



Re: Abdul Wasi Safi

To: U.S. Atty James T. Ward, U.S. Atty Ashley C. Hoff

5 DECEMBER 2022

Dear U.S. Attorneys Ward and Hoff, et al,

My name is [REDACTED] I am a U.S. citizen, residing in [REDACTED] and I am an award-winning journalist and photographer with 15 years of experience covering conflict, war, and humanitarian crises around the world. I am also a U.S. Army combat veteran, having served a one-year tour in the environs of Mosul, Iraq, from 2004-2005 as a combat engineer. As a reporter, I completed multiple combat embeds with the U.S. Army, the Marines, and Afghan troops engaged in heavy fighting in the Helmand, Wardak, and Kandahar Provinces of Afghanistan from 2009-2011. Back home in the U.S., I have covered veterans issues for more than a decade. All of this is to say: I have lived America's post-9/11 wars on the front lines and at home for most of my adult life, have lost far too many friends to them, and have a visceral sense of their costs and consequences, especially for the people we left behind—people like Abdul Wasi Safi.

I am writing this letter to urge you to dismiss the criminal charges against Abdul Wasi Safi, a man who put his life on the line to fight alongside U.S. troops in his home country of Afghanistan, and who was forced to risk his life yet again to seek safety and refuge after the Taliban victory.

I knew Abdul Wasi Safi's brother, Sami, in Afghanistan when I worked there as a [REDACTED]. Men like Sami kept me alive and risked everything to do it, for little money and out of a sense that helping people like me tell the world about their country's plight was vitally important. In the field, Afghan soldiers like Abdul Wasi Safi also kept me alive. I have read about Abdul Wasi Safi's service in the ANSF, his escape from Taliban-controlled Afghanistan under threat of death, and of his grueling journey to the U.S.—a journey that should have happened on an airplane and been met on arrival with a welcome party of supporters waiting to ease his passage into a new, safe life. The accounts of Abdul Wasi Safi's wartime service, escape, and journey to the U.S. speak to his extraordinary courage and integrity; our country owes him a safe harbor and a debt of gratitude—not the humiliating and painful ordeal of a criminal prosecution.

The Taliban security forces in Afghanistan are hunting down, jailing, torturing, and murdering members of the former government's security forces. I know from my reporting that members of the special forces, like Abdul Wasi Safi, are priority targets of recriminatory violence. It is my firm opinion as a veteran of the U.S. military and of the Global War on Terror, and as someone who spent years covering Afghanistan, that our country failed Abdul Wasi Safi and thousands like him when we withdrew from Afghanistan without a plan to help our most vulnerable allies escape. That can't be fixed now, but you can fix the dilemma that Abdul Wasi Safi finds himself in—and I urge you to do so.

