



World Hazara Council (WHC)  
Chaussée de Ninove 226, 1080 Bruxelles, Belgium  
Charity number: 0563.369.367  
<https://www.whc.international/>

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## **World Hazara Council Condemnation Statement on Terrorist Attacks Against Hazara/Shia Community in Kabul, Afghanistan**

The World Hazara Council ('WHC') strongly condemns the heinous terrorist attacks in the Hazara-Shia majority area of West Kabul, Afghanistan on Friday and Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2022. These attacks follow the earlier pattern of systematic targeted attacks that are deliberately carried out in crowded Hazara-Shia areas. The first attack on Friday took the lives of reportedly more than 50 people and injured scores of others in Sar-e Kariz, Qala-e Shadah. Less than 24 hours later, on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August, yet another explosion claimed lives of at least 14 civilians and wounded many others at Shahid Mazari Square, Pol-e Sokhta, just one kilometre away from the first attack. On Sunday, the 7<sup>th</sup> of August, there were reports of a third explosion in Hazara-Qala area of Chendawol. The Islamic State-Khurasan Province ('ISKP') militant group has claimed responsibility for these blasts.

We express and extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims of these barbaric attacks. These latest attacks come as the Hazara-Shia community of Afghanistan are commemorating the first 10 days of the Islamic holy month of Muharram, culminating in *Ashura* on the 10<sup>th</sup> Day, and as such mourners are gathering in large numbers at mosques and taking part in processions.

As the *de facto* authorities, the Taliban bear the responsibility to put in place adequate security measures to protect the mourners. This is especially important as the community faces systematic attacks. Furthermore, following their takeover of Afghanistan in August 2021, the Taliban have removed the self-protection mechanisms put in place at mosques, especially during Muharram, in the last years of the former Republic. Dismantling the self-protection mechanism has rendered the community even more vulnerable as the Taliban remain unable and/or unwilling to ensure security on the ground. Other moves by the Taliban, including the removal of *Ashura* from the list of holidays in the calendar, strongly indicate that unwillingness on the part of the sitting authorities. It is important to note that the Taliban continue to deny the presence of ISKP in Afghanistan, despite the ongoing escalating attacks.

We also strongly condemn the Taliban's deliberate acts that makes it difficult to save lives of the wounded and blocks coverage of these attacks. The Taliban mistreat families of the victims and refuse to allow volunteers and family members to donate blood to help the wounded. We strongly condemn these acts as inhumane, deem them as clear violation of human rights, and warn against its consequences for the community and the overall social fabric in Afghanistan. We also condemn the Taliban's refusal to allow journalists to cover these attacks and keep information flowing.

While violence is widespread in Afghanistan, the Hazara and Shia community continue to face particular vulnerabilities and continue to be persecuted on ethnic identity and religious grounds. These latest attacks are a continuation of the pattern of vicious systematic attacks

against ethnic and religious minorities, targeting places of worship, hospitals, educational centres, sporting facilities and schools.

The Hazara-Shia community have long faced violence and persecution in Afghanistan based on their ethnic identity and religion, and since 2001, because of their dedication to democratic political institutions and human rights in Afghanistan. Under the regime of the Taliban in the late 1990s, Hazaras and Shias endured at least nine cases of massacre by the Taliban, while under the former Republic over the last 20 years, targeted attacks continued against the Hazaras and Shias, which were often claimed responsibility for by the Taliban and the ISKP. A recent study has documented nearly 300 attacks in the past two decades against the community.

**Sajjad Askary, Hazara refugee and advocate says:**

*“While there are widespread human rights violations in Afghanistan, the Hazara people face extra layers of vulnerabilities due to their ethnic identity, religion and more recently, because of their dedication to democratic and liberal values, education, and human rights in Afghanistan.*

*The latest attacks on the Hazara-Shia community highlight that Hazaras are in real danger, and at risk of genocide. The de facto Taliban regime cannot protect the Hazaras. The UN must act with urgency to prevent further atrocities against the Hazara people.”*

**Sitarah Mohammadi, Spokesperson at World Hazara Council and Hazara advocate says:**

*“We call on United Nations member states to recognise ethnic and religious minorities such as the Hazaras and Shias, as needing refugee protection due to their well-founded fear of persecution for their religious beliefs and ethnic identity in Afghanistan.*

*We call on the United Nations and international community to take collective and robust action to intervene to prevent further attacks and protect the Hazara and Shia community. We call on the UN to adequately respond to the atrocities unfolding against the Hazara and Shia population in Afghanistan by implementing the Principle of Responsibility to Protect.”*

Media Contact:

Sitarah Mohammadi,  
Spokesperson, World Hazara Council  
[worldhazaracouncil@gmail.com](mailto:worldhazaracouncil@gmail.com)