



**Alliance for
Peacebuilding**

October 12, 2021

The Honorable Janet Yellen
Secretary of Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20020

Dear Secretary Yellen:

The [Alliance for Peacebuilding](#) (AFP), the leading nonpartisan global network of 150+ member organizations working in 181 countries to end violent conflict and build sustainable peace, and the undersigned organizations request the Biden Administration and the U.S. Treasury Department to expand the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) [general licenses](#), *Authorizing Humanitarian Activities in Afghanistan (General License 14)* and *Transactions Related to the Exportation or Reexportation of Agricultural Commodities, Medicine, Medical Devices, Replacement Parts and Components, or Software Updates in Afghanistan (General License 15)*. We are grateful for the quick response of the U.S. government to issue the general licenses and for your continued partnership on this issue, but additional aid not covered under these licenses is needed for life-saving activities. We request the U.S. Administration issue an OFAC general license for Afghanistan similar to [General License 11 to facilitate the delivery of life-saving aid and activities](#) for [Yemen](#) after the [Foreign Terrorist Organization](#) (FTO) designation of Ansar Allah in early 2021.

While the Taliban is not a designated FTO, it is a [Specially Designated Global Terrorist](#) (SGDT) entity. This designation, through the [Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act](#) (AEDPA) and [International Emergency Economic Powers Act](#) (IEEPA), prohibits U.S. based or funded organizations from providing support to the Taliban, including but not limited to, the provision of payments, services, and advice. As COVID-19, drought, mass internal displacement, and people trying to leave the country are compounding the conflict and destabilizing dynamics inside Afghanistan and regionally, this designation and the criminal and civil liabilities to which U.S. organizations and others are subject through AEDPA and IEEPA due to the lack of OFAC licenses is preventing the delivery of other life-saving aid, including much needed development and peacebuilding programs.

In addition to humanitarian assistance granted for Afghans' basic needs as provided for by the general OFAC licenses, other development programs including education, governance, human rights and protection, and peacebuilding are vital to preserve and build upon gains made during the last 20 years. The next general license should, at a minimum, include: (1) protection and prevention—covering atrocities prevention, protection of human rights defenders, and protection of religious and ethnic minorities, as well as all marginalized and vulnerable communities; (2) women's rights—covering women's empowerment, support to women-led civil society, and prevention and services surrounding sexual- and gender-based violence; and (3) conflict and stabilization—covering community-level dialogue, conflict prevention, mediation, conflict resolution, and violence prevention at the local level.

We request the Administration adopt the Yemen OFAC license model that offers both precedent and applicable language to assist NGOs in their efforts to provide critical aid in Afghanistan. A broad general license specifically tailored to the Afghanistan context should include exceptions for all transactions involving the Taliban that are necessary and ordinarily incidental to support peacebuilding, atrocity prevention, democracy building, human rights, education, infrastructure development and maintenance, and environmental protection activities, as well those that serve, protect, and empower Afghan women and girls and human rights defenders. Such transactions include, but are not limited to, the processing and transfer of funds, payment of taxes, fees, or import duties, as well as the purchase or receipt of permits, licenses, public utility services, and telecommunications.

We also request additional comprehensive guidance for the requested general license through Frequently Asked Questions for implementers, as well as for institutions providing financial services to facilitate humanitarian, peacebuilding, education, and other development operations and for other frontline actors covered by all general licenses. The impediments facing banks and other financial institutions and the attendant lack of cash remain significant challenges for all implementers, including those covered by the existing general licenses.

As conflict and destabilizing dynamics increase in Afghanistan, we ask the Department of Treasury to immediately issue an additional comprehensive OFAC license for U.S. based or funded NGOs so they can continue to deliver vital aid that is critical for life-saving activities. We are grateful for the Administration's partnership on and strong commitment to these issues and welcome continued engagement to discuss these issues and best practices to ensure life-saving aid programs continue.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter.

Kind regards,

- Alliance for Peacebuilding
- Aware Girls
- Charity & Security Network
- Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
- Educators' Institute for Human Rights (EIHR)
- FCA
- Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Generations for Peace
- Helping Hand for Relief and Development
- Ideas Beyond Borders
- Institute of World Affairs
- International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)
- Islamic Relief USA
- MADRE
- Mina's List
- National Iranian American Council
- Nonviolent Peaceforce
- PartnersGlobal
- Peace Direct
- Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft
- RECLAIM
- Search for Common Ground
- ShelterBox USA
- Tanenbaum
- Thomas H. Nelson & Associates

Cc: The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary of State
The Honorable Jake Sullivan, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
The Honorable Samantha Power, USAID Administrator