



## **Oral Statement at the 31<sup>st</sup> special session of the Human Rights Council on the serious human rights concerns and situation in Afghanistan**

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Delivered by Wissam Al Saliby

The World Evangelical Alliance expresses grave concerns at the take-over of Afghanistan by the Taliban who in the past have been known for persecuting religious minorities, including Shiites and Christians, and for suppressing women's rights.

Afghans who changed their religion, which is their right under human rights law, have suffered societal stigma and oppression during the past twenty years, and are now at an even greater risk. Thousands of Christians are now in hiding and are afraid for their lives.

We appeal to the international community and to the United Nations to pay special attention to these vulnerable groups. We appeal to this esteemed Council to establish a mechanism for ongoing monitoring and reporting on the situation in Afghanistan.

And we urge all parties in Afghanistan to respect human rights and humanitarian law.

Furthermore, Evangelical aid agencies have witnessed a worsening plight of displaced Afghans and asylum seekers. Forced repatriation of Afghans from Europe, including of Christians, was ongoing up until very recently. And the conditions in refugees camps, such as in Greece, are unbearable and inhumane.

We urge the international community to model a compassionate, humane and generous response to the ongoing and possibly worsening Afghan refugee crisis.

Thank you.