

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 30, 2021

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

We write today to ask for your attention to the case of American citizen and Illinoisan Mark Frerichs. Mr. Frerichs has been missing from Afghanistan since January 31, 2020 and is believed to have been kidnapped by members of the Taliban, Haqqani Network or their affiliates. As the duration of his captivity stretches to over a year, his family is understandably distressed about his well-being and interested in the efforts underway to secure his return.

As questions linger regarding the future of American forces in Afghanistan, we are increasingly concerned that we may be losing our largest point of leverage to ensure our American hostages in Afghanistan and Pakistan, including Mark Frerichs, are safely returned home to their families. As our Nation's chief representative on foreign affairs, we urge you to examine this case and ensure that the release of Mark Frerichs and other American hostages be prioritized in future negotiations with the Taliban. We also ask that you keep Mr. Frerichs' family apprised of efforts to secure his release.

To that end, we request a brief on the latest developments in Mr. Frerichs' case from Ambassador Khalilzad, Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, with input from the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs and the Hostage Recovery Fusion Cell. Additionally, we appreciate any clarity you can provide on the diplomatic options that remain for Mr. Frerichs' return and how they factor into decisions regarding the future of U.S. involvement in Afghanistan. Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working with you to ensure all Americans return home from Afghanistan.

Sincerely,



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator

