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**STATUS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN  
FOR THE 46<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW**

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## **Status of Human Rights in Afghanistan for the 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the Universal Periodic Review**

### **Introduction**

1. The European Centre for Law and Justice (ECLJ) is an international, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights around the world. The ECLJ also holds Special Consultative status before the United Nations Economic and Social Council. This report discusses the status of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (Afghanistan) for the 46<sup>th</sup> session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR).

### **Background**

2. Afghanistan is located in Southern Asia with a population of 39.2 million people.<sup>1</sup> 99.7% of the population identify as Muslim (84.7 - 89.7% Sunni, 10 - 15% Shia), and less than 0.3% as other.<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan was ranked as the ninth worst country for Christian persecution on the 2023 World Watch List, down from number one in 2022, and number two in 2021.<sup>3</sup> However, this drop in rankings does not indicate a decrease in persecution, but rather the fact that Christians had to flee for their lives after the Taliban took control.<sup>4</sup>

3. Afghanistan's previous review was held on January 21, 2019.<sup>5</sup> As a result of the review, Afghanistan received 259 recommendations, 236 of which it accepted.<sup>6</sup> In particular, Angola recommended that the Afghan government "[a]dopt specific measures to effectively protect freedom of belief for practitioners of minority religions," which Afghanistan supported.<sup>7</sup> Italy made a similar recommendation to "[i]ntensify efforts to protect and promote freedom of religion or belief and the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities," which Afghanistan supported.<sup>8</sup> Among the numerous recommendations to improve human rights protections for women and children, Egypt recommended the Afghan government "[c]ontinue efforts to combat trafficking in persons," which Afghanistan supported.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Moldova recommended that Afghanistan "[a]dopt and implement a national action plan to end child marriage," which Afghanistan supported.<sup>10</sup>

### **Legal Framework**

4. Afghanistan has faced an enormous shift in its legal and political framework since the collapse of its democratic government and the reemergence of the Taliban as the de facto ruler in 2021.<sup>11</sup> Upon its seizure of power, "the Taliban adamantly rejected [the country's 2004] constitution as an illegal entity and a product of the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan."<sup>12</sup> Instead, the Taliban announced they would temporarily rely on certain articles of Afghanistan's monarchical constitution from 1964 that are "not in conflict with Islamic Sharia (law)."<sup>13</sup>

5. Imposing an archaic brand of Sharia and tribal law on the populace, the Taliban's legal framework significantly regresses human rights and promotes, rather than protects against, oppressive policies relating to religious freedom, human trafficking, and child marriage, among others.

6. The Taliban's new Islamic "Emirate is a highly underspecified and undertheorized political system. The lack of interest in theorizing and defining the Emirate is a function of the

Taliban’s history.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, since the Taliban’s takeover of the country, the “whole legal system in Afghanistan is collapsing. ‘There are no standardized procedures or substantive statutes in criminal or civil matters that police, judges, or lawyers can follow.’”<sup>15</sup> With no codified legal infrastructure or coherent political system, the Taliban point to Sharia as the foundation of its rule.<sup>16</sup>

7. The Taliban’s enthusiastic implementation of Sharia law only further distorts Afghanistan’s already ambiguous law. Sharia, referring to the divine edicts of the Quran on moral and correct living, is subject to numerous conflicting interpretations.<sup>17</sup> Lacking a unified definition of Sharia law, the Taliban enforce its own uniquely brutal interpretation, which critics often decry as exceeding the prescriptions of traditional Sharia.<sup>18</sup> As such, there are no practically enforced domestic laws against religious persecution, human trafficking, or child marriage.

### *Religious Persecution*

8. Despite the Taliban’s rebuking international instruments that conflict with Sharia,<sup>19</sup> Afghanistan under the Taliban remains a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).<sup>20</sup> Under Article 18 of the ICCPR:

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.

2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.<sup>21</sup>

9. Moreover, Article 27 of the ICCPR states: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.”<sup>22</sup>

### *Human Trafficking*

10. Similarly, Afghanistan is still party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).<sup>23</sup> Article 32 of the CRC recognizes “the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.”<sup>24</sup> Likewise, Afghanistan is a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),<sup>25</sup> according to which “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.”<sup>26</sup>

### *Child Marriage*

11. Under the previous government, the official marriageable age in Afghanistan was sixteen years old for girls and eighteen years old for boys.<sup>27</sup>

12. Article 1 of the CRC defines a child to mean a “human being below the age of eighteen years.”<sup>28</sup> Taken in conjunction with Article 16 of CEDAW, which states, “[t]he betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect,”<sup>29</sup> Afghanistan is technically still bound to its international obligation to prohibit marriages between those younger than eighteen years.

13. However, it bears repeating that the Taliban’s conduct shows a complete disregard for the provisions of such agreements, with a lack of a formal withdrawal from such treaties being the only reason Afghanistan is still a party, albeit in name only. Mullah Nooruddin Turabi, one of the founders and current leaders of the Taliban, made this clear when he declared on the Taliban’s behalf: “No one will tell us what our laws should be. We will follow Islam and we will make our laws [based] on the Quran.”<sup>30</sup>

### **Religious Persecution**

14. Currently, there is no religious freedom in Afghanistan.<sup>31</sup> The Taliban have imposed an extremist interpretation of Islam on every facet of Afghanistan’s sociopolitical life.<sup>32</sup> This brand of Islam “is a shift . . . toward a more tailored and unwritten mixture of puritanical beliefs wrapped in Islamic sharia.”<sup>33</sup> Indeed, “[the Taliban] command[] that Islam dictate every aspect of daily life and considers Afghan society insufficiently Islamic and in need of re-Islamization — either by invitation or coercion.”<sup>34</sup> Resultantly, “Taliban authorities view anyone who has left Islam to have committed apostacy, a crime they believe should be punished by death.”<sup>35</sup>

15. ISIS affiliated groups within Afghanistan pose an additional threat to religious minorities. ISIS, engaged in an armed conflict with the Taliban for control of the country, orchestrated several terrorist attacks on the populace since the Taliban’s reinstatement, worsening the already dire humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup> From August 2021 to August 2022, approximately 700 civilians were killed and 1,406 wounded in Afghanistan by ISIS and other similar groups.<sup>37</sup> Most of these killings are attributable to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province (ISIS-K), who mainly targets ethnic and religious minorities.<sup>38</sup> Although the Taliban condemned the attacks and provided meager aid to victims, “there are few signs authorities are taking active or significant steps” to prevent future attacks.<sup>39</sup>

16. Afghanistan’s Hazara population, a minority ethnic group consisting of Shia and Sufi Muslims, were the central targets of at least thirteen terrorist attacks by ISIS.<sup>40</sup> Notably, an ISIS suicide bomber killed thirty-one people and injured eighty-seven others at the Seh Dokan Mosque in Mazar-e Sharif, one of Afghanistan’s largest Shia mosques, on April 21, 2022.<sup>41</sup> Earlier, on April 19, 2022, another ISIS suicide bomber killed six people and injured at least twenty others at the Hazara-majority Abdul Rahim Shahid High School in Kabul.<sup>42</sup> The same group killed nearly fifty students and injured over a hundred more at an all-girl’s Hazara-majority high school in May 2021.<sup>43</sup> Another suicide bomber killed twenty-four people and injured at least sixteen others at a maternity ward in a Shia-majority neighborhood.<sup>44</sup> “The attacks have also effectively excluded Hazara from participating in public life, practising their religion or accessing education.”<sup>45</sup> But the Taliban maintain that “all Afghans are equal in the sight of the law; there is no discrimination. The government has taken necessary measures for the security of Hazara and they are free to perform their rituals.”<sup>46</sup>

17. Afghan Christians, the largest non-Muslim minority religion in the country, are “almost exclusively comprised of converts from Islam,”<sup>47</sup> experience intense persecution, forcing them to either leave the country or go into hiding.<sup>48</sup> In its 2023 World Watch List, Open Doors ranked Afghanistan as the ninth worst country for Christians to live in, which was a drop from its

previous rankings of the first worst in 2022 and second worst in 2021.<sup>49</sup> However, this significant drop is “solely due to the fact that many Christians were forced to flee in the wake of the Taliban’s takeover last year.”<sup>50</sup> Those that remain are forced to worship “underground,” operating a loose network of connected house churches.<sup>51</sup> Even so, the Taliban actively work to uncover Christian circles by confiscating the phones of suspected Christians in order to access their contacts and messages, by monitoring mosque attendance to determine who did not appear, or by holding the victim’s friends and family hostage to force suspects to comply.<sup>52</sup> Discovered Christians are often detained, tortured, and usually executed.<sup>53</sup> According to one Afghan Christian’s testimony, “[t]he Taliban are conducting a door-to-door search to find us. God alone knows who has informed them about the whereabouts and identities of the believers. If they find us, they kill believers on the spot.”<sup>54</sup>

18. In one barbaric instance, the Taliban brutally murdered a man when his Christian family refused to renounce their faith, skinning him alive before hanging him on a pole to die.<sup>55</sup> In another instance, Azad, a convert from Islam, was kidnapped and held for ransom by the Taliban.<sup>56</sup>

19. Women and children also face extreme oppression due to the Taliban stripping women of basic human rights.<sup>57</sup> After a Taliban declaration for tribal leaders to list all of the young girls in their village for the Taliban’s use, “[m]any Christians fear the Taliban will take their children . . . The girls will be forced to marry Taliban fighters and the boys will be forced to become soldiers. Both will be sent to madrasas to be brainwashed.”<sup>58</sup> Afghan Christian women also cannot teach Christianity to their children due to domestic oppression.<sup>59</sup> In one account, Nasreen, a Christian widow who lives in a small basement of her father-in-law, must hide her faith from him and the other Muslim men of the house lest they punish her or expose her to the Taliban.<sup>60</sup> Facing intolerable restrictions on her freedom, she worries her children will face extreme coercion from the Taliban’s Islamic system before she can teach them her religion.<sup>61</sup>

## **Human Trafficking**

20. The Taliban dismiss transnational human trafficking as outside of their concern and insists that domestic trafficking is illegal in Afghanistan.<sup>62</sup> However, the Taliban routinely traffic and exploit Afghan women, holding them as sex slaves or forcing them into marriage with Taliban fighters.<sup>63</sup> Indeed, “[o]ffering ‘wives’ or sex slaves is part of the Taliban’s recruitment strategy to lure militants to join the Taliban.”<sup>64</sup> Additionally, “[f]oreign victims from neighbouring countries and elsewhere in Asia are trafficked into Afghanistan primarily for sexual exploitation or participation in war.”<sup>65</sup>

21. Part of the Taliban’s involvement in sex trafficking comes from economic incentive. “[A] sex slave can be sold over and over again, and this sex trafficking builds the Taliban’s economic power so they can maintain political power.”<sup>66</sup> The “critical intersection between human trafficking and illicit finance”<sup>67</sup> also drives families to sell their children in order to pay off debts or to pay for food, which has become limited since the Taliban’s takeover.<sup>68</sup> In one account, Maria, an Afghan mother, sold or gave away three of her children to provide for her remaining four, selling one of her daughters for 280 euros.<sup>69</sup> Because Afghanistan will likely receive no foreign aid so long as the Taliban remain in power, “human trafficking will very likely soar [in Afghanistan] due to impoverished families resorting to selling or trading their children to meet their basic needs.”<sup>70</sup>

22. Of particular concern is the common practice of Bacha Bazi (“boy play”), referring to pedophilia and sexual enslavement of boys.<sup>71</sup> Although the Taliban oppose it, the practice of Bacha Bazi persists.<sup>72</sup> “In Kandahar province in particular, community elders and local police openly traffic and exploit boys in bacha bazi without fear of reprisal.”<sup>73</sup> This is in part due to the “Taliban purges of police officers working for the previous administration [that] resulted in the killing or disappearance of police officers investigating the pedophile rings.”<sup>74</sup>

### **Child Marriage**

23. Child marriage is commonplace in Afghanistan, orchestrated both by families and by the Taliban. Even before the Taliban’s takeover, “[Afghan] [f]amilies arrange[d] marriages to pay back personal debts, settle disputes, improve relations with rival families, or simply because they hope[d] marriage [would] offer them protection from the worst extremes of economic hardship, and social and political upheaval.”<sup>75</sup> Child marriage has only increased since Taliban-ushered poverty ravaged Afghanistan, with “more than 120,000 children . . . hav[ing] been bartered for some sort of financial incentive” since 2021.<sup>76</sup> About 28% of Afghan women between ages fifteen and forty-five were married before they were eighteen.<sup>77</sup>

24. The Taliban’s Ministry of Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice declared, “[t]he Sharia is clear about this. . . . When a girl reaches puberty, she can be given to marriage.”<sup>78</sup> As such, it is common for Afghan girls to be married off at age eleven or younger.<sup>79</sup> In one instance, a nine-year-old girl was sold off by her family to a fifty-five year old man for marriage.<sup>80</sup> The financial desperation in Afghanistan has reached such a point that families will offer their children up for future marriage when they are just days old in return for a dowry promise.<sup>81</sup> Because Afghans conduct marriages as private family and religious affairs, there is no civil registry or need for permission before marriage.<sup>82</sup>

25. Despite Sheikh Haibatullah Akhundzada, Taliban chief, declaring in 2021 that “no one can force women to marry by coercion or pressure”<sup>83</sup> the Taliban commonly demand families to give their widows or daughters up to their soldiers for marriage.<sup>84</sup> One woman, Soona, recalls how a Taliban soldier who invaded her village threatened to rape her and kill her children if she would not marry him.<sup>85</sup> Another woman, Gulpari, fled her home after Taliban soldiers announced that households with more than one daughter should give up one for marriage to a Taliban fighter.<sup>86</sup> These marriages often involve physical, sexual, and psychological abuse, and many Afghan women commit suicide rather than remain in such situations.<sup>87</sup>

26. Other oppressive policies, such as banning women from going to school or work, encourage Afghan women to capitulate to early marriages. As one Afghan woman noted: “When girls are banned from school and from work outside, what options are left for parents other than giving their daughters into early marriage?”<sup>88</sup> Likewise, some Afghan women believe an undesired marriage is necessary given the Taliban’s mandate that a male escort must accompany women while outside the home.<sup>89</sup> Marriage to more than one woman is another facet of this cultural patriarchy, with “[a]lmost all of the Taliban’s senior leaders hav[ing] already taken multiple wives.”<sup>90</sup>

### **Recommendations**

27. Afghanistan’s deplorable human rights conditions will likely never alleviate so long as the Taliban remain in power. Violent religious persecution, sexual exploitation of women and

children, forced marriages, and oppression of women are essential features, not passing phases, of the Taliban's ideology.

28. The Taliban must cease their persecution of religious minorities, especially Christian converts, and begin providing real protection against terrorist attacks from ISIS-K.

29. Additionally, the Taliban should remove themselves from and actively stamp out human trafficking activities in Afghanistan, beginning by recognizing the problem and honoring the international agreements still in place.

30. The marriageable age should be raised to at least eighteen years old for girls, and the practice of marrying off or selling children for money should be outlawed.

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<sup>1</sup> *Afghanistan*, WORLD FACTBOOK, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/afghanistan> (Aug. 29, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Afghanistan*, OPEN DOORS, <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/afghanistan> (last visited Sept. 5, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> *World Watch List 2023*, OPEN DOORS, <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/theadvocacyreport> (last visited Sept. 5, 2023).

<sup>5</sup> *Universal Periodic Review – Afghanistan*, OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/af-index> (last visited Sept. 5, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> *Afghanistan Infographic 32nd*, OHCHR, [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session32/AF/Infographic\\_Afghanistan.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session32/AF/Infographic_Afghanistan.pdf) (last visited Sept. 5, 2023).

<sup>7</sup> *UPR of Afghanistan: Thematic List of Recommendations*, OHCHR, [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session32/AF/UPR32\\_Afghanistan\\_Thematic\\_List\\_Recommendations.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session32/AF/UPR32_Afghanistan_Thematic_List_Recommendations.docx) (last visited Sept. 5, 2023).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> Haroun Rahimi, *Remaking of Afghanistan: How the Taliban are Changing Afghanistan's Laws and Legal Institutions*, INST. OF S. ASIAN STUD. (July 26, 2022), <https://www.isas.nus.edu.sg/papers/remaking-of-afghanistan-how-the-taliban-are-changing-afghanistans-laws-and-legal-institutions>.

<sup>12</sup> Ayaz Gul, *Taliban Say They Will Use Parts of Monarchy Constitution to Run Afghanistan for Now*, VOA (Sept. 28, 2021).

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*; see generally CONST. OF AFG. 1964, [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Afghanistan\\_1964](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Afghanistan_1964).

<sup>14</sup> Rahimi, *supra* note 11.

<sup>15</sup> Ewelina U. Ochab, *The Collapse of The Legal System in Afghanistan*, FORBES (Feb. 6, 2023), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ewelinaochab/2023/02/06/the-collapse-of-the-legal-system-in-afghanistan> (quoting U.N. HUM. RTS. SPECIAL PROCS., UN EXPERTS: LEGAL PROFESSIONALS IN AFGHANISTAN FACE EXTREME RISKS, NEED URGENT INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT 3 (Jan. 20, 2023), <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/ijudiciary/statements/2023-01-17/202301-stm-sr-ijl-sr-afghanistan-day-endangered-lawyer.pdf>).

<sup>16</sup> Anchal Vohra, *The Taliban's Sharia Is the Most Brutal of All*, FOREIGN POL'Y (Oct. 13, 2021), <https://www.foreignpolicy.com/2021/10/13/the-talibans-sharia-is-the-most-brutal-of-all>.

<sup>17</sup> Kali Robinson, *Understanding Sharia: The Intersection of Islam and the Law*, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELS. (Dec. 17, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> Daniel Victor, *What is Shariah Law, and What Does it Mean for Afghan Women under the Taliban?*, N.Y. TIMES (Aug. 30, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/article/shariah-law-afghanistan-women.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Gul, *supra* note 12.

<sup>20</sup> *Ratification Status for Afghanistan*, OHCHR, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=1&Lang=EN](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=1&Lang=EN) (last visited Aug. 29, 2023).

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- <sup>21</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights art. 18, *adopted* Dec. 16, 1966, 999 U.N.T.S. 171, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights> [hereinafter ICCPR].
- <sup>22</sup> *Id.* art. 27.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ratification Status for Afghanistan*, *supra* note 20.
- <sup>24</sup> Convention on the Rights of the Child art. 32, *adopted* Nov. 20, 1989, 1577 U.N.T.S. 3, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child> [hereinafter CRC].
- <sup>25</sup> *Ratification Status for Afghanistan*, *supra* note 20.
- <sup>26</sup> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women art. 6, *adopted* Dec. 18, 1979, 1249 U.N.T.S. 13, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women> [hereinafter CEDAW].
- <sup>27</sup> CIVIL CODE OF THE REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN [CIVIL CODE] art. 70 (1977), <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/afg204715.pdf>.
- <sup>28</sup> CRC, *supra* note 24, art. 1.
- <sup>29</sup> CEDAW, *supra* note 26, art. 16.
- <sup>30</sup> Kathy Gannon, *Taliban Official: Strict Punishment, Executions Will Return*, ASSOC. PRESS (Sept. 23, 2021), <https://apnews.com/article/religion-afghanistan-kabul-taliban-22f5107f1dbd19c8605b5b5435a9de54> (quoting Taliban leader Mullah Nooruddin Turabi).
- <sup>31</sup> Fereshta Abbasi, *Testimony to the US Commission on International Religious Freedom — Religious Freedom in Afghanistan: One Year Since the Taliban Takeover*, HUM. RTS. WATCH (Aug. 24, 2022), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/08/24/testimony-us-commission-international-religious-freedom>.
- <sup>32</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>33</sup> Javid Ahmad, *The Taliban's Religious Roadmap for Afghanistan*, MIDDLE E. INST. (Jan. 26, 2022), <https://www.mei.edu/publications/talibans-religious-roadmap-afghanistan>.
- <sup>34</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>35</sup> Abbasi, *supra* note 31.
- <sup>36</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>37</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>38</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>39</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>40</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>41</sup> Weronika Strzyżyńska, *Hundreds of Hazaras Killed by ISKP since Taliban Took Power, Say Rights Group*, GUARDIAN (Sept. 6, 2022), <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/sep/06/hundreds-of-hazaras-shia-killed-iskp-islamic-state-khorasan-province-taliban-power-human-rights-watch>.
- <sup>42</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>43</sup> Abbasi, *supra* note 31.
- <sup>44</sup> *Attack on Kabul Maternity Hospital a 'War Crime': HRW*, TOLO NEWS (May 14, 2020), <https://tolonews.com/afghanistan/attack-kabul-maternity-hospital-'war-crime'-hrw>.
- <sup>45</sup> Strzyżyńska, *supra* note 41.
- <sup>46</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>47</sup> AFGHANISTAN HUMANITARIAN BRIEF: SITUATIONAL OVERVIEW FOR CHRISTIAN MINORITIES, INT'L CHRISTIAN CONCERN 2 (Aug. 15, 2022).
- <sup>48</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>49</sup> *World Watch List 2023*, *supra* note 4; *World Watch List*, OPEN DOORS (Oct. 27, 2021, 2:11 PM), <https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries>.
- <sup>50</sup> *World Watch List 2023*, *supra* note 4, at 5.
- <sup>51</sup> AFGHANISTAN HUMANITARIAN BRIEF, *supra* note 47.
- <sup>52</sup> *Id.* at 2-4.
- <sup>53</sup> *Id.*
- <sup>54</sup> *Afghanistan*, *supra* note 3.
- <sup>55</sup> *Christian Afghan Skinned Alive, Hung on a Pole by Taliban: Former US Congressman*, INDIA TODAY (Anuja Jha ed.) (Aug. 21, 2021), <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/christian-afghan-skinned-alive-hung-on-pole-by-taliban-former-us-congressman-1843735-2021-08-21>.
- <sup>56</sup> AFGHANISTAN HUMANITARIAN BRIEF, *supra* note 47, at 3-4.
- <sup>57</sup> *Id.* at 4-5.
- <sup>58</sup> Rock Ronald Rozario, *Afghan Christians Told to Stay Home to Avoid Taliban Persecution*, UCA NEWS (Aug. 23, 2021), <https://www.ucanews.com/news/afghan-christians-told-to-stay-home-to-avoid-taliban-persecution/93820> (quoting a Christian leader in Afghanistan).
- <sup>59</sup> AFGHANISTAN HUMANITARIAN BRIEF, *supra* note 47, at 4.
- <sup>60</sup> *Id.* at 4-5.



<sup>61</sup> *Id.*

<sup>62</sup> ‘Preventing it is Not our Responsibility’, *Says Taliban Spokesperson on Human Trafficking Report*, ANI (July 19, 2023), <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/preventing-it-is-not-our-responsibility-says-taliban-spokesperson-on-human-trafficking-report20230619184314>.

<sup>63</sup> Anne Basham & Clare Morell, *How Sex Trafficking Funds the Taliban and Terrorism*, WASH. TIMES (Sept. 16, 2021), <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2021/sep/16/how-sex-trafficking-funds-the-taliban-and-terrorism>.

<sup>64</sup> *Id.*

<sup>65</sup> AFGHANISTAN, GLOB. ORGANIZED CRIME INDEX a(2021), [https://ocindex.net/assets/downloads/english/ocindex\\_profile\\_afghanistan.pdf](https://ocindex.net/assets/downloads/english/ocindex_profile_afghanistan.pdf).

<sup>66</sup> Basham & Morell, *supra* note 63.

<sup>67</sup> *Id.*

<sup>68</sup> Alberto Suarez et al., *Human Trafficking in Afghanistan Since the Taliban Takeover*, COUNTERTERRORISM GRP. (Jan. 1, 2022).

<sup>69</sup> DW Documentary, *Child Trafficking in Afghanistan*, YOUTUBE (Aug. 15, 2022).

<sup>70</sup> Suarez et al., *supra* note 68.

<sup>71</sup> Emily Prey & Kinsey Spears, *What About the Boys: A Gendered Analysis of the U.S. Withdrawal and Bacha Bazi in Afghanistan*, NEWSLINES INST. FOR STRATEGY AND POL’Y (June 24, 2021).

<sup>72</sup> *Id.*

<sup>73</sup> *Id.*

<sup>74</sup> Suarez et al., *supra* note 68.

<sup>75</sup> Robyn Huang, ‘I’ll Be Sacrificed’: *The Lost and Sold Daughters of Afghanistan*, ALJAZEERA (Aug. 14, 2022).

<sup>76</sup> Akmal Dawi, *Afghanistan Poverty Bears More Child Brides*, VOA (May 4, 2022).

<sup>77</sup> Henrietta Fore, *Girls Increasingly at Risk of Child Marriage in Afghanistan*, UNICEF (Nov. 12, 2021).

<sup>78</sup> Dawi, *supra* note 76.

<sup>79</sup> *Id.*

<sup>80</sup> Anna Coren et al., *She was Sold to a Stranger so her Family Could Eat as Afghanistan Crumbles*, CNN (Nov. 1, 2021).

<sup>81</sup> Fore, *supra* note 77.

<sup>82</sup> Dawi, *supra* note 76.

<sup>83</sup> Assoc. Press, *Taliban Decree an End to Forced Marriages in Afghanistan*, NY TIMES (Dec. 3, 2021).

<sup>84</sup> Philip Smucker, *The Taliban’s Forced Marriages*, DIPLOMAT (Oct. 12, 2021),.

<sup>85</sup> *Id.*

<sup>86</sup> Ruchi Kumar, *Taliban Trying to Force Afghan Girls as Young as 13 into Marriage*, NAT’L (Aug. 3, 2021),.

<sup>87</sup> Smucker, *supra* note 84.

<sup>88</sup> Dawi, *supra* note 76.

<sup>89</sup> Smucker, *supra* note 84.

<sup>90</sup> *Id.*