

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 18, 2011

████████████████████  
Consul General  
████████████████████  
████████████████████  
████████████████████

Dear Consul General ██████████,

We are writing in reference to the B-2 nonimmigrant visa application of Ms. Malalai Joya. Ms. Joya is a prominent women's rights activist and a former member of the Afghan parliament. She was scheduled to come to the United States on March 20, 2011, but her visa request was denied. We respectfully ask for a second meeting with Ms. Joya for a full reconsideration.

On March 20, Ms. Joya was scheduled to begin a three-week U.S. tour to discuss an updated edition of her memoir, *A Woman Among Warlords*. In 2010, Ms. Joya was named one of TIME magazine's 100 most influential people in the world and is widely regarded as a rare symbol of hope for Afghanistan's future. Ms. Joya's memoir has been translated into over a dozen languages, and she has toured widely including Australia, the UK, Canada, Norway, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, and the Netherlands in support of the book over the past two years. Events featuring Malalai Joya are planned from March 20 until April 10 in New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., Maryland, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington and California.

Ms. Joya has visited the United States before and has always gone back to Afghanistan, despite the risks and threats she faces at home. Ms. Joya's ties to her country of residence are strong and it is our understanding that she has no intention of staying in the United States beyond the period of time that covers her speaking engagements.

We were therefore distressed to learn that the reason for the denial of visa was that she is "unemployed" and "lives underground." Ms. Joya's activism in Afghan politics and her conviction to stand up against warlords and fundamentalists in Afghanistan have resulted in five assassination attempts. Despite these challenges, Ms. Joya has continued her efforts to be a courageous voice in a world where women's voices are brutally suppressed.


We respectfully request a full reconsideration of Ms. Joya's visa application. We look forward to hearing from you.

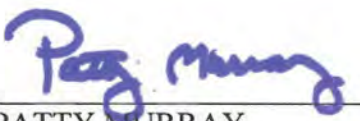
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


  
JIM McDERMOTT  
U.S. Representative

  
PATRICK LEAHY  
U.S. Senator

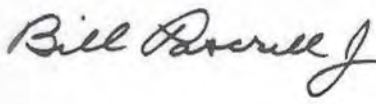
  
JAY INSLEE  
U.S. Representative


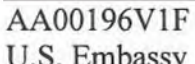
  
PATTY MURRAY  
U.S. Senator


  
KEITH ELLISON  
U.S. Representative

  
BERNARD SANDERS  
U.S. Senator

  
PETER WELCH  
U.S. Representative

  
BILL PASCRELL  
U.S. Representative

**Name on Passport:** Malaalay Joya  
**Date of birth:**   
**Passport number:**   
**Visa application number:** AA00196V1F  
**Location of Interview:** U.S. Embassy

  
BETTY McCOLLUM  
U.S. Representative