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S. RES. 513

Recognizing the growing threats against women and children, religious and ethnic minorities, and LGBTQI persons in Afghanistan and against allies of such individuals, such as civil society leaders and activists, scholars, former government officials, journalists, and media workers, and expressing solidarity with and reaffirming the dire need to protect vulnerable and minority populations and their allies in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 15, 2022

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. CASEY, Ms. SMITH, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the growing threats against women and children, religious and ethnic minorities, and LGBTQI persons in Afghanistan and against allies of such individuals, such as civil society leaders and activists, scholars, former government officials, journalists, and media workers, and expressing solidarity with and reaffirming the dire need to protect vulnerable and minority populations and their allies in Afghanistan under Taliban rule.

Whereas the Taliban have a history of prohibiting women from receiving an education and pursuing jobs outside

their homes and have publicly executed women who were accused of adultery;

Whereas a 2001 report by the Department of State noted that, from 1996 to 2001, the Taliban “perpetrated egregious acts of violence against women” as part of a “war against women”;

Whereas, in some Afghan provinces taken over by the Taliban beginning in May 2021, there are reports that the Taliban have forced women into marriage with Taliban fighters and have led targeted killings against women;

Whereas United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet has expressed concern with the Taliban’s contradiction of “stated commitments,” their exclusion of women from the public sector, and their restrictions on women, such as not allowing women to appear in public without a male chaperone;

Whereas, since 2018, the Secretary of State has designated the Taliban as an entity of particular concern for religious freedom pursuant to section 301 of the Frank R. Wolf International Religious Freedom Act (22 U.S.C. 6442a) for having engaged in “particularly severe violations of religious freedom”;

Whereas, in October 2021, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom reported on deteriorating conditions for religious minorities in Afghanistan, noting growing fear among Hazara Shi’a Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Ahmadi Muslims, Baha’is, and nonbelievers, and stating, “Afghans who do not adhere to the Taliban’s harsh and strict interpretation of Sunni Islam and adherents of other faiths or beliefs are at grave threat”;

Whereas the Hazaras constitute approximately 10 to 15 percent of the national population in Afghanistan and are considered a minority religious group;

Whereas the Hazaras specifically, along with other religious and ethnic minorities, have historically been explicitly targeted by the Taliban and have been abused with impunity;

Whereas Amnesty International reported that on August 30, 2021, 13 Hazaras were unlawfully killed in the village of Kahor in the Khider district by Taliban fighters, with one of the victims being a 17-year-old girl;

Whereas, in 2021, the Taliban forcibly displaced approximately 4,000 Hazaras from their homes and ancestral lands in Daykundi province while a Taliban court expelled approximately 2,000 families from the city of Mazar-e-Sharif;

Whereas, in 2021, more than 30 instances of violence and threats of violence against Afghan journalists were recorded;

Whereas activists, journalists, civil society actors, and scholars face threats and intimidation and risk being unlawfully detained or tortured or becoming a victim of targeted killings by the Taliban;

Whereas adherence to the rule of law and protection of human rights is rapidly deteriorating under the Taliban, which are reportedly targeting judges, prosecutors, lawyers, human rights defenders, journalists, former parliamentarians, and individuals who previously advocated for human rights and the rule of law, particularly women;

Whereas there are reports of the Taliban conducting house-to-house searches and tracking individuals who served the

previous authorities and then carrying out targeted revenge killings;

Whereas, during the previous period of rule of the Taliban, the Taliban reportedly executed Afghan men alleged to have engaged in sexual activity with other men;

Whereas the current Acting Prime Minister of the Taliban reportedly stated in 1996 that “homosexuality is a great sin” and “some say we should take these sinners to a high roof and throw them down, while others say we should dig a hole beside a wall, bury them, then push the wall down on top of them”;

Whereas a Taliban judge, Gul Rahim, stated in July 2021 that “[f]or homosexuals, there can only be two punishments: either stoning or he must stand behind a wall that will fall down on him,” and a spokesman for the Ministry of Finance of Afghanistan noted that LGBT rights would not be respected under the Taliban’s interpretation of Sharia law; and

Whereas, in 2022, many LGBTQI individuals in Afghanistan are forced to live in hiding due to reports of threats and attacks against such individuals in the community: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) stands in solidarity with the people of Af-
 3 ghanistan and with vulnerable groups including
 4 women and children, religious and ethnic minorities,
 5 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and
 6 intersex (LGBTQI) persons, civil society actors,

1 journalists, and other at-risk populations in Afghani-
2 stan;

3 (2) reaffirms the longstanding commitment of
4 the United States to advance human rights world-
5 wide;

6 (3) calls on the Taliban to uphold the protec-
7 tion of universal human rights, including the com-
8 mitments set forth in the Universal Declaration of
9 Human Rights and enshrined in the International
10 Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Af-
11 ghanistan is a party;

12 (4) encourages the executive branch to continue
13 to call for the protection of women and children, re-
14 ligious and ethnic minorities, civil society actors,
15 journalists, and LGBTQI persons under Taliban
16 rule;

17 (5) calls for the international community to
18 condemn human rights violations committed by the
19 Taliban;

20 (6) reaffirms the commitment of the United
21 States to support Afghan civil society, individuals
22 who assisted with the war efforts of the United
23 States and allies of the United States, and individ-
24 uals who advocate for universal human rights; and

1 (7) calls on the United States Government to
2 work closely with the international community and
3 nongovernmental organizations, particularly such or-
4 ganizations based in Afghanistan, to support at-risk
5 Afghan minority populations and other vulnerable
6 communities, including through efforts to stem the
7 growing humanitarian crisis that will disproportion-
8 ately impact already vulnerable groups.

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