



**The Quaker Centre
1 Oakley Gardens
Downhead Park
Milton Keynes
MK15 9BH**

Iain Stewart MP, Milton Keynes South
House of Commons

11th February 2022

Dear Mr Stewart

Starvation in Afghanistan

The Quakers of Milton Keynes Quaker Meeting are most concerned about the dreadful plight of the people of Afghanistan. The United Nations Development Programme has reported that 97% of the population are now below the poverty line. On the Today programme, last week, John Simpson reported that everyone fears starvation. He said the Taliban are so desperate about food shortages, they have said they will enter into discussions to ease social restrictions on the Afghan people, if they receive aid.

The population also need help to keep warm in the freezing winter conditions. They need warm clothes, stoves and firewood.

A charity worker who has worked in Afghanistan, speaking on the Today programme, encouraged people to ask the Government to lift sanctions and ask banks to unfreeze the money belonging to Afghan people.

Last November, in reply to an urgent request to help the people of Afghanistan, one of our members received a letter from the Foreign Office. In this letter they say that Afghanistan is a priority to the UK and that the UK has played a leading role in the UN to secure safe passage, access to humanitarian aid and maintaining human rights. The UK has also increased aid to Afghanistan.

This is good, but it is clearly not enough. The situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated and momentous action is required.

We are requesting that you appeal to Government to put aside political concerns so that we can help an entire nation on the brink of starvation. It is most urgent that they lift sanctions, ask banks to unfreeze money and do what they can to help the Afghan population, who yet again, are largely the innocent victims of an international power struggle.

We urge you to ask the Government to lift sanctions. Sanctions on the Taliban have been put in place to support human rights, like the right of girls to receive education; however, the right to life surely trumps everything else and most of the Afghan people risk losing their lives without outside help.

If we do not act urgently to save a starving nation, we share the responsibility of many lives lost.

Yours sincerely,

Don Rowe and Jim Iley

Co- clerks, Milton Keynes Quaker Meeting

Cc Ben Everitt MP, Milton Keynes North