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**COUNTRY CONDITIONS EXHIBITS DEMONSTRATING THE THREATS TO
AFGHANS WHO ASSISTED U.S. AND NATO MISSIONS**

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Introduction

The Taliban is an Islamic fundamentalist, militant, and political group operating in Afghanistan that was officially formed in 1994. The Taliban was in power from 1996-2001. The Taliban is characterized by a strict adherence to extreme cultural and religious practices and it has used extreme violence in order to achieve its aim of establishing a fundamentalist government in Afghanistan. Under Taliban rule, human rights abuses were rampant in Afghanistan and draconian measures were implemented to ensure compliance with Taliban ideologies. Historically disenfranchised groups bore the brunt of the Taliban's abuses of rights.

Islamic fundamentalist groups such as the Taliban view western powers, especially the U.S., as enemies to their way of life and to the interests of their country. One of their fellow countrymen assisting one of these western powers, is seen as a form of betrayal requiring swift and public retribution so that others are discouraged from committing the same offense.

In 2021, U.S. and NATO forces began to withdraw from Afghanistan and the Taliban launched an offensive which has resulted in the overthrow of the U.S. and NATO backed government. Since then, the Taliban has taken control of the government and the entire country leading to fears that the changes that have been implemented by the western-backed government will be reversed and the plight of disenfranchised groups in Afghanistan will worsen. Given that the Taliban is in control of the government and the country, persecuted groups cannot safely relocate within Afghanistan to escape said persecution.

PART I: THE TALIBAN IS IN CONTROL OF AFGHANISTAN	
Source	Relevant Information
A	<p>United States Department of State, "2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan," <i>Available at: Afghanistan - United States Department of State</i></p> <p>The Taliban culminated its takeover on August 15 when Kabul fell to their forces. On September 7, the Taliban announced a so-called interim government made up almost entirely of male Taliban fighters, clerics, and political leaders, hailing from the dominant Pashtun ethnic group.</p>

	<p>The Taliban promoted a strict interpretation of Quranic instruction according to the Hanafi school of Sunni jurisprudence, seeking to eliminate secular governance.</p>
B	<p>Congressional Research Service, "Taliban Government in Afghanistan: Background and Issues for Congress," <i>Available at:</i> R46955 (congress.gov)</p> <p>On September 7, 2021, the Taliban announced a “caretaker government” to rule Afghanistan. The announcement came weeks after the Taliban, a Sunni Islamist extremist movement that ruled most of Afghanistan from 1996 until 2001, retook effective control of the country with the collapse of the U.S.-backed former Afghan government and its security forces amid the U.S. military departure.</p> <p>Afghanistan is different in many ways from the country the Taliban last ruled in 2001. Women have been active participants in many parts of Afghan society; protections for them, and ethnic and religious minorities, were enshrined in the country’s 2004 constitution. The Taliban are likely to reverse that progress.</p>
<p>PART II: THREATS FACING AFGHANS WHO ASSISTED U.S. AND NATO MISSIONS</p>	
C	<p>United States Department of State, "2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Afghanistan," <i>Available at:</i> Afghanistan - United States Department of State</p> <p>Numerous reports since August indicated that the Taliban entered homes and offices forcibly to search for political enemies and those who had supported the NATO and U.S. missions.</p> <p>Human rights groups encouraged human rights defenders to delete or modify their online presence to minimize the risk that the Taliban would link them to the former regime or NATO forces.</p> <p>Thousands of those who worked for or supported the pre-August 15 government or foreign entities, as well as members of minority groups, sought to flee the country on or after August 15 due to fear of reprisals.</p>
D	<p>The New York Times, "Thousands of Afghans Who Helped the U.S. are Trapped. What Happens Next?" <i>Available at:</i> Thousands of Afghans who helped the U.S. are trapped. What happens next? - The New York Times (nytimes.com)</p> <p>Since 2002, the United States has employed Afghans to assist U.S. troops, diplomats and aid workers. Many were threatened, kidnapped and attacked, and an unknown number killed, as a result of their association with the United States.</p>
E	<p>National Public Radio, "Evacuation of Afghan Interpreters and Others Who Aided U.S. to Begin in Late July." <i>Available at:</i> U.S. Will Evacuate Afghans Who Helped It And Its Allies During 20-Year War : NPR</p> <p>Now, with the U.S. withdrawal 95% complete — and Taliban control of the country growing by the day — the threat of revenge attacks on those known to have worked with the U.S. is at a renewed high.</p>

F	<p>ABC News, "Afghans Who Helped US Military Plea for Escape: Taliban Will 'Cut Our Heads Off,'" Available at: Afghans who helped US military plea for escape: Taliban will 'cut our heads off' - ABC News (go.com)</p> <p>Several Afghans who had worked with the U.S. military said they would be killed if the Taliban found them. They said they felt abandoned by the Americans.</p> <p>“The Taliban is trying to find us and they [are] searching for us,” said Khalil, who had worked with U.S. special forces, and recorded the audio on Aug. 18. “They told me that anywhere I should go, they will find me and kill me. I asked the Americans, ‘Please help us.’”</p> <p>Idriss, an Afghan pilot, said in a recording from Aug. 18 that he worked for U.S. special forces and that he and his family had been stuck in their home for three days, terrified that the Taliban was hunting them.</p>
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