



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## Women for Afghan Women Announces the Resignation of Executive Director Najia Nasim

*Women for Afghan Women (WAW) bids farewell to a brave leader after ten years of service*

(New York, NY) September 5, 2023 – After ten extraordinary years of dedicated service to [Women for Afghan Women \(WAW\)](#), Najia Nasim has decided to step down from her position as Executive Director of WAW at the end of September 2023.

WAW's board of directors, staff, and clients are beyond grateful for the leadership, skill, passion, and commitment that Najia Nasim has brought to WAW throughout her tenure. The organization is saddened to say farewell, after a decade of her tremendous service and contributions to serving Afghan women and girls.

Najia assumed the position of WAW Executive Director in 2019, after five years as Country Director in Afghanistan. She skillfully led the organization through a time of unprecedented and unexpected challenges, including the devastating health crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic; the upheaval resulting from the US troop withdrawal and the subsequent fall of Afghanistan to the Taliban; the mass exodus of Afghan refugees to the US and other Western countries; the outright Taliban ban on education for women; and Taliban prohibition on women working for NGOs in Afghanistan.

The events of the past few years have shaken and reshaped the future of Afghanistan, Afghan women, and our organization. Despite all these difficulties, under Najia's leadership, WAW was not only able to survive but thrive. The organization has expanded its services in the United States and position itself as the largest service provider to refugee returnees and internally displaced individuals in Afghanistan.

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021 forced Najia and many members of WAW's high-risk staff to flee Afghanistan, making this the second time in her life that Najia was made a refugee by conflict in her homeland. Despite the arduous challenges to the life and future of the organization and her own traumatic exit from Afghanistan, Najia refused to give up.

In the midst of the Taliban confiscating many of WAW's resources, threatening staff, and shuttering the organization's women's protection centers, Najia worked day and night with board and senior staff to adapt, assign, and refocus whatever remained to establish new programs and operations, and literally rebuild the organization from the ground up in Afghanistan.

Thanks to Najia's leadership, today, the organization is now fully functioning with new leadership, 580 staff, and reinvented humanitarian and other operations in Afghanistan. In the United States, WAW has stabilized into a vast expansion of its programs. Its community center model in Virginia is based on the successes we have achieved serving Afghan and other immigrant communities in New York.

Najia leaves behind a dedicated and professional staff, as she noted in her resignation letter to her staff on May 15th:

*"While I am deeply saddened to leave WAW after spending the last decade with all of you, I trust your amazing capabilities to take this organization to the next level of success. You have shown leadership and unwavering commitment during the most difficult of times. The memories and the relationships I have built during my time at WAW are gifts for which I am most grateful. WAW is a place to learn, to serve, and to bring tangible, lifesaving results, and positive change to the lives of thousands of people. Thank you."*



WAW's board, staff, and clients thank Najia for her service and ten-year commitment. She has steered the organization through extraordinary achievements and triumphs, as well as losses and tragedies. The organization bids her farewell with deep appreciation, admiration, and respect for her professional acumen, values-driven leadership, and profound personal commitment to WAW's mission to save, protect, and empower Afghan women, girls, and their families.

Najia's final day working with WAW will be **September 30**, but she will remain a member of the WAW family and an ally in the organization's evolving work.

Leading consultant and coach, and former Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of USA for UNHCR – The UN Refugee Agency, **Anne-Marie Grey**, will act as WAW's Interim Executive Director as the board and organization seek to recruit a suitable replacement for Najia Nasim.

In addition to her role at USA for UNHCR, Anne-Marie Grey has had over 30 years of leadership experience in the United States and internationally, including various leadership positions with Save the Children, UNICEF, and Share Our Strength, the National Museum of Australia, and the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. She completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees at the Australian National University and holds a post-graduate certificate in Non-Profit Management from Georgetown University. She has authored two books on sponsorship marketing and is a frequent international speaker on various international development, strategic partnership, resource mobilization, and leadership topics.

**For press related inquiries contact: Sabena Chaudhry**

Women for Afghan Women Communications & Advocacy Manager  
158-24 73rd Ave., Fresh Meadows, New York 11366  
Tel: 718.591.2434 | E-mail [sabena@womenforafghanwomen.org](mailto:sabena@womenforafghanwomen.org)

Women for Afghan Women (WAW) is a grassroots, non-profit organization dedicated to securing and protecting the rights of disenfranchised Afghan women and girls in Afghanistan and New York, particularly their rights to develop their individual potential, to self-determination, and to be represented in all areas of life: political, social, cultural, and economic. WAW advocates for women's rights and challenges the norms that underpin gender-based violence wherever opportunities arise to influence attitudes and bring about change.

[www.womenforafghanwomen.org](http://www.womenforafghanwomen.org)