



Over the past two weeks, communities from the Caribbean to the Middle East have been shaken by disasters both natural and politically induced. Haiti has recently experienced political instability due to the assassination of their president and is now experiencing the reverberations of an earthquake which injured more than 12,000 and killed at least 2,000 Haitians. The human toll of these tragedies brings us great sorrow. Natural disasters such as this remind us of our shared humanity with people from different cultures, identities, religions, and backgrounds. *We wish to let our Haitian members and those with friends and family in the region know that we see their pain and we share in their struggle.*

In Afghanistan, corresponding to a U.S. military disengagement, the country has fallen to Taliban leadership as President Ghani fled to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). As the world watched a wrenching video from Hamid Karzai International Airport of people running alongside a U.S. transport plane, it was clear to onlookers that the country's future remains uncertain and dangerous. *We stand in solidarity with our Afghani and Middle Eastern members, as well as the Afghani people as they face the rise of an oppressive regime; one that many expect to threaten the lives and livelihoods of women and girls.*

As U.S. forces continue to evacuate various allies and citizens, we hope for safety and security in these efforts. At this time, we also acknowledge the strong emotions that these images will evoke for veterans and active duty military who made countless sacrifices over the past 20 years in the region. *We stand in solidarity with our veteran members and their families during this difficult time.*

Recent events like these display how vulnerable we all are to various forces around us, internationally or stateside. In order to navigate these conditions, we need one another. Acknowledging this individual weakness challenges us to build community, extend compassion, and create resilient spaces where basic needs are met for even the most marginalized.

Countless opportunities for our communities to engage one another in solidarity will reveal themselves in time. The change we hope to implement is engaging members regularly, not only in moments of tragedy and great suffering. In the meantime, we ask our members to reach out for support and with support. If any members are aware of any organizations with low overhead rates, a long standing history of working in the Haitian and/or Afghani regions, and provide direct assistance to the people affected and the folk supporting them, please share them with us and within your circles of influence.

---

**Resources to support the people of Afghanistan:**

For help on the ground right now, consider donating to organizations that have a strong track record of helping Afghan women and girls.

[Women for Women International](#) is a non-profit organization that provides aid and support to women in war-torn countries. Women for Women has long had a presence in Afghanistan and their Stronger Women, Stronger Nations program [has proven](#) to have a significant impact in the country. A donor has promised to match up to \$500,000 for the emergency aid fund in response to the humanitarian crisis unfolding there. [Learn more](#) and [donate here](#).

[Women for Afghan Women](#) is a grassroots civil society organization that "works to help Afghan women and girls exercise their rights to pursue their individual potential to self-determination, and to representation in all areas of life—political, social, cultural, and economic." With offices in Afghanistan and New York, they assist disenfranchised Afghan women both in Afghanistan and the U.S. [Learn more](#) and [donate here](#).

For help in the long run, ask the U.S. government to increase the refugee ceiling back to historic norms at minimum.

While the Biden administration increased the number of refugees the U.S. would accept this year from 15,000 to 65,000, that's [still far lower than the numbers the U.S. has historically welcomed](#). (To be clear, the refugee resettlement program is separate from the asylum-seeking we see at the southern border.) Refugees are [the most vetted group](#) of people to enter the U.S., they are [statistically more likely to start businesses](#) than native-born residents and other immigrants, they overall have [a positive impact on the economy](#), and logic would tell us that displaced people are likely to be grateful and loyal to a country that offers them safe haven and opportunity. Refugee resettlement is good for the U.S. in addition to being the right thing to do.

Sign the International Rescue Committee petition to raise the refugee ceiling [here](#).

Source: <https://www.upworthy.com/how-to-help-afghan-women-and-girls>

For organizations/people endangered because of their human rights work, emergency grants for expenses like security, temporary relocation, medical expenses, legal representation, prison visits, trial monitoring, and equipment replacement are available.

Eligibility: CSOs (civil society organization) with at least two or more activists that are threatened as a result of their human rights activities are eligible for assistance. CSOs need not be officially registered, but must be able to document a history of activism. Beyond traditional NGOs, this can include journalist associations, network organizations, community-based organizations, student groups, labor unions, think tanks, and other associations. To qualify for assistance, a CSO must demonstrate that a threat occurred in the past 3 months and provide means to independently verify details of the threat and confirm that the threat is directly related to their human rights work.

Source: <https://www.csolifeline.org/emergency-assistance-1>

Other CSO Resources: <https://www.csolifeline.org/resources-1>

### **Resources to support the Haitian people:**

[Fonkoze USA](#) is an American 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to securing financial and technical support for its Haitian partners. It educates the American public about Fonkoze's work in Haiti, facilitates technical assistance for the two Haitian entities and raises money to support Fonkoze's programs. Fonkoze USA also acts as a channel for socially responsible investors who want to "invest" in Fonkoze's loan fund by lending their money at subsidized interest rates. Fonkoze USA gives American donors access to tax advantages available to the fullest extent allowed, and conducts the necessary due diligence on Fonkoze's operations.

[Friends of Paradis des Indiens, Inc.'s](#) goal is to create an empowered, self-sufficient community by raising funds to support education, jobs, and modernization of the existing resources of the region.

[COFHED](#) was founded out of Nicaise Avignon and Madeleine Maceno-Avignon's deep desire to return to their homeland Haiti to engage rural Haitian communities. The organization was established in 2001 as a 501(c)3 in Minnesota to promote community engagement in rural Haiti, to strengthen local Haitian leadership, and carry our engagement process to partner communities and beyond.

Supported and encouraged by several close friends in Minnesota, the Avignons moved to Camp-Perrin in southern Haiti in September 2002 and began to explore villages affected by extreme poverty. In 2003, the village of Lougou requested a partnership, and COFHED began engaging local residents in community-led initiatives to address the spiritual, economic, social and environmental factors affecting their lives.

### **Resources to support veterans:**

The [Office of Veterans Affairs and Military Programs](#) launched the [UConn Veterans Activities and Support Fund](#) to provide support for activities at UConn (including all regional campuses) focused towards veteran students, staff, faculty, and their family members. These activities will include special events that honor the sacrifices made by our veterans and their families, such as the annual Veterans Day Ceremony, military appreciation programs, and other activities throughout the year. It is through these events we strive to honor veteran students, faculty, and staff and provide for their morale and welfare.

Since opening our doors in 2002, [ABRI/Homes for the Brave](#) has provided housing, vocational training, and life skills coaching to help individuals leave homelessness behind. To date, we have worked with nearly 1,200 men and women, most of whom are Veterans. A great need exists for housing programs and support services like ours. On any given night, 40,000 United States Veterans find themselves homeless, and another 1.4 million are at-risk of homelessness due to a lack of affordable housing, financial resources, and support. (National Coalition for Homeless Veterans). With the help of our community, we will continue to uphold our mission of helping Connecticut's Veterans and other individuals experiencing homelessness to return to meaningful, productive lives. We hope that you will join us as we serve the men and women who have served us all.

[South Park Inn](#) works closely with the local, state, and federal Veterans' Administration to identify and assist in placing any veterans experiencing homelessness as quickly as possible. We are extraordinarily grateful for the service that these brave men and women have provided for our country and are committed to making them a priority in their time of need. South Park Inn provides an extensive range of programs and services to assist people experiencing homelessness, as they strive to identify and remove the barriers to permanent housing.