

Afghanistan: Conditions for Hazaras and other religious minorities

SEPTEMBER 2021

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Research Timeframe

The earliest source dates from 1998 and the most recent sources dates from 2021.

Sources consulted

All web sources were consulted in SEPTEMBER 2021.

1. International Organizations

- United Nations – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: “Over a Century of Persecution: Massive Human Rights Violation Against Hazaras in Afghanistan”, February 2019
<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Racism/SR/Call/mhhasrat.pdf>
- Human Rights Watch – “Afghanistan: The Massacre in Mazar-i Sharif”, November 1998
https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/afghan/Afrepor0-03.htm#P186_38364
- Human Rights Watch – “Afghanistan: Shia Bombing Spotlights Need to Protect”, 21 November 2016
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/11/21/afghanistan-shia-bombing-spotlights-need-protect#>
- Minority Rights Group International – World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Hazaras
<https://minorityrights.org/minorities/hazaras/>

2. Government sources

- Department of State – “2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan”, 30 March 2021
<https://www.state.gov/reports/2020-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/afghanistan/>
- Department of State – “2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan”, 11 March 2020
<https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/afghanistan/>
- UK Parliament – Hazara Research Collective – Written Evidence: “International Relations and Defence Committee: The UK and Afghanistan, Call for Evidence”, 6 September 2020
<https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/11165/pdf/>
- United States Commission on International Religious Freedom – “2021 Annual Report – Afghanistan Chapter,” April 2021
<https://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/2021-05/Afghanistan%20Chapter%20AR2021.pdf>

3. NGOS and think tanks

- Amnesty International – “Afghanistan: Taliban responsible for brutal massacre of Hazara men – new investigation”, 19 August 2021
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/08/afghanistan-taliban-responsible-for-brutal-massacre-of-hazara-men-new-investigation/>
- International Federation for Human Rights – “UN Should Investigate Deadly Attacks on Afghan Civilians”, 2 July 2021
<https://www.fidh.org/en/region/asia/afghanistan/un-should-investigate-deadly-attacks-on-afghan-civilians>
- Yale Macmillan Center, “Protecting Afghanistan’s Hazara People Under Taliban Rule”, 26 August 2021
<https://macmillan.yale.edu/news/protecting-afghanistans-hazara-people-under-taliban-rule>
- David Treyster, New York Law School Journal of Human Rights Vol. 18:3, “The Taliban May No Longer Control Afghanistan, but Their Persecution of Religious Minorities Will Forever Remain a Stain on Global History”, Summer 2002
https://digitalcommons.nyls.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1504&context=journal_of_human_rights

4. Media

- United Nations – UN News: “Afghanistan: Record number of women and children killed or wounded”, 26 July 2021
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/07/1096382>
- The Guardian, “‘Taliban sharpening their knives’: Hazara community in Australia terrified for relatives in Afghanistan”, 17 August 2021
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/18/taliban-sharpening-their-knives-hazara-community-in-australia-terrified-for-relatives-in-afghanistan>
- Reuters, “Fears abroad for fate of Hazara minority as Taliban take control”, 17 August 2021
<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/fears-abroad-fate-hazara-minority-taliban-take-control-2021-08-17/>
- Al Jazeera, Saadullah Akhtar, “Fleeing Afghan Hazaras face uncertain future in Pakistan”, 20 September 2021
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/20/fleeing-afghan-hazaras-face-uncertain-future-in-pakistan>
- New Delhi Television, “Taliban Blows Up Bamiyan Statue of Hazara Leader They Executed In 1995”, 18 August 2021
<https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/afghanistan-crisis-taliban-blow-up-hazara-leaders-statue-after-afghanistan-takeover-2513004>
- The Hill, “Afghanistan’s Christians are turning off phones and going into hiding,” 23 August 2021

<https://thehill.com/opinion/international/568992-afghanistans-christians-are-turning-off-phones-and-going-into-hiding>

Findings

The findings in this report are presented beginning with United States governmental sources, moving to international organizations and ending with NGOs and media outlets.

1. **Hazara people are reportedly regularly subjected to discrimination, targeted violent attacks and killings based on their ethnic and religious identity.**

According to sources, the Hazara people who serve in government are regularly persecuted in the assignments given them as they are given insignificant and more dangerous assignments.

- “Ethnic tensions continued to result in conflict and killings. Societal discrimination against Shia Hazaras continued in the form of extortion of money through illegal taxation, forced recruitment and forced labor, physical abuse, and detention. According to NGOs, **the government frequently assigned Hazara police officers to symbolic positions with little authority within the Ministry of Interior. NGOs also reported Hazara ANDSF officers were more likely than non-Hazara officers to be posted to insecure areas of the country.** During the year ISIS-K continued attacks against Shia, predominately Hazara, communities. On March 6, gunmen attacked a ceremony in Kabul attended primarily by Shia Hazaras, killing 32. On October 24, a suicide bomber killed 40 persons and wounded 72 others at an educational center in a Hazara neighborhood of Kabul. ISIS-K claimed responsibility. Many of the victims were between the ages of 15 and 26.”

Source: United States Department of State: [“2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan”](#), 30 March 2021, last accessed 17 September 2021.

According to sources, international aid and general human rights have been directed away from predominantly Hazara areas.

- “Despite the on-paper equality of the Hazara population, the ongoing acts of persecution do not reflect those of a state which is protecting minority groups from discrimination. According to an article by Dr Melissa Kerr, there is even a lack of basic resources available to the Hazara people; **there is significant evidence to suggest that aid has been intentionally directed away from predominantly Hazara areas. In areas where their population is dense, such as Daikundi, there is minimal access to electricity, essential services, running water or even basic infrastructure; in winter, much of the population of Daikundi is trapped in the mountainous region and many die simply from the lack of food, cold, and other effects of their abject poverty.**”

Source: UK Parliament – Hazara Research Collective – Written Evidence: [“International Relations and Defence Committee: The UK and Afghanistan,](#)

[Call for Evidence](#)", 6 September 2020, quoting Kerr, Melissa (2014) The illumination of marginality: How ethnic Hazaras in Bamyan, Afghanistan, perceive the lack of electricity as discrimination. *Central Asian Survey* 33, (4): 449

<https://www-proquestcom.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/docview/1643234831?accountid=8630>,

last accessed 20 September 2021

- “Road blockage is another strategy of the Taliban to putting the Hazara locals in acute pressure. **By blocking and banning the routes, the Taliban control almost all Hazaras’ movement and traveling.** The road blockage had begun when the Taliban started their campaign to rule Afghanistan in mid of 1990s. Since [2012] it has been intensified. The road blockage and siege of the Hazara area are the most effective tools of the Taliban either to subjugate the people or to attain their political and economic demand. Being double victimized in such circumstance, the Hazaras are used as scapegoat of both the Taliban and government.”

[...]

“According to many sources, Hazaras are **still treated as “second-class citizens”**, being denied basic services and political rights for years. Those who have field observation and close interaction with Afghan politics and society certainly approve such unpleasant reality in Afghanistan. Discrimination is deep-rooted and some high officials are deeply involved. A big discrimination related scandal which a high ranking staff from Afghan president office was involved in was disclosed by the Media. **Despite its sensitivity and promise for just due process, the government disregarded it soon after that.**”

Source: United Nations – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: “[Over a Century of Persecution: Massive Human Rights Violation Against Hazaras in Afghanistan](#)”, February 2019, last accessed 20 September 2021

According to sources, Hazara people are regularly the victim of violent attacks by ISIS-K and the Taliban, resulting in the deaths of many in Hazara communities.

- “Ethnic tensions continued to result in conflict and killings. Societal discrimination against Shia Hazaras continued in the form of extortion of money through illegal taxation, forced recruitment and forced labor, physical abuse, and detention. According to NGOs, the government frequently assigned Hazara police officers to symbolic positions with little authority within the Ministry of Interior. NGOs also reported Hazara ANDSF officers were more likely than non-Hazara officers to be posted to insecure areas of the country. **During the year ISIS-K continued attacks against Shia, predominately Hazara, communities. On March 6, gunmen attacked a ceremony in Kabul attended primarily by Shia Hazaras, killing 32. On October 24, a suicide bomber killed 40 persons and wounded 72 others at an educational center in a Hazara neighborhood of Kabul. ISIS-K claimed responsibility. Many of the victims were between the ages of 15 and 26.**”

Source: United States Department of State: "[2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#)", 30 March 2021, last accessed 17 September 2021.

- "Ethnic tensions between various groups continued to result in conflict and killings. Societal discrimination against Shia Hazaras continued along class, race, and religious lines in the form of extortion of money through illegal taxation, forced recruitment and forced labor, physical abuse, and detention. According to NGOs, the government frequently assigned Hazara ANP officers to symbolic positions with little authority within the Ministry of Interior. NGOs also reported Hazara ANDSF officers were more likely than non-Hazara officers to be posted to insecure areas of the country. During the year ISIS-K continued escalating attacks against Shia, predominately Hazara, communities. **In August, ISIS-K attacked a wedding hall of a young Hazara couple in a predominately Shia Hazara neighborhood of Kabul, killing 91 persons, including 15 children, and wounding 143 others. Although the bride and groom survived, many of their friends and family (most of them women, children, and other civilians) were among the dead and wounded. Hazaras were among the casualties, but most victims were non-Hazara Shias and Sunnis. ISIS-K cited a sectarian motive for the attack.**"

Source: United States Department of State: "[2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan](#)", 11 March 2020, last accessed 20 September 2021

- "[ISIS] Attacks have **targeted Hazara villages, places of worship, schools, roads, weddings, gyms and markets** to maximize civilian casualties."
[...]
"This report demonstrates that Hazaras continue to face what amounts to genocide under international law. **Over 8,000 Hazaras were systematically killed by the Taliban in the Mazar-i-Sharif massacre of 1998. Today, targeted attacks have increased exponentially since the withdrawal of NATO in 2014 and the Shi'a Hazara minority of Afghanistan are subject to daily violence by both Daesh and the Taliban.** Attacks are targeting Hazara villages, places of worship, schools, roads, weddings, gyms and markets to maximize civilian casualties: nowhere is safe. Due to the violence they face, many Hazaras have had to flee Afghanistan as refugees. However they find little respite, as they endure targeted attacks in Pakistan and systemic discrimination in Iran."
[...]
"In 1998, the local population of Mazar-e-Sharif fought back against the Taliban invasion, resulting in many Taliban casualties. In retribution, the Taliban slaughtered eight thousand civilians, who were massacred systematically in a 6-day campaign in Mazar-e-Sharif, targeting primarily Hazaras. **Similar killings occurred throughout Afghanistan such as Yakawlang in Bamiyan and Rabatak in Samangan provinces. Other than massacres, the Taliban also**

destroyed and targeted the cultural identity of the Hazara. They detonated the ancient Buddha statues in Bamiyan and destroyed hundreds of historically significant artifacts and cultural sites, such as the mausoleum built in the memory of Ali Mazari, a political figure considered as the spiritual father of the Hazaras.”

[...]

“With the rise of ISIS’s presence in Afghanistan, the Hazaras have been systematically targeted by suicide bombers across the country, including in the capital of Kabul. Notably, **suicide bombers targeted a peaceful Hazara demonstration on 23 July 2016 and a Shia Ashura religious festival later that year, killing and injuring hundreds.** The attack on peaceful protesters was the deadliest in Kabul since 2011 and highlighted the precarious security of Hazaras even in major cities. Further, **on August 4, 2017, over 800 militants (including both ISIS and the Taliban) attacked Mirza Walang, a Hazara village in the mountains of north-central Afghanistan, killing and dismembering more than 50 civilians including women and children.** Despite pleas from locals, the Afghan government did not send reinforcement to the region and have not provided adequate security in Hazara-populated areas.”

Source: UK Parliament – Hazara Research Collective – Written Evidence: [“International Relations and Defence Committee: The UK and Afghanistan, Call for Evidence”](#), 6 September 2020, last accessed 20 September 2021

| MAJOR ATTACKS AGAINST HAZARAS (2014-2018) | | | | | |
|---|----------------|---|-------------|-------|--------|
| TYPE | CLAIMED BY | PLACE | DATE | DEATH | INJURY |
| Massive Attack | Taliban | Jaghori- Ghazni ⁴⁹ | 07/11/2018 | 90 | 25 |
| Massive Attack | Taliban | Malistan- Ghazni ⁵⁰ | 09/11/2018 | 10 | 15 |
| Massive Attack | Taliban | Urozgan Khaas -Urozgan | 27/10/2018 | 31 | 7 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Wrestling club- Qala Nazer, Kabul | 05/09/2018 | 35 | 95 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Mawoud Educational Center-Kabul | 15/08/2018 | 50 | 67 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Tazkira center – Mahtab Qala-Kabul | 22/04/2018 | 69 | 120 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Nowruz festival- Karte-Sakhi –Kabul | 21/03/2018 | 33 | 65 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Baba Mazari Commemoration-Kabul | 09/03/2018 | 9 | 18 |
| IED | IS-KP | Kosar Danish Educational center Kabul | 7/03/2018 | - | 8 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Tebyan Center- Qala Nazer-Kabul | 28/12/2017 | 52 | 90 |
| IED | Unknown | Al Mahdi Library, Jebryeel City-Herat | 21/12/2017 | 5 | 15 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Imam Zaman Mosque – Pol- e Khoshk Kabul | 20/10/2017 | 56 | 55 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Qala-e Fathullah, Kabul | 27/09/2017 | 5 | 20 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Imam Zaman Mosque- north Kabul | 25/08/2017 | 40 | 95 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Jawadeya Mosque- BekrAbad- Herat | 01/08/2017 | 50 | 80 |
| Massive Attack | Taliban& IS-KP | MirzaUlang, Sayed district - Sare-Pol | 3-6/08/2017 | 50 | - |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Al Zahra Mosque-Qala Nazer-Kabul | 15/06/2017 | 4 | 9 |
| Taking hostage | IS-KP | Tala-wa-Barfak – Baghlan province | 06/01/2017 | 13 | - |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Bager Ul Alom Mosque - Kabul | 21/11/2016 | 40 | 80 |
| IED | IS-KP | Balkh district, Balkh Province | 12/10/2016 | 14 | 70 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Sakhi Mosque - Karte-Sakhi –Kabul | 11/10/2016 | 18 | 58 |
| Suicide Attack | IS-KP | Dehmazang - demonstrator rally- Kabul | 23/07/2016 | 85 | 500 |
| Taking hostage | Taliban& IS-KP | Shajoy District- Zabul province | 23/02/2015 | 7 | - |
| Taking hostage | | Badga-Ghoor province | 25/07/2014 | 14 | - |

[...]

“Taking hostage, kidnapping and abduction of Hazara people by the Taliban and IS-KP have also been increased in recent years. Although it occurs occasionally, but the extent of recent incidents has made many international observers and human rights organization to be quite sensitive. One of the horrific case took place in Zabul province where **31 Hazaras were abducted**

in 2015. According to Washington post report, the masked gunmen collected identity cards of the kidnapped Hazaras at the first and then snatched their cellphones. Later on, they separated males from females and Sunni Muslims from Shiite Muslims. **Out of those kidnapped Hazaras, seven of them were beheaded.**”

Source: United Nations – Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights: “[Over a Century of Persecution: Massive Human Rights Violation Against Hazaras in Afghanistan](#)”, February 2019, last accessed 20 September 2021

- “On November 21, 2016, a suicide bomber killed at least 32 worshippers, including children, and injured 50 others, at a Shia mosque in Kabul during observance of the religious ceremony of Arbaein. Since July, a wave of sectarian suicide attacks has injured or killed more than 500 members of the Shia community. Insurgents who affiliate themselves with the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) claimed responsibility for this attack, their fourth on gatherings by Afghanistan’s Shia community since July 2016. The group also said they carried out two attacks during the Shia ceremony of Ashura on October 11, in Kabul, and on October 12, in the northern province of Balkh, that altogether killed at least 32 people. **The group also claimed a July 23 attack against a demonstration by mainly Hazara Shia in Kabul, killing at least 85 and injuring 413, the deadliest attack in Afghanistan on civilians since 2002.**”

Human Rights Watch – “[Afghanistan: Shia Bombing Spotlights Need to Protect](#)”, 21 November 2016, last accessed 20 September 2021

- “**Taliban fighters massacred nine ethnic Hazara men after taking control of Afghanistan’s Ghazni province last month**, Amnesty International said today. On-the-ground researchers spoke to eyewitnesses who gave harrowing accounts of the killings, which took place between 4-6 July in the village of Mundarakht, Malistan district. **Six of the men were shot and three were tortured to death, including one man who was strangled with his own scarf and had his arm muscles sliced off.** The brutal killings likely represent a tiny fraction of the total death toll inflicted by the Taliban to date, as the group have cut mobile phone service in many of the areas they have recently captured, controlling which photographs and videos are then shared from these regions.”

Source: Amnesty International – “[Afghanistan: Taliban responsible for brutal massacre of Hazara men – new investigation](#)”, 19 August 2021, last accessed 20 September 2021

- “As you know, on June 8, 2021, insurgents carried out an attack on civilian deminers working for the Halo Trust in Baghlan province, **with reports that the attackers were seeking out members of the Hazara Shia community.** This followed the May 8, 2021 massacre of schoolgirls as they were leaving

the premises of Sayed-Ul-Shuhada school in Dasht-e Barchi precinct of Kabul, a predominantly Hazara-Shia neighbourhood. These horrific attacks came after other attacks on civilians including a suicide bombing at Kabul University that killed at least 19 people, mostly students, and injured 22 others in November 2020; an attack at a maternity hospital in Dasht-e Barchi in May 2020 which killed 24 civilians including 11 mothers and a midwife, while newborns and other patients and staff were injured; and the attack on a Sikh temple in March 2020 that killed 26 civilians and injured 11 others. In addition, since September 2020 there has been an increased targeting of human rights defenders, women rights defenders, and journalists.”

Source: International Federation for Human Rights – [“UN Should Investigate Deadly Attacks on Afghan Civilians”](#), 2 July 2021, last accessed on 20 September 2021

- “In 2021, as the Taliban have once again gained territory and consolidated power, Hazara civilians have been frequent targets of the Taliban and other militant groups, notably ISIL-KP (Islamic State in the Levant and Khorasan Province), a self-proclaimed branch of the Islamic State. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) documented(link is external) **20 attacks targeting Hazaras leaving 143 dead and 357 injured in the first half of 2021 alone.** Among these attacks was the car bombing (link is external) of the Sayed ul-Shuhada school in Kabul, timed just as female students were leaving for home. At least 90 civilians were killed, mostly Hazara schoolgirls (link is external) between the ages of 11 and 17.

Last month, Taliban fighters reportedly **conducted door-to-door killings (link is external) in the Malistan district, which is almost entirely populated by Hazaras.** In Malistan district in the eastern Ghazni province, nine ethnic Hazara men were tortured (link is external) and killed between July 4 and July 6, according to a report from Amnesty International.

The threat that the Hazara faces as the Taliban assume power, is potentially consistent with the legal definition of genocide, which boils down to “...acts [including killing] committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.” The violence against the Hazara appears to be on account of their ethnic identity and religious affiliation. If attacks continued along the lines established in the past, one might equally impute that they are being undertaken with an “intent to destroy.”

Source: Yale Macmillan Center, [“Protecting Afghanistan’s Hazara People Under Taliban Rule”](#), 26 August 2021, last accessed on 20 September 2021

- “UNAMA also recorded a resurgence of deliberate sectarian-motivated attacks against the Shi’a Muslim religious minority, most of whom also belong to the Hazara ethnic group, nearly all claimed by the Islamist extremist group ISIL-KP.”

Source: United Nations – UN News: “[Afghanistan: Record number of women and children killed or wounded](#)”, 26 July 2021, last accessed 20 September 2021

- A member of the Hazara ethnicity, the third-largest by population in Afghanistan, Ferozan and her family felt they would be under greater threat under the Taliban, which was accused of carrying out atrocities against Hazaras during their first stint in power between 1996 and 2001.
The armed group, which seized Mazar-i-Sharif on August 14 and took complete control of the capital Kabul a day later, **had targeted members of the Hazara ethnicity, most of whom are Shia Muslims, in a series of targeted massacres and bombings for decades.**
In August, human rights organization Amnesty International found evidence that Taliban fighters **had killed nine Hazara men after taking control of Ghazni province in July.**

Source: Al Jazeera, Saadullah Akhtar, “[Fleeing Afghan Hazaras face uncertain future in Pakistan](#)”, 20 September 2021, last accessed on 20 September 2021

- “In the years following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, **religious minorities and women in Afghanistan experienced violence and discrimination as armed groups struggled for territorial control** . . . Due to the absence of a constitution and the ongoing civil war, freedom of religion is determined primarily by the unofficial and unwritten policies of the Taliban. Therefore, freedom of religion is restricted severely. Afghanistan is divided between the Sunni Muslims, who make up 84% of the population, and Shi’a Muslims, who make up 15%. The Taliban reflect great religious intolerance by its continuous persecution of the Hazaras ethnic group, which is Shi’a Muslim. The Taliban are Sunni Muslims and followers of a strict conservative sect that considers the Shi’a to be infidels.
The Taliban enforced its strict interpretation of Islamic law, and, according to reports, public executions, floggings, and amputations took place weekly against those who violated the law. The Taliban established Islamic courts to judge criminal cases and resolve disputes. The courts dealt with all complaints, relying on the Taliban’s interpretation of Islamic law and punishments, as well as tribal customs.
Since they took control of Kabul in 1996, the Taliban has committed numerous human rights violations, particularly against the Hazaras. In September 1997, the **Taliban massacred 70 Hazara civilians in Quzelabad.** In August of 1998, the **Taliban carried out a systematic execution of 2,000 Hazara civilians because of their ethnic and religious identity.** The Taliban failed to distinguish between combatants and noncombatants. The Massacre began when Taliban troops entered the northern Afghanistan city of Mazar-i Sharif and shot at “anything that moved” in what witnesses described as a “killing frenzy.” In the days that followed, the troops conducted house-to-house searches, arresting and executing Hazara men and boys. Eyewitnesses reported that troops demanded they recite Sunni prayers to prove they were not Hazara. **Hundreds of Hazara men and boys were executed to prevent any attempts to mount resistance to the Taliban in the future.** Taliban troops also engaged in aerial bombardments and rocket

attacks on panicked citizens fleeing southward out of the city, toward the Alborz Mountain. **Women and girls in Mazar-i Sharif, were raped and abducted during the Taliban takeover of the city.** In the absence of a full-scale investigation, there is no way to know precisely how many Shi'a Muslims were killed in the weeks following the fall of Mazar-i Sharif to the Taliban. In May 2000, Taliban forces conducted a mass execution of civilian detainees near the Robatak Pass, which lies along the road connecting the towns of Tashkurgan and Pul-i Khumri. Thirty-one bodies were found at one site to the northwest of the pass. Twenty-six of the dead were positively identified as Shi'a Hazara civilians. Of the latter, all had been unlawfully detained for four months and some had been tortured before they were killed. The massacre in Yakaolang district began on January 8, 2001 and continued for four days. In the course of conducting search operations following the recapture of the district from two Hazara-based parties in the United Front, the Taliban detained about 300 civilian adult males, including staff members of local humanitarian organizations. **The men were herded to assembly points in the center of the district and several outlying areas, and then shot by firing squad in public view."**

Source: David Treyster, New York Law School Journal of Human Rights Vol. 18:3, "[The Taliban May No Longer Control Afghanistan, but Their Persecution of Religious Minorities Will Forever Remain a Stain on Global History](#)", Summer 2002, last accessed 23 September 2021.

2. **Other religious minorities present in Afghanistan are reportedly regularly subjected to violent attacks, extreme punishments, and general exclusion from society.**

- "The United Nations (UN) documented 8,820 civilian casualties (3,035 killed and 5,785 injured) in 2020, with some of the most brutal attacks targeting religious minorities. . . . The UN reported the Taliban were responsible for 45 percent of civilian casualties. While the Taliban rejected these findings and denied responsibility for or involvement in attacks targeting civilians, particularly religious minority communities, the Afghan government alleges that the **Taliban use Islamic militant groups as proxies and continue to target progovernment Muslim leaders, institutions, and leaders of other faiths throughout the country.** Although their use of antiminority rhetoric has diminished, reports indicate that the Taliban continue to exclude religious minorities and punish residents in areas under their control in accordance with their extreme interpretation of Islamic law.

During the current peace negotiations, the Taliban also refused to acknowledge or allow the integration of Shi'a jurisprudence in the current Afghan legal system, causing concern among Shi'a Muslims.

Although ISIS-K lost significant territorial control in 2020, it continued to target minority faiths and Muslims who it believes deviate from Islam. **Terrorist and criminal attacks against Sikh and Shi'a communities continued, targeting their leadership, neighborhoods, festivals, and houses of worship.** In March, a *gurdwara* (Sikh house of worship) in Kabul was attacked, killing 25 Sikhs—

including women and children—and causing many of the few Sikhs remaining in Afghanistan to flee. In March, ISIS-K once again attacked a memorial service held for a Shi'a Hazara leader, Abdul Ali Mazari, who was killed by the Taliban in 1995—killing 32 people and wounding over 50. In November, two roadside bombings perpetrated by ISIS-K killed 14 and injured 45 others in the Shi'a province of Bamiyan.”

Source: United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, “[2021 Annual Report – Afghanistan Chapter](#)”, April 2021, last accessed 23 September 2021.

- “Afghanistan’s Christians are estimated to number between 10,000 and 12,000. The vast majority of them are converts from Islam to Christianity. For decades they have largely practiced their faith underground, as conversion is considered a crime punishable by death under Sharia law. Yet, since the Taliban’s fall in 2001, the Christian community has not only been growing, it has become emboldened, in part because of the modicum of security leant by the U.S. presence on the ground. In 2019, as the number of children born to converts grew, dozens of Afghan Christians decided to include their religious affiliation on their national identity cards so that future generations wouldn’t have to hide their faith. Only about 30 Christians successfully made this change before the Taliban’s takeover this week. Now the United States’ highly criticized withdrawal has left Afghan Christians with no choice but to join those who cooperated with the U.S. and Afghan governments in attempting to hide. **The memories of public executions, floggings and amputations of Christians and other religious minorities under the Taliban’s previous rule remain vivid.** As the Taliban is reportedly already working to track down the known Christians on its list, some local church leaders are counseling their communities to stay inside their homes, even though they know the best and perhaps only long-term hope is to somehow flee the country. Other Christians are reportedly escaping to the hills in attempts to find safety. Some Christians on the ground have expressed that, with the takeover of Kabul, they expect to be killed, mafia-style. Although some reports say that the Taliban is already conducting targeted killings of Christians and other minorities found using public transportation, as well as executing anyone found with Bible software installed on their cell phones. Christians also fear for the safety of their children, with the Taliban already publicizing plans to “eradicate the ignorance of irreligion” by taking non-Muslim women and girls as sex slaves and forcing boys to serve as soldiers.”

Source: Kelsey Zorzi (President, U.N. NGO Committee on Freedom of Religion or Belief), The Hill, “[Afghanistan’s Christians are turning off phones and going into hiding](#)”, 23 August 2021, last accessed 23 September 2021.

- “In September 1999, **the Taliban issued decrees that forbade non-Muslims from building places of worship, forbade non-Muslims from criticizing**

Muslims, ordered non-Muslims to identify their houses by placing a yellow cloth on their rooftops, forbade non-Muslims from living in the same residence as Muslims, and required that non-Muslim women wear a yellow dress with a special mark so that Muslims could keep their distance.

In May 2001, the Taliban issued a decree that required Hindus to wear a yellow piece of cloth on their shirt pockets, saying it will shield them from religious police enforcing Islamic law. The main purpose for the measure, according to the Taliban, was to keep Hindus from being stopped by religious police, under the control of the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, and to prevent Muslims from claiming they are Hindu when violating religious laws . . .

Human Rights Watch said requiring Afghan Hindus to wear distinguishing marks is likely to have a stigmatizing effect and does not have an apparent protective function. Afghans, who expect to have dealings with officials already carry identification cards issued by the Interior Ministry that indicate their religion. Moreover, the identity of local Hindus is well-known in the communities where they live. . .”

Source: David Treyster, New York Law School Journal of Human Rights Vol. 18:3, “[The Taliban May No Longer Control Afghanistan, but Their Persecution of Religious Minorities Will Forever Remain a Stain on Global History](#)”, Summer 2002, last accessed 23 September 2021.