



Dear AUW Friends,

On June 30, I wrote "***Perhaps no other group within our community faces as dire an existential challenge as our Afghan students and alumnae. With NATO forces fast disappearing from Afghan land, and the Taliban having already taken over more than one hundred districts, the fear of what awaits even in Kabul has become palpable. We have no illusions as to the convictions of and methods used by the Taliban. Neither do our students nor alumnae. Under these circumstances, we are preparing to not only evacuate our Afghan students but also our alumnae who may want to return to AUW for graduate-level courses and further prepare for a better day in their country.***" I am pleased to report that yesterday we succeeded in accomplishing that mission.





Our students and alumnae have been evacuated in US military planes out of Kabul. They have now safely reached bases in the Middle East where they will be processed for their onward journeys. An extraordinary group of people helped us pull off this miracle. Those contributions will be appropriately acknowledged at a later date. This ordeal succeeded only after two grueling but failed attempts with our students huddled in a convoy of seven buses for forty straight hours. Our Afghan student leader, Sepehra Azami, AUW Class of 2022 and six others who supported her in the overall coordination and communication, showed a measure of competence, tenacity, and what Ernest Hemingway described as *grace under pressure* that I have not seen before, even myself as a child of a civil war of our own in Bangladesh. My deep gratitude to each of them.

The future in Afghanistan may now appear withdrawn but it cannot be relinquished. We pledge to continue to support that vision of another

Afghanistan that has eluded us till now but *inshallah* will one day be realized. It is because of these women, like Sepehra and the others whom AUW has helped educate over the years, that that day must come and shall come.

With gratitude,



Kamal Ahmad  
Founder & Trustee  
Asian University for Women  
Email: [kamal.ahmad@asian-university.org](mailto:kamal.ahmad@asian-university.org)

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June 30, 2021

Dear AUW Family and Friends,

Another year and more have passed since the beginning of the Covid 19 calendar. AUW's class rooms, dormitories, and other areas remain hauntingly vacant with just 24 out of our 1000+ students still on campus. The most urgent challenge we face is in arranging the return to campus of our students and safeguarding their health and safety while they are in our custody. With so much uncertainty around the pandemic still looming in the horizon, no choice can be easy or foolproof. Yet, having spoken to many of our students over the past month and following the discussions from AUW's last Board of Trustees meeting and the counsel of a special Task Force of experts that we have assembled, I am convinced that we must try to bring our students back in a

systematic way, adhering to the best protocols and practices that are known. The Government of Bangladesh has generously indicated that it will facilitate a supply of vaccines for our students as we search for additional vaccines and other crucial material resources such as Covid-19 test kits, PPE, oxygen, therapeutics, etc. Please contact [info@asian-university.org](mailto:info@asian-university.org) for a detailed list of our needs.

Perhaps no other group within our community faces as dire an existential challenge as our Afghan graduates and alumnae. With NATO forces fast disappearing from Afghan land and, Taliban having already taken over more than one hundred districts, the fear of what awaits even in Kabul have become palpable. We have no illusions as to the convictions of and methods used by the Taliban. Neither do our students nor alumnae. Under these circumstances, we are preparing to not only evacuate our Afghan students but also our alumnae who may want to return to AUW for graduate-level courses and further prepare for a better day in their country. We will not be able to bend the fates of all 40 million people in Afghanistan; however, we have a solemn obligation to do everything we can to support the 250 or so AUW students and alumnae in these times of multiple jeopardies in Afghanistan stemming from Covid, a collapsing state that is being run over by the Taliban i.e the same Taliban who violently oppose women's rights and the existence of minorities such as the ethnic Hazaras who constitute a majority of our students and alumnae.

Time is of the essence here. I am on my way to Bangladesh and Afghanistan next week. As of now, we feel confident that we can pull this through. As always, your support (and prayers) will help. We need resources to transport the students and alumnae out of Afghanistan (*Emirates* is still flying out of Kabul); we need vaccines; we need all the monitoring and back up supplies. With approximately \$500,000, we believe we can get this done.

Thank you for considering extending your support for AUW at these unkind times.

With much gratitude and best wishes,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kamal Ahmad', with a stylized, cursive script.

Kamal Ahmad

Founder & Trustee

Asian University for Women

<https://asian-university.org>

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