does not support regimes that violate the basic rights of women and girls, and that our policies both at home and abroad reflect our commitment to human dignity and equality.

I urge you to prioritize the safety and protection of women and girls globally. The United States must hold itself accountable for the impact of its foreign aid and take a firm stand against regimes that perpetuate violence and oppression.

Sincerely,

Meaghan Mobbs, PhD



*Director, Center American Safety
and Security
Independent Women's Forum*

Zainab Zeb Khan



*President and Founder
Muslim American Leadership Alliance
(MALA)*