

04 Dec. 2022

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing this letter asking that charges against Abdul Wasi Safi of illegal entry into the United States be dropped, and that he be reunited with his brother in Houston while his application for asylum is considered.

As you know, Wasi served as a second lieutenant in the Afghan Special Forces, and he went into hiding for a year after the Taliban took over in August 2021 before he was able to sneak out of the country. His service and, in particular his affiliation with the Special Forces, put him in grave danger of arrest and summary execution should he be deported back to Afghanistan. Since U.S. forces left behind biometric data and other records of those who served in the Afghan Special Forces, it would not take much for the Taliban to uncover Wasi's military history, if he were to reenter Afghanistan.

I worked in Afghanistan for several years as a journalist for [REDACTED] Newspapers and [REDACTED]. I can attest that revenge killings are standard policy for the Taliban. I have Afghan friends who have been unable to get out of the country, and they too have gone into hiding, simply because of the fact that they worked for me or other western journalists 20 years ago. It is heart-breaking to get messages from them pleading for help and knowing there is absolutely nothing I can do.

Human Rights Watch reported last month that the Taliban have killed more than 100 former soldiers or officials who worked for the American-back government in Afghanistan. Many of these were from the lower ranks, and were killed because they lacked the protection of influential tribal leaders able to intervene with the Taliban on their behalf, the group reported.

I urge you to release Abdul Wasi Safi and allow him to remain in the United States while his application for amnesty is considered. To send him back to Afghanistan would be to sign his death warrant. Considering the service his brother gave to U.S. forces and Wasi's own service to the government that our country backed for 20 years, it is the least we can do. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Newspapers, Afghanistan 2001-2002
[REDACTED], Afghanistan 2008-2010