

PROVIDENCE CHURCH Prayer for the Nations

AFGHANISTAN

The Sunnis make up almost 80% of the country's population, while the Shi'ites comprise 19%. Afghanistan has a small, low profile Christian community and most of them are expatriates. Conversion from Islam is considered apostasy and is punishable by death under the Sharia Law. The new constitution has no reference to Sharia, but there have been reports that converts to Christianity faced societal discrimination, threats and in some cases have been murdered. There are no Christian or Jewish schools, no Christian churches, and one synagogue.

Extremist Groups: The Taliban had risen to power in the mid 1990s. Many Taliban members had been educated in madrassas in Pakistan and were largely from Pashtun backgrounds. The Taliban sought to impose an extreme interpretation of Islam and were known for many atrocities committed against religious minorities and women. The Taliban had also provided sanctuary to Osama Bin Laden in the 90s. Soon after the military attack was carried out by the US and its allies in its anti-terrorist campaign in Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks, the Taliban disintegrated rapidly. However, remnants of this radical group still remain in this country.

Persecution: Persecution of Christians is intense. During the Taliban regime, persecution was accomplished formally by law, and informally by tribes and families. Since the overthrow of the Taliban, the legal system no longer imposes criminal sentences on Christians. However, it also does not interfere when a Christian's family or tribe murders him for apostasy from Islam. The situation for native Christians in Afghanistan has not been much better under American occupation or the new elected (but firmly Islamic) regime than it was under Taliban rule. Foreign aid workers who are Christian are, however, somewhat more free to operate than they were under the Taliban.

The negative and suspicious view of Afghans towards Christian activities has caused Christian groups and individuals including Christians with an Islamic background, to be targeted in this war-torn country.

Mohabat News – Christian evangelism has turned into a sensitive and complicated issue in the last 10 years. Muslims target Christians every day. They refer to the Islamic Sharia Laws to charge Christians with blasphemy.

The rate of growth of Christianity in Afghanistan has caused Afghani Muslim clerics to consider it a threat. Also according to reports by news services, Afghani Muslim clerics warned the country's government against the spread of Christianity. The Islamic council of Afghanistan, composed of Islamic seminary students and clerics from all around the country, called on Hamid Karzai to limit the number of aid-workers and Christian missionaries coming to Afghanistan, because they can cause Afghans to convert to Christianity.

[Christianity grows in Afghanistan, despite Islamists' threat](#)