



**Afghanistan**  
**Stakeholder Report for the United Nations Universal Periodic Review**

**Submitted by The Advocates for Human Rights,**  
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

for the 46th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review  
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Founded in 1983, **The Advocates for Human Rights** (“The Advocates”) is a volunteer-based non-governmental organization committed to the impartial promotion and protection of international human rights standards and the rule of law. The Advocates conducts a range of programs to promote human rights in the United States and around the world, including monitoring and fact finding, direct legal representation, education and training, and publication.

The Advocates is the primary provider of legal services to low-income asylum seekers in the Upper Midwest region of the United States. A growing number of Afghans fleeing **persecution and systemic human rights violations** in Afghanistan have requested legal assistance from The Advocates’ Afghan Legal Clinic. This report includes first-hand information and has been written in collaboration with asylum-seekers and other lived experience experts about the human rights violations in Afghanistan. The following information has been included in this submission with their permission.

## I. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

**D28 Gender-based violence; D29 Domestic violence; F11 Advancement of women; F12 Discrimination against women; F13 Violence against women; F14 Participation of women in political and public life; E51 Right to education – General; F31 Children: definition; general principles; protection.**

### **Status of Implementation: Partially Accepted, Not Implemented**

1. In the Third-Cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Afghanistan supported 97 recommendations related to gender issues.<sup>1</sup>
2. Afghan women experience high rates of domestic violence (nearly 90%), sexual violence (17%) and physical violence (52%).<sup>2</sup> In territories under Government control prior to the August 2021 Taliban takeover, there was a network of services and legal protections for victim-survivors, most notably through the 2009 Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) law.<sup>3</sup>
3. EVAW criminalized 17 forms of violence against women<sup>4</sup> and established specialized police units and courts with female judges to enforce EVAW. The law also established rights to access shelters, free emergency health services, an advocate or legal aid, compensation for damage, confidentiality, and prosecution of the offender.<sup>5</sup> The law obligated the Ministry of Women Affairs to establish shelters,<sup>6</sup> and the Government funded around 30.<sup>7</sup>
4. Even so, systems actors prior to August 2021 – including judges, police, and prosecutors – did not consistently implement the law. They frequently deterred women from filing complaints, and the police failed to investigate or arrest perpetrators of gender-based violence, including domestic violence and “honor killings.”<sup>8</sup>
5. Despite supporting Ireland’s recommendation to employ the criminal justice system in cases of violence against women instead of mediation,<sup>9</sup> officials continued to refer cases involving violence against women to traditional informal councils (*jirgas*) for family mediation.<sup>10</sup> In rural areas, officials sometimes referred cases for which mediation is explicitly prohibited by EVAW.<sup>11</sup>
6. Despite the protections offered by EVAW, courts may also prosecute many women and girls who are victims of violence for “morality” crimes. For example, victim-survivors of domestic violence who leave their homes may be charged with attempted *zina*<sup>12</sup> despite an Afghan Supreme Court ruling that established that running away from home is not illegal.<sup>13</sup>
7. Even prior to the Taliban takeover, women had less access to protection in territories controlled by the Taliban. Human Rights Watch reported that, in these areas, a minimal number of domestic violence cases appeared before courts, and most were deferred to family mediation.<sup>14</sup>
8. After August 2021, *de facto* authorities have not enforced, and even dismantled protections for victim-survivors of gender-based violence against women. The Ministry for Women’s Affairs was dismantled.<sup>15</sup> The Taliban forcibly closed shelters,<sup>16</sup> and some shelters chose to close to avoid Taliban-led violence.<sup>17</sup> The Taliban also released people formally convicted and /or held in detention by the former Afghan national government, including those charged with crimes of gender-based violence.<sup>18</sup>

9. The general insecurity of the judicial system has rendered EVAW unenforceable, as well as other laws which may protect women from violence. The Taliban also dissolved the specialized courts handling domestic violence cases.<sup>19</sup> An interviewee confirmed that the Taliban are not adhering to EVAW or the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).<sup>20</sup> Multiple interviewees reported that if a woman appears in court, judges may engage in corruption and extortion and pressure women into having sex.<sup>21</sup>
10. Women in Afghanistan experience discrimination in private and public spheres. According to multiple human rights organizations, the Taliban have barred women from returning to work in many industries.<sup>22</sup> Some women continue to work as nurses.<sup>23</sup>
11. As a result, women and their families have lost income,<sup>24</sup> which also has an impact on women's autonomy. Prior to August 2021, women also faced threats, intimidation, and harassment in the workplace.<sup>25</sup> Other clients reported that customers and unknown men would verbally threaten, harass, and attempt to physically harm them in an attempt to scare them.<sup>26</sup> Another interviewee who worked in women's education received death threats and the Taliban arrested her co-worker.<sup>27</sup>
12. The Taliban have also sought to eliminate women from the legal system. One interviewee who received a degree in Sharia did not pursue a career as a lawyer due to the risks she feared she would face as a female lawyer.<sup>28</sup> After the regime change, the Taliban ended the independence of the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association and required all attorneys to renew their licenses, barring women from renewing.<sup>29</sup>
13. Officials who investigated and prosecuted cases against the Taliban continue to face threats, reprisals, and murder, including women officials and those involved with cases regarding violence against women.<sup>30</sup>
14. Interviewees confirm media reports about violations of the right to education. Beginning September 20, 2021, the Taliban stopped most girls over the age of 12 from going to school above.<sup>31</sup> In December 2022, The Taliban issued a statement banning university education for women.<sup>32</sup>
15. Women and girls who attempt to continue their education are at risk of harassment, violence, and violations of their rights to liberty of movement and education. The Taliban has stopped women and girls pursuing degrees abroad from leaving the country, even with proper documentation.<sup>33</sup> One testimony supplied that, even when young girls in grade 7 continue to go to school, they have to lie about their age. The interviewee shared that her niece's teacher taught the grade 7 curriculum in secret and told students to lie that they were in grade six.<sup>34</sup>
16. Multiple interviewees stressed their concern that the Taliban are limiting women's education in order to prevent children from growing up in educated households, particularly preventing them from seeing educated mothers, with the goal of rendering their children more vulnerable to Taliban ideology.

## **G1 Members of minorities; D42 Freedom of thought, conscience, and religion**

### **Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not Implemented**

17. In the Third Cycle UPR, Afghanistan supported all ten recommendations on the protection of ethnic and religious minorities.<sup>35</sup>
18. According to the Afghanistan Human Rights Coordination Mechanism, the Taliban has engaged in systemic forced displacement and massive killings within the country, often targeting ethnic and religious minorities. Further, local human rights defenders (HRDs) report “ethnic cleansing, massacres, forced displacement, and war crime incidents” that occurred since December 2022.”<sup>36</sup>
19. The Taliban continuously engaged in house raids, especially in those of ethnic minority individuals who were part of their communities’ civic space. Multiple Advocates’ clients reported that Taliban members have visited their family homes on multiple occasions, searching for them, even after they had left the country.<sup>37</sup> Further, it is a reportedly common practice to threaten, detain, and even assault family members in retaliation for not finding targeted individuals.<sup>38</sup>
20. The Advocates’ clients have reported that the Taliban has persecuted the Shia and Hazara religious and ethnic and minorities for decades with suicide bombers.<sup>39</sup> According to international NGOs, the Taliban has continued with a “wider pattern” of persecutions and extrajudicial killings in Hazara communities since gaining power under the perception this community is an “adversary.”<sup>40</sup>
21. The testimonies provided by The Advocates’ clients are consistent with reports of forced displacement and evictions by the Taliban with the purpose of distributing land to their supporters, especially in provinces with high populations of Hazara communities.<sup>41</sup> Individuals from the Bamyan province, which is predominately inhabited by Hazara communities, have reported systemic persecution to The Advocates based on their ethnic identity.<sup>42</sup> Interviewees also reported enduring harassment s without having any means of protection from such threats; one client of The Advocates recalled receiving multiple threats that stated: “Hazaras were not real Muslims and should be killed.”<sup>43</sup>
22. According to The Advocates Tajik clients, the Taliban engages in hostile actions toward Tajiks by imposing discriminatory laws that restrict their freedom of movement, education, and employment.<sup>44</sup> Clients reported that the Taliban has an intelligence network within the local community that allows the local group in control to closely monitor people’s affiliations and ethnicities, making it more difficult for families to hide their identities and be safe even if they are displaced to a different city or province.<sup>45</sup>
23. International civil society has reported that the Taliban view ethnic Tajiks, especially those from Panjshir, as potential National Resistance Front (NRF) supporters and has engaged in killings, arbitrary detentions, and beatings of civilians in Panjshir and in adjacent Tajik-dominated areas; and towards Panjshiris living in Kabul.<sup>46</sup> These NGOs’ reports are consistent with testimonies by The Advocates’ clients that the Taliban have established a pattern of detaining, questioning, and beating young men from Panjshir Province, as well as having informant networks in Kabul that allow them to monitor Panjshiri individuals and families living there.<sup>47</sup>
24. Testimonies have also described that the Taliban perceives speaking Dari against their system of beliefs, restricting its use in some public education institutions. Further, interviewees described that the Taliban has threatened and attacked individuals who speak and teach in Dari, especially in academic spaces.<sup>48</sup>

## **D45 Freedom of Association; H1 Human rights defenders; D43 Freedom of opinion and expression**

### **Status of Implementation: Accepted, Not Implemented**

25. Afghanistan supported 18 recommendations to protect civil society members in its Third Cycle of UPR.<sup>49</sup>
26. The Taliban reportedly threatens and kills civil society members. HRDs in Afghanistan describe the current situation as “living in a climate of constant fear.”<sup>50</sup> HRDs face “intimidation, harassment, arbitrary arrest, ill-treatment, and killing.”<sup>51</sup>
27. Interviewees noted that the Taliban tracks civilians through social media use,<sup>52</sup> in addition to use of phones and the internet. Further, one of The Advocates’ clients asserted that they received threatening calls pointing out the individuals’ publications on social media about human rights violations in Afghanistan.<sup>53</sup> The information gathered by The Advocates is consistent with UN reports about human rights defenders having erased their data trails to avoid being located by the Taliban.<sup>54</sup>
28. Women, especially human rights defenders, are especially at risk. The Taliban singles out, threatens, and kills “high-profile women” and female HRDs.<sup>55</sup> They often target female journalists “not only for issues they cover but also for challenging perceived social norms prohibiting women from being in a public role and working outside the home.”<sup>56</sup> Reports from secondary sources have highlighted that women HRDs, especially those from minority groups, endure grave human rights violations by the Taliban, such as “kidnapping, gang rapes and imprisonment, physical and psychological harm, defamation and house searches, arbitrary arrest and torture, and physical threats and violence against their family members.”<sup>57</sup>
29. Testimonies gathered by The Advocates have confirmed that “high-profile people,” especially those of whom are women, are afraid to leave their houses and transit the street due to fears of enforced disappearances and attacks by the Taliban. An interviewee said “People go outside without knowing if they are coming back to their home.”<sup>58</sup> According to another expert testimony, enforced disappearances are unreported critical systemic human rights violations and require further monitoring by the international community.<sup>59</sup>
30. The Taliban has reportedly implemented secret prisons to detain, torture, and interrogate individuals without any due process. They also reportedly execute HRDs, community leaders, and officers from the former government (*de jure* authority) because they consider them their “adversaries.”<sup>60</sup>
31. Expert testimonies have noted that the Taliban is constricting civil space and creating collective fear by repressing protests and patrolling public spaces with heavily armed forces.<sup>61</sup> Experts highlighted that the Taliban also systemically targets and attacks Pashtun human rights defenders, journalists, and community leaders, especially those Pashtuns who were affiliated with foreign governments, international governmental and/or non-governmental organizations, and the militaries.

### **32. RECOMMENDATIONS**

33. This stakeholder report suggests the following recommendations for the Government of Afghanistan (*de jure* and *de facto*):

- Respect and restore public institutions and the rule of law in the country.
- End all violations of the rights of women and ensure women enjoy their rights to freedom and equality.
- Reinstatement of the Ministry for Women's Affairs and allow it to effectively carry out its mandate and all activities.
- Reinstatement of the female judges and courts established by the 2009 Elimination of Violence against Women Law.
- End the requirement that victims of crimes under the 2009 Elimination of Violence against Women Law must make a complaint and continue to prosecute these crimes even when a complaint is withdrawn.
- Ensure that complaints regarding gender-based violence crimes are heard by official courts and cease the practice of family mediation for charges of domestic violence.
- Repeal the policies and practices that restrict the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls, among other matters.
- Reopen schools at all levels and universities for girls and women.
- Ensure that authorities do not impede students, including women and girls, from studying abroad.
- Promote an inclusive government with an active role for women at all levels of public decision-making.
- Protect women enduring gender-based violence against women and re-open shelters for domestic violence victims.
- Investigate and prosecute offenses related to intimidation of healthcare workers and staff at domestic violence shelters.
- Cease arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial executions, as well as investigate and sanction the responsible and provide remedy to all victims.
- Grant unrestricted access to local and international human rights and humanitarian organizations and agencies to detention centers and prisons.
- Respect and protect the rights of ethnic and religious minorities and ensure that they can exercise their rights without fear and persecution.
- Guarantee the representation and meaningful participation of ethnic and religious minorities in public affairs.
- Respect rights and freedoms, including the right to defend rights, in accordance with international human rights law and standards by allowing human rights defenders to operate freely and safely.
- Ensure that all people in Afghanistan can exercise their rights to the freedoms of association, peaceful assembly and expression, and release immediately and unconditionally all human rights defenders in detention.

- Ensure that civilians have full and unrestricted access humanitarian aid, including restoring and ensuring the safe passage to humanitarian workers, and cooperate with international humanitarian and human rights mechanisms, especially the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).
- Considering demilitarizing public spaces, including public institutions and schools, to protect civilians and ensure individuals are allowed to participate in peaceful protest and refrain from excessive use of force.

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Afghanistan – Addendum* (June 18, 2019), U.N. Doc A/HRC/41/5Add.1, ¶ 136.205 Take further steps to ensure full implementation of the elimination of violence against women law and the provisions regarding the protection of women’s rights included in the new Penal Code and the national action plans for women and on women, peace and security (Italy); ¶ 136.246 Adopt and implement a national action plan to end child marriage, and adopt the necessary legal and regulatory measures to ensure consistent implementation at the central and local levels of laws on violence against women (Republic of Moldova); ¶ 136.194 Further promote the empowerment of women and the protection of their rights through the effective enforcement of the Penal Code and the elimination of violence against women law, the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women and the further promotion of women’s participation in the peace process and all spheres of society (Thailand); ¶ 136.215 Ensure the effective implementation of the elimination of violence against women law, and make continued efforts to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls (Republic of Korea); ¶ 136.219 Adopt all necessary legal and regulatory measures to eliminate violence and discrimination against girls and women (Sri Lanka); ¶ 136.188 Ensure the full implementation of the elimination of violence against women law and the 2018 Penal Code’s provisions related to violence against women and girls (United States of America); ¶ 136.189 Take the necessary steps for the effective implementation of the elimination of violence against women law (Albania); ¶ 136.202 Continue measures aimed at the effective implementation of the elimination of violence against women law (Georgia); ¶ 136.213 Continue legislative and administrative reforms to prevent all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls (Nepal); ¶ 136.217 Fully implement the law on the elimination of violence against women and the 2018 Penal Code by ensuring that cases of violence against women and girls are appropriately investigated and prosecuted through the criminal justice system, and that judges and prosecutors are sufficiently resourced to do their jobs (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); ¶ 136.193 Ensure the effective implementation of the law on the elimination of violence against women, including by raising awareness and increasing knowledge of the law among the population, the police force and the judiciary (Belgium); ¶ 136.35 Fully implement and enforce its elimination of violence against women law and its national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) (Australia). Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Afghanistan – Addendum* (June 18, 2019), U.N. Doc A/HRC/41/5Add.1, ¶ 136.194 Further promote the empowerment of women and the protection of their rights through the effective enforcement of the Penal Code and the elimination of violence against women law, the prosecution of perpetrators of violence against women and the further promotion of women’s participation in the peace process and all spheres of society (Thailand); ¶ 136.35 Fully implement and enforce its elimination of violence against women law and its national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) (Australia); ¶ 136.192 Take further measures to prevent violence and eliminate discrimination against women, guarantee their full participation in public and political life, including in the peace and reconciliation process, and ensure the full implementation of the national action plan on women, peace and security by allocating sufficient human, technical and financial resources (Austria); ¶ 136.34 Integrate the national action plan for Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) in national programmes through the regular budget (Sweden); ¶ 136.37 Implement the national action plan for implementing Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) with adequate resources in order to further promote equal rights for women and girls, while providing

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the same level of support and protection for boys (Czechia); ¶ 136.42 Allocate financial resources for the efficient implementation of the national action plan on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) (Ukraine); ¶ 136.25 Prioritize the implementation of Afghanistan's national plan of action on women, peace and security, in particular by ensuring the broad participation of civil society, especially women, at all stages of the peace process (Switzerland); ¶ 136.216 Continue measures to improve the situation of women, in particular with regard to their access to justice and participation in State administration and decision-making institutions (Serbia); ¶ 136.129 Continue taking steps in the field of women's empowerment by expanding women's participation in political, economic and social processes in Afghanistan (Kazakhstan); ¶ 136.130 Continue progress towards the empowerment of women, and increase their representation in government institutions (Egypt); ¶ 136.131 Ensure that women can fully and meaningfully participate in decision-making in all initiatives related to national and local-level peace processes (State of Palestine); ¶ 136.59 Fight gender-based discrimination, promote effective participation by women in the peace process, according to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and guarantee the rights of women (France); ¶ 136.40 Strengthen efforts to address violence against women, provide greater access to justice to women and increase women's participation in the peacemaking process (Indonesia); ¶ 136.36 Take further steps to promote women's full and meaningful participation in activities related to peace negotiations, peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the country (Bulgaria); ¶ 136.38 Ensure the active participation of women in the peace process (Iceland); ¶ 136.39 Ensure the meaningful participation of women in peace negotiations (Australia); ¶ 136.41 Enhance its efforts to effectively implement the Security Council resolution on women, peace and security and ensure women's full participation in the peace process (Lithuania). Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Afghanistan – Addendum* (June 18, 2019), U.N. Doc A/HRC/41/5Add.1, ¶ 136.200 Continue its efforts to combat violence against women and domestic violence through the full implementation of the national strategy adopted in this context and related national programmes in this area (Tunisia); ¶ 136.201 Accelerate progress in tackling gender-based violence, including domestic violence against women and girls (Estonia); ¶ 136.220 Take extra measures to prevent and combat domestic violence and to take care of abandoned children (Algeria); ¶ 136.97 Comply in a more effective way with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and create policies and practices to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, as well as to increase accountability and promptly investigate and prosecute all cases of violence against women and girls (Finland).

<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, World Health Organization, and Human Reproduction Programme, *Addressing Violence Against Women in Afghanistan: The Health System Response*, (2015). Available at [https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/201704/WHO\\_RHR\\_15.26\\_eng.pdf](https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/201704/WHO_RHR_15.26_eng.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women*, (Aug. 2009). Available at <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5486d1a34.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women*, (Aug. 2009), Article 17–41. Available at <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5486d1a34.pdf>. The forms of violence are: 1. Sexual assault; 2. Forced prostitution; 3. Recording the identity of the victim and publishing it in a way that damages her personality; 4. Burning, using chemicals or other dangerous substances; 5. Forcing one to burn herself or to commit suicide or using poison or other dangerous substances; 6. Causing injury or disability; 7. Beating; 8. Selling and buying women for the purpose of or on the pretext of marriage; 9. Giving *Baad*; 10. Forced marriage; 11. Prohibiting from the right of marriage or right to chose spouse; 12. Underage marriage; 13. Abusing, humiliating, intimidating; 14. Harassment/persecution; 15. Forced isolation; 16. Forced addiction; 7 17. Depriving from inheritance; 18. Prohibiting to access personal property; 19. Prohibiting from the right to education, work and access to health services; 20. Forced labor; 21. Marrying more than one wife without observing Article 86 of Civil Code; and 22. Denial of relationship.

<sup>5</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women*, (Aug. 2009), Article 6. Available at <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5486d1a34.pdf>.



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<sup>6</sup> Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, *Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women*, (Aug. 2009), Article 8. Available at <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5486d1a34.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Sara Peirria, “*Protections for Women Facing Violence Have Vanished Under the Taliban*,” The New Humanitarian, Apr. 20, 2022, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2022/04/20/afghanistans-empty-womens-shelters>.

<sup>8</sup> Human Rights Watch, “‘I Thought Our Life Might Get Better’: Implementing Afghanistan’s Elimination of Violence Against Women Law,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/08/05/i-thought-our-life-might-get-better/implementing-afghanistans-elimination>.

<sup>9</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Afghanistan – Addendum* (June 18, 2019), U.N. Doc A/HRC/41/5Add.1., ¶136.105 Refer cases of violence against women to the criminal justice system, not to mediation or traditional dispute resolution mechanisms (Iceland).

<sup>10</sup> Human Rights Watch, “‘I Thought Our Life Might Get Better’: Implementing Afghanistan’s Elimination of Violence Against Women Law,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/08/05/i-thought-our-life-might-get-better/implementing-afghanistans-elimination>.

<sup>11</sup> Human Rights Watch, “‘I Thought Our Life Might Get Better’: Implementing Afghanistan’s Elimination of Violence Against Women Law,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/08/05/i-thought-our-life-might-get-better/implementing-afghanistans-elimination>.

<sup>12</sup> *Hudud* crimes are crimes against God and receive mandatory punishment as delineated in the Qur’an and Hadith. *Zina* is one of the six *Hudud* crimes and it includes adultery, fornication, and may include consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults.

<sup>13</sup> Human Rights Watch, “‘I Thought Our Life Might Get Better’: Implementing Afghanistan’s Elimination of Violence Against Women Law,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/08/05/i-thought-our-life-might-get-better/implementing-afghanistans-elimination>.

<sup>14</sup> Human Rights Watch, “‘I Thought Our Life Might Get Better’: Implementing Afghanistan’s Elimination of Violence Against Women Law,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/08/05/i-thought-our-life-might-get-better/implementing-afghanistans-elimination>.

<sup>15</sup> News Agencies, *Taliban Replaces Ministry for Women with Guidance Ministry*, Al Jazeera, Sept. 18, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/18/taliban-replace-ministry-for-women-with-guidance-ministry>.

<sup>16</sup> Amnesty International, “Afghanistan: Survivors of Gender-Based Violence Abandoned Following Taliban Takeover – New Research,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/12/afghanistan-survivors-of-gender-based-violence-abandoned-following-taliban-takeover-new-research/>.

<sup>17</sup> Sara Peirria, *Protections for Women Facing Violence Have Vanished Under the Taliban*, The New Humanitarian, Apr. 20, 2022, <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2022/04/20/afghanistans-empty-womens-shelters>.

<sup>18</sup> Amnesty International, “Afghanistan: Survivors of Gender-Based Violence Abandoned Following Taliban Takeover – New Research,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/12/afghanistan-survivors-of-gender-based-violence-abandoned-following-taliban-takeover-new-research/>.

<sup>19</sup> Press Release, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, UN experts: Legal Professionals in Afghanistan Face Extreme Risks, Need Urgent International Support, (Jan. 20, 2023). Also available online at <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>20</sup> Interview Conducted by The Advocates 2021-2023.

<sup>21</sup> Interview Conducted by The Advocates 2021-2023.

<sup>22</sup> Amnesty International, “Afghanistan: Women Call on the International Community to Support Women’s Rights Amid Ongoing Taliban Suppression,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/afghanistan-women-call-on-the-international-community-to-support-womens-rights-amid-ongoing-taliban-suppression/>; Human Rights Watch, “From Taliban to Taliban: Cycle

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of Hope, Despair on Women's Rights," accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/11/01/taliban-taliban-cycle-hope-despair-womens-rights>.

<sup>23</sup> Bahaar Joya and Emma Batha, *Shut Out of Jobs, Afghan Women Retrain as Nurses*, Context, (Aug.7, 2023), <https://www.context.news/socioeconomic-inclusion/shut-out-of-jobs-afghan-women-retrain-as-nurses>.

<sup>24</sup> Amnesty International, "Afghanistan: Women Call on the International Community to Support Women's Rights Amid Ongoing Taliban Suppression," accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/afghanistan-women-call-on-the-international-community-to-support-womens-rights-amid-ongoing-taliban-suppression/>.

<sup>25</sup> Interview Conducted by The Advocates 2021-2023.

<sup>26</sup> Interview Conducted by The Advocates 2021-2023.

<sup>27</sup> Interview Conducted by The Advocates 2021-2023.

<sup>28</sup> Interview Conducted by The Advocates 2021-2023.

<sup>29</sup> Press Release, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, UN Experts: Legal Professionals in Afghanistan Face Extreme Risks, Need Urgent International Support, (Jan. 20, 2023). Also available online at <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>30</sup> Press Release, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan and the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, UN Experts: Legal Professionals in Afghanistan Face Extreme Risks, Need Urgent International Support, (Jan. 20, 2023). Also available online at <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>31</sup> Amnesty International, "Afghanistan: Women Call on the International Community to Support Women's Rights Amid Ongoing Taliban Suppression," accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2021/11/afghanistan-women-call-on-the-international-community-to-support-womens-rights-amid-ongoing-taliban-suppression/>.

<sup>32</sup> Diaa Hadid, *'The Taliban Took Our Last Hope': College Education is Banned for Women in Afghanistan*, NPR, Dec. 20, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2022/12/20/1144502320/the-taliban-took-our-last-hope-college-education-is-banned-for-women-in-afghanis>.

<sup>33</sup> Ali M. Latifi, *Afghanistan: Taliban Stops Scores of Female Students from Flying to Qatar*, Middle East Eye, Aug. 26, 2022, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/afghanistan-taliban-female-students-scores-stopped-qatar>.

<sup>34</sup> Interviews by The Advocates, 2021-2023.

<sup>35</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Afghanistan – Addendum* (June 18, 2019), U.N. Doc A/HRC/41/5Add.1, ¶ 136.250 Redouble efforts on legislation to protect ethnic and religious communities (Honduras); ¶ 136.115 Continue enforcing its constitutional provisions on freedom of religion and belief, including by duly protecting individuals and property from religiously motivated violence (Czechia); ¶ 136.252 Establish an independent mechanism to assess how religious and ethnic minorities can be better protected against violent attacks (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); ¶ 136.138 Continue to provide programmes to help the poor and other vulnerable groups, including in rural society, to improve their skills and to give them better access to economic opportunities as well as basic services (Lao People's Democratic Republic); ¶ 136.249 Take all measures to protect the civilian population in full respect of international humanitarian law and human rights, in particular specific measures for the protection of ethnic and religious minorities (Switzerland); ¶ 136.251 Intensify efforts to protect and promote freedom of religion or belief and the rights of persons belonging to religious minorities (Italy); ¶ 136.117 Continue efforts aimed at mitigating ethnic, tribal and sectarian tensions among Afghans, and prohibit by law any call for national, racial or religious hatred (Senegal); ¶ 136.195 Strengthen measures to eradicate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and ethnic, religious or linguistic minority groups, and to protect their rights (Chile); ¶ 136.116 Continue efforts to ensure that all religious

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communities are free to practise their religion or belief, and that this right is adequately protected (Malta); ¶ 136.118 Adopt specific measures to effectively protect freedom of belief for practitioners of minority religions (Angola).

<sup>36</sup> Senior Human Rights Defender from the Shia Community, *Human Rights Defenders and the Future of Multi-ethnic Democracy in Afghanistan*, Peace Policy, (Nov. 17 2022), <https://peacepolicy.nd.edu/2022/11/17/human-rights-defenders-and-the-future-of-multi-ethnic-democracy-in-afghanistan/>.

<sup>37</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>38</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>39</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>40</sup> Amnesty International, “Afghanistan: Taliban Torture and Execute Hazaras in Targeted Attack – New Investigation,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/09/afghanistan-taliban-torture-and-execute-hazaras-in-targeted-attack-new-investigation/>.

<sup>41</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Afghanistan: Taliban Forcibly Evict Minority Shia,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/10/22/afghanistan-taliban-forcibly-evict-minority-shia>.

<sup>42</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>43</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>44</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>45</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>46</sup> European Union Agency for Asylum, 3.14.5. Tajiks, accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://euaa.europa.eu/country-guidance-afghanistan-2023/3145-tajiks>.

<sup>47</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>48</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>49</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Afghanistan – Addendum* (June 18, 2019), U.N. Doc A/HRC/41/5Add.1, ¶ 136.102 Guarantee the safety of journalists and media workers operating throughout the country, and end the impunity of perpetrators of crimes against them (Albania), ¶ 136.93 Hold accountable individuals responsible, including government officials, for threats and violence against journalists (United States of America).

<sup>50</sup> Press Release, Special Procedures, *Afghanistan: Human Rights Defenders Living Under “Climate of Fear” – UN Expert*, (Nov. 3, 2021). Also available online at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/11/afghanistan-human-rights-defenders-living-under-climate-fear-un-expert>.

<sup>51</sup> Security Council, *The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security*, (28 January 2022), U.N. Doc A/76/667–S/2022/64, ¶ 33. Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023); Freedom House, *A Needs Assessment of Afghan Human Rights Defenders*, by Ahmad Yasar Jahani and Aziz Rafiee (Afghanistan Human Rights Coordination Mechanism and Afghan Canadian Civil Society Forum, 2023). Also available online at <https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/AfghanHRDSReportJan2023edit.pdf>.

<sup>52</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>53</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>54</sup> Press Release, Special Procedures, *Afghanistan: Human Rights Defenders Living Under “Climate of Fear” – UN Expert*, (Nov. 3, 2021). Also available online at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2021/11/afghanistan-human-rights-defenders-living-under-climate-fear-un-expert>.

<sup>55</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Afghanistan: Taliban Rights Pledges Raise Concerns,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/08/18/afghanistan-taliban-rights-pledges-raise-concerns>.

<sup>56</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023). Human Rights Watch, “Afghanistan: Taliban Target Journalists, Women in Media,” accessed Oct. 11, 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/04/01/afghanistan-taliban-target-journalists-women-media>.

<sup>57</sup> Senior Human Rights Defender from the Shia Community, *Human Rights Defenders and the Future of Multi-ethnic Democracy in Afghanistan*, Peace Policy, (Nov. 17, 2022), <https://peacepolicy.nd.edu/2022/11/17/human-rights-defenders-and-the-future-of-multi-ethnic-democracy-in-afghanistan/>.

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<sup>58</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>59</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>60</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).

<sup>61</sup> Interview by The Advocates for Human Rights (2021-2023).