

September 8, 2021

The Honorable Abdulla Shahid
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of the Maldives
Boduthakurufaanu Magu
20077, Male', Republic of Maldives

Dear President-elect Shahid:

I write to congratulate you on your successful bid to be the 76th President of the United Nations General Assembly. I hope that your tenure will further the United Nations' founding mission to maintain international peace and security, promote better living standards and safeguard human rights around the world. As you assume your role for the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly, I respectfully request that you work with your colleagues at the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and other United Nations bodies to ensure that the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's representatives to the United Nations continue to represent the Afghan people.

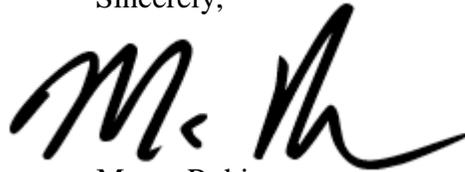
In past few weeks, the Taliban, a designated terrorist organization per United Nations Security Council resolution 1267, have forcibly seized control of the Afghan government and have declared the return of their illegitimate Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The Taliban stands to assume Afghanistan's membership on United Nations commissions and councils, most notably the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. As you know, in March 2020, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2513, which stated that the "Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan" would not be recognized at the United Nations. As Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in his August 16 statement, the International Community must "use all tools at its disposal to suppress the global terrorist threat in Afghanistan and to guarantee that basic human rights will be respected." There are reports that the Taliban have already begun severely restricting the human rights of women and religious minorities. Their inclusion on United Nations councils and commissions will only serve to legitimize this tragic reduction in the Afghan people's human rights. Although the Taliban never sent a delegation to the United Nations during their last tenure in power, it has made significant efforts to increase its international outreach and may imminently send a representative to the United Nations. Under no circumstances should a Taliban-appointed representative assume Afghanistan's rights at the United Nations and influence the Commission on the Status of Women, or any other United Nations entities.

I understand that in previous situations with rival claimants presenting credentials for representation, previous Presidents of the General Assembly invoked Rule 29 of the Rules of Procedure to provisionally allow the current representatives to be seated. It is also my

understanding that you have the authority to propose the composition of the Credentials Committee, which reviews these competing claims. In order to protect both the goals of the United Nations and the dramatic progress Afghanistan has made in advancing its economic and social development, I urge you to follow in the steps of your predecessors and ensure that Afghanistan continues to be represented by its current United Nations delegation, led by Ghulam Isaczai. Doing so will ensure that Afghan women and minorities continue to be represented by a United Nations delegation that represents their interests.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator

CC:

The Honorable Antonio Guterres, Secretary General, United Nations

The Honorable Collen Vixen Kelapile, President-Elect, United Nations Economic and Social Council