

3.14.3. Hindus and Sikhs

COMMON ANALYSIS

Last update: May 2024

This profile includes people who belong to the Hindu or Sikh religions.

COI summary

The numbers of Hindus and Sikhs living in Afghanistan have steadily decreased over the past years. It is estimated that there were around 700 000 Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan in the 70s, around 220 000 in 1992, and approximately 150 at the end of 2021, compared to around 400 in the beginning of the same year. Out of those, fewer than 50 were reported to be Hindus. Reportedly, all of them were male and had their families in other countries. Most members of the small Sikh and Hindu communities resided in Kabul, but there were also smaller numbers in Ghazni and other provinces. Many Sikhs and Hindus sought to resettle outside of Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover, and in 2022 religious representatives estimated that less than 100 Hindus and Sikhs remained in the country - mainly to care for temples [[Country Focus 2023](#), 4.5.2., p. 85; [Targeting 2022](#), 6.6.3., pp. 150-152; [Security June 2021](#), 2.1., p. 84; [Security 2020](#), 2.1., p. 56; [COI query on Hindus and Sikhs](#), 1.1., p. 2; [Society-based targeting](#), 2.6., p. 29].

Hindus and Sikhs were recognised and protected as equal citizens with Muslims under the suspended Constitution of 2004. Following the Taliban takeover, the *de facto* authorities have promised to protect the rights of Sikhs and Hindus. Senior representatives of the Taliban met with Sikh and Hindu community leaders in December 2021. The Taliban gave security assurances and welcomed the communities to return to Afghanistan. There have been concerns, however, in the Sikh and Hindu communities over their physical security. The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan also expressed concern about verbal and physical threats and attacks against religious minorities, including Sikhs, forcing some to flee the country. There were also reports in the fall of 2021 that armed Taliban members had harassed Sikhs at their central temple in Kabul [[Society-based targeting](#), 2.6., p. 29; [Targeting 2022](#), 6.6.3., pp. 150-152].

Attacks on Hindus and Sikhs, including killings, by ISKP in places of worship have been reported in recent years. Furthermore, Hindus and Sikhs have encountered crime incidents because of their perceived wealth, land-grabbing, societal discrimination, harassment, and some reported instances of societal violence in Afghanistan [[Targeting 2022](#), 6.6.3., pp. 150-152; [COI query on Hindus and Sikhs](#), 1.1., pp. 2-4; 1.4., p. 6; [Anti-government elements](#), 3.6.2., p. 34].

Sources indicate that Hindus and Sikhs celebrated discreetly in order not to provoke the attention of Muslims and that they have inconspicuous places of worship [[COI query on Hindus and Sikhs](#), 1.1., p. 2; [Society-based targeting](#), 2.6., p. 29].

On 18 June 2022, an armed attack was carried out on a Sikh Gurdwara (place of worship) in Kabul. At least two persons were killed – a Sikh worshipper and a member of the *de facto* security forces, and seven others were injured. ISKP claimed the attack and furthermore stated that it was a response to a political debacle in India, where a politician previously had made remarks interpreted as an insult to the Prophet Mohammed.

The *de facto* security forces intervened and tried to protect the Gurdwara [[Targeting 2022](#), 6.6.3., p. 151].

A bombing in a Sikh-owned shop close to a Sikh place of worship in Kabul City, which did not cause any casualties, was reported in July 2022 [[COI Update 2022](#), 3., p. 9]. A Sikh shop was also attacked by an explosion on 3 December 2022 in Jalalabad, causing six casualties according to local *de facto* authorities. However, several sources have noted that ISKP attacks had decreased and no major attacks against ethno-religious minorities had been reported in many months as of September 2023 [[Country Focus 2023](#), 2.2.2., pp. 33-34].

Conclusions and guidance

Do the acts qualify as persecution under Article 9 QD?

Acts reported to be committed against individuals under this profile are of such severe nature that they amount to persecution (e.g. sectarian attacks).



What is the level of risk of persecution (well-founded fear)?

For individuals under this profile, well-founded fear of persecution would in general be substantiated.



Are the reasons for persecution falling within Article 10 QD (nexus)?

Available information indicates that persecution of Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan is highly likely to be for reasons of religion.

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