



**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT SHANE HARRIS  
PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION OF JUSTICE ADVOCATES  
M E M O R A N D U M**

**August 24, 2021**

**Nathan Fletcher**

**Chair, San Diego County Supervisors**

**Supervisor, Fourth District**

**1600 Pacific Hwy.**

**San Diego, CA 92101**

**Nora Vargas**

**Vice Chair, San Diego County Board of Supervisors**

**Supervisor, First District**

**1600 Pacific Hwy. San Diego, CA 92101**

**Jim Desmond**

**Supervisor, Fifth District**

**1600 Pacific Hwy. San Diego, CA 92101**

**RE: PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION OF JUSTICE ADVOCATES PRESIDENT SHANE HARRIS  
AND AFGHAN LEADERS PROPOSE SAN DIEGO COUNTY SUPERVISORS PASS A  
FORMAL RESOLUTION DECLARING "SAN DIEGO COUNTY A WELCOMING REGION TO**

**AFGHAN REFUGEES” TO ACTIVATE THE COUNTY’S OFFICIAL RESPONSE TO THE INTERNATIONAL CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN IN ANTICIPATION OF A LARGE INFLUX OF AFGHAN REFUGEES AND TO PROVIDE A STRONGER COORDINATED HOUSING ACCOMODATION PLAN FOR INCOMING AFGHAN REFUGEES**

**Dear Supervisors Fletcher, Vargas & Desmond:**

My office is writing you regarding the ongoing crisis happening in Afghanistan and how that crisis is hitting home right here in San Diego. Over the past week my office has been in communication with Afghan leaders in our region, housing advocates and some of your largest refugee service providers in our region such as Jewish Family Service (JFS) and there is one thing in common with what everyone is saying: we need more housing specifically for Afghan refugees, faster and more coordinated. Initially we were proposing the county pass a formal resolution on record but as more concerns have grown regarding a potential influx and the number of refugees seen showing up in our region over the last few weeks it became clearer that the county needs to do more than a resolution. The county needs a more coordinated housing accommodation plan for a potential influx of Afghan refugees.

The County of San Diego is a border county and is known for its broad community of refugees from various countries. Historically we have declared ourselves available to immigrants and refugees. We believe that as we have historically been supportive of other groups seeking refuge, we ought to do the same for Afghan refugees. My office is bringing forth the following proposals regarding immediate actions the county can take now to meet this humanitarian crisis:

- 1. My office is proposing the county pass a formal resolution declaring “San Diego County a welcoming region to Afghan Refugees.” Passing a formal resolution such as this allows the county to take a formal step on record to work in coordination with federal officials on a coordinated housing accommodation plan.**
- 2. My office proposes the County of San Diego partner with some of its largest refugee service providers such as: Jewish Family Service, Catholic Charities, and the International Rescue Committee (San Diego) to provide an immediate and proactive stronger coordinated housing accommodation plan in advance of a potential influx of Afghan refugees coming into the region. The county should provide extra temporary housing accommodations to the large refugee service providers so they can expand their bandwidth for service.**

The request here is simple but impactful and we hope that the county takes this proposal to heart and adopts some of these efforts. We understand that we don’t have all of the numbers, we don’t have a clear timeline etc. This proposal and memorandum call for a proactive plan to be

pulled together and announced so that our county has an official response on record for our Afghan community. The Afghan community cannot wait and we must be there for them as we have been there for others. We have a humanitarian obligation here to step up as a county for our Afghan community here in our region and for the people arriving here in our town from horrific conditions abroad. In the Bible there is a passage in Matthew 2:1-15 that talks about Jesus as a refugee. Jesus himself experienced what fleeing turmoil looks like and therefore we should not turn a blind eye to our Afghan brothers and sisters. My hope is that we can step up as a county with a more coordinated approach to provide our Afghan brothers and sisters a wraparound welcome to the County of San Diego. The People's Association of Justice Advocates is a national civil rights organization and policy institute founded to keep Dr. Martin Luther King's dream alive by taking direct action with a balanced standard of justice no matter what race, gender, criminal record, sexuality, gender status or citizenship. We can be reached for more information at [info@pajmovement.org](mailto:info@pajmovement.org) or via phone at 619-354-8051.

Signees,



Shane Harris (REV.)

President, People's Association of Justice Advocates



Mursel Sabir

Afghan Community Leader/Student



Tariq Kohgadai

Afghan Community Leader/Business Owner



Sana Hashemi

Organizer of Stop Killing Afghans San Diego March

CC: Supervisor Joel Anderson of County District 2, Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer of County District Three, Jewish Family Services, International Rescue Committee San Diego, Catholic Charities, San Diego City Councilmember Monica Montgomery-Steppe, San Diego City Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera, San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, NAACP San Diego, and the San Diego County Office of Refugee Coordination. More interested parties are being cc'd and included but not listed here.

