

April 1, 2022

Secretary of State Antony Blinken
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520-2204

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We, the undersigned, are extremely concerned for the welfare of Afghanistan's Christians. We are calling on you to provide special consideration to this vulnerable community wishing to emigrate to the United States in hopes of fleeing the persecution perpetrated against them by the Taliban regime. Given the extreme danger facing Afghan Christians, they need a special visa status to allow them to bypass the standard emigration processes and procedures. We ask you to cut through the bureaucracy and create a speedy process for Afghan Christians to escape near certain death and come to the United States where they may practice their faith freely.

As you may know, Afghanistan's Christian community is predominantly composed of Muslim converts to Christianity, numbering between approximately 8,000 and 12,000 people. They live in extreme secrecy within a loosely connected underground house church network throughout the country. The reality of their conversion puts them at risk of death as the Taliban's interpretation of Sharia law considers converts traitors against Islam. The idea of a 'religious minority' does not exist in the eyes of Taliban, as Christians are considered a community of criminals because of their decision to leave Islam. They are in extreme danger from the Taliban and need immediate assistance from the international community.

Historically, the Taliban have ruled through oppression. They target individuals and communities who disagree with their ideology, subjecting them to a radical interpretation of Sharia law. Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities faced severe persecution, violence, and torture under the Taliban rule in the late 1990s and early 2000s. People lived in absolute terror during their rule. Many of those same fears resurfaced when the Taliban assumed control of Afghanistan last year. Reports immediately began to surface of known Christians receiving threatening phone calls as the Taliban solidified their power in the capital city of Kabul.

We ask your team at the Department of State to work to ensure that the Christian community is given special consideration in obtaining visas to emigrate to the United States. We also ask that you collaborate with the United States Congress to create ways for these severely at-risk people to receive special consideration allowing them to emigrate to the United States.

Please do everything in your power to safeguard the Christians of Afghanistan who are facing the gravest of risks for simply choosing to follow Jesus.

Sincerely,

The undersigned: