



April 9, 2020

His Excellency Narendra Modi
Prime Minister
Republic of India
7, Lok Kalyan Marg
New Delhi, India

Dear Prime Minister Modi:

We are writing to you today regarding the continued persecution of Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan.

On March 25, 2020, a terrorist attack on the prominent Dharamshala Temple in the Shor Bazar area of Kabul, Afghanistan tragically killed 25 people and injured at least 8 others. About 150 worshipers were inside the temple at the time of the attack including women and children.

Though the Islamic State (Daesh) claimed responsibility for the cowardly attack, terrorism experts have pointed to the likely role of the Haqqani network and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). Both are supported by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency, as you well know. It is widely believed that the Islamic State-Khorasan, aka ISIS-K, could not have carried out such an attack without the help and support of the Haqqani network and their affiliates like LeT.

Sadly, this is just the latest example of religious minorities being persecuted in Afghanistan. In July 2018, a suicide bomber attacked a convoy of Sikhs and Hindus en route to meet Afghan President Ashraf Gani, resulting in the deaths of 19 people and injuring 20 others. Today, there are only an estimated 200 Sikh and Hindu families left in Afghanistan.

The response by the Government of India to last month's vicious attack, including your swift condemnation, was welcomed and appreciated by millions of Indian Americans — Hindus and Sikhs alike. We were pleased to see your Ambassador to Afghanistan, H.E. Vinay Kumar, visit the blast site and meet with the families of the victims. We were



similarly heartened by the accommodations your government has made to the families of victims, such as Shri Tian Singh, an Indian national who was killed in the Kabul attack, as well as to other families of victims which have travelled to India for burial rights and services.

While we are encouraged by your Government's response, we respectfully urge you to take further action to alleviate the dire situation of religious minorities in Afghanistan who look to the secular Republic of India as the only safe haven in the region.

We recommend that the Government of India take the following steps, including but not limited to:

1. Grant legal entry and political asylum to any Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, and other persecuted religious minorities currently fleeing Afghanistan with residency visas that last no less than five (5) years and with the option of applying for expedited citizenship;
2. Ensure that these religious minorities are eligible for government benefits such as physical and mental healthcare, education, economic or business loans, grants and other employment opportunities; and
3. Provide temporary housing to the refugees.

We recognize that the resettlement of Afghanistan's persecuted religious minorities in India is the most practical and likely outcome. Moreover, not only do many Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan have familial ties in India, they also consider India to be their sacred homeland.

As such, we believe that your government should take the steps above to immediately alleviate their pain and suffering and to assist them wherever they wish to ultimately seek refuge, whether it be India or anywhere in the world.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

HINDU AMERICAN FOUNDATION
910 Seventeenth St., Suite 316A
Washington, D.C. 20006
www.hafsite.org | 202.223.8222



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Suhag Shukla', written in a cursive style.

Suhag Shukla, Esq.
Executive Director
Hindu American Foundation

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Samir Kalra', written in a cursive style.

Samir Kalra, Esq.
Managing Director
Hindu American Foundation

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Taniel Koushakjian', written in a cursive style.

Taniel Koushakjian
Director of Public Policy
Hindu American Foundation

CC:

Ambassador Kenneth Juster
Ambassador Ross Wilson
Ambassador Sam Brownback
Ambassador Taranjit Singh Sandhu
External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar