



PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

Pray for the Persecuted Christians in AFGHANISTAN

Remember the prisoners as if chained with them - those who are mistreated - since you yourselves are in the Body also.

(Hebrews 13:3)



Total Population: 38,928,346

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: 0,1% – **Evangelical Witness: <0,1%**

Death Rate: 12.7/1000 per year: Just today: 1,354

The Taliban Announce Interim Government in Afghanistan Filled with Hardliners

Afghan Christians Fear Strict Enforcement of Sharia Law Under Taliban Rule

09/08/2021 Washington D.C. (International Christian Concern) - International Christian Concern (ICC) has learned that the Taliban have announced an interim government for Afghanistan filled with hardline figures from the group's rule in the 1990s. For Afghanistan's religious minorities and the international community, the announcement of the interim government confirms fears that the Taliban will not respect the rights of minorities or women.

On Tuesday, September 7, Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's spokesman, announced the formation of an interim governing cabinet. While Mujahid emphasized that the appointments would be temporary, he did not clarify how long the interim cabinet would serve.

The U.S. State Department expressed concern over the makeup of the interim cabinet, specifically highlighting the lack of women and minorities to appointed positions. The U.S. State Department also noted the troubling track record of many of the men appointed to positions of power in the interim cabinet.

Mullah Hasan Akhund was appointed the Taliban's interim prime minister.

Hasan Akhund headed the Taliban government in Kabul in the last years of its rule in the 1990s, overseeing a regime of intense oppression.

Prior to the invasion of U.S.-led forces, the Taliban ruled Afghanistan through an unelected leadership council that brutally enforced the group's fundamentalist interpretation of Sharia. Many hope the Taliban's new government will soften its stance on Sharia and eventually form a more inclusive government.

"We are not taking them at their word; we're going to take them at their deeds," U.S. Undersecretary of State, Victoria Nuland, told the media last week. In a statement following the announcement of the new Taliban government, the U.S. State Department said, "The world is watching closely."

For the country's religious minorities, the official establishment of the Taliban government has them bracing for increased oppression and persecution. Afghan Christians in particular fear the Taliban's strict enforcement of Sharia.

Afghanistan's Christian community is almost exclusively comprised of converts from Islam. Some estimate the Christian population to be between 8,000 and 12,000, making it one of the country's largest religious minority groups. Due to extreme persecution, however, the Christian community remains largely closeted and hidden from public eye.

Their status as converts makes Afghan Christians direct targets for persecution by both extremist groups and society in general. In Afghanistan, leaving Islam is considered extremely shameful and converts can face dire consequences if their conversion is discovered.

In many cases, known Christians must flee Afghanistan or risk being killed. According to the Taliban's ideology, Afghanistan is a Muslim country and non-Muslims must leave Afghanistan or accept second class status. For Christians, coming from convert backgrounds, the Taliban will consider them apostates and subject them to Sharia's deadliest consequences.