



CONCILIUM

AFGHANISTAN IMPACT STATUS REPORT

*CONCILIUM EFFORTS FOLLOWING TALIBAN TAKEOVER OF
AFGHANISTAN 2021*

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Concilium Inc. is a religious 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, wholly committed to the fulfillment of the Great Commission by helping Christian missionaries and Gospel workers build Great Commission obedience through biblically based security, risk and crisis management strategies.

Concilium is connected to over 100 mission sending organizations for whom we provide subject matter expertise in personal and organizational security as well as crisis management through training, analysis, security consulting and crisis response.

The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan came with dangerous implications for foreign missionaries and gospel workers (referred to by Concilium as Western Christian expatriates or WCE's), Afghan believers, and others affiliated with Western governments, evangelical organizations, and civil society groups.

After receiving a flood of calls for crisis management assistance, Concilium's President re-tasked Concilium's staff towards supporting the evacuation efforts of our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan because many of our partners and beneficiaries were struggling to make their way safely to US military and charter flights departing the country and needed Concilium's support to make it to freedom. **Concilium provided all Afghanistan services at NO CHARGE to our partners and beneficiaries.**

Concilium quickly became a leading figure in issuing guidance and considerations for mission agencies as well as other public and private sector agencies and organizations by hosting daily and weekly briefings providing ground truth and facilitating evacuations out of Afghanistan.

August 21 Concilium deployed a team in-theater to help with evaluation coordination and analysis. The team traveled to Al Udeid Air Force Base in Qatar, Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany, and refugee resettlement processing centers in northern Virginia to coordinate with military and civilian partners and provide first person updates on the refugee processing and resettlement process from Afghanistan to the USA.

Concilium was blessed by multiple small and large donations totaling approximately \$210,000. Apart from covering costs for the current response, Concilium intends to use these funds and any additional funds collected, for the following:

- Costs related to the ongoing engagement with Concilium beneficiaries in need of evacuation resources and support to safely depart Afghanistan.
- Development of a dedicated crisis response program based on lessons learned from Concilium's Afghanistan response to better serve Concilium's missionary and persecuted Christian beneficiaries in need of Concilium crisis services and support around the world.
- The development and implementation of a more robust and multi-faceted training program for Concilium personnel to better prepare them emotionally, spiritually, and physically for the rigors of crisis management ministry unto the least of these.

WHO IS CONCILIUM?

Concilium, Inc. is a religious, 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, wholly committed to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

We are dedicated to helping Christian missionaries, humanitarians, and other Gospel workers build stewardship and resilience into Great Commission obedience. Every year, Concilium equips, trains, and empowers Christian workers from around the world, empowering both the voice and presence of the Gospel to enter and remain in hard-to-reach places.

Concilium supports Christian workers serving in a multitude of locations using multiple ministry paradigms. This requires Concilium to remain both adaptive and cutting edge as we meet the needs of our global partners through security best practices, crisis prevention and management services, global risk analysis, and member care resources.

Concilium is connected to over 100 mission sending organizations for whom we constantly provide subject matter expertise in personal and organizational security as well as crisis management through training, analysis, security consulting and crisis response.

MISSION:

To build capacity and resilience into Gospel advance so others may hear and live.

VISION:

To see Christians of all ages engaged in serving the Lord with boldness, legitimacy, and competence.

VALUES:

We hold the Gospel as our highest value, the safety of God's people as the highest priority, and the fulfillment of the Great Commission as our highest priority.

SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

The Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan came with dangerous implications for Western Christian expatriates (WCE's), Afghan believers, and others affiliated with Western governments, evangelical organizations, and civil society groups. The transition period for the Taliban's takeover resulted in intense scrutiny of personal property, such as homes, persons, and phones. In many cases, Afghans with perceived or assumed affiliation with these groups frequently faced stolen property, verbal and physical harassment, brutal beatings, and even death. *See Appendix I for a timeline of events.*

CONCILIUM'S RESPONSE

Prior to August 15th Concilium's team of analysts began closely monitoring the situation on the ground and quickly understood the severity of the situation. After receiving a flood of urgent phone calls for crisis management assistance, Concilium Founder & President Scott Brawner re-tasked all Concilium staff towards applying our foundational mission, resources, and services to supporting the evacuation efforts of our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan. The Concilium team understood that many of our beneficiaries were struggling to make their way safely to the airport for US military and charter flights departing the country. Identifying the need for accurate and actionable information that would help them travel safely.

On August 19th Concilium set up a 24/7 watch center to monitor the situation on the ground. Within 48 hours of an all-staff meeting, **Concilium's 24/7 Watch Center** was up and running with a dedicated task force monitoring incoming requests, our team of analysts monitoring, researching, and forecasting the situation, and Stateside operators collaborating with individuals and contacts on the ground to ensure accurate and actionable information and communication.

Concilium staff leveraged organizational and personal contacts in government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other groups in order to serve those in need in Afghanistan.

Due to our rapid response to Afghanistan and prior reputation for acute analytical products for Western Christian expatriates, Concilium quickly became a leading figure in issuing guidance and considerations for the US State Department [Overseas Security Advisory Council \(OSAC\)](#) Faith Based Working Group and broader OSAC constituency, U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and evangelical ministry representatives from the [Risk Management Network \(RMN\)](#). We hosted daily and weekly briefings on the situation on the ground where we issued general guidance and answered specific questions for individuals facilitating evacuations out of Afghanistan.

By August 21, it was clear that Concilium needed a presence in theater to help with evaluation coordination and analysis. Concilium president Scott Brawner and a subject matter expert traveled to al Udeid Air Force Base in Qatar, Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany, and various refugee processing centers in northern Virginia to coordinate with USAID and military and civilian partners as well as provide first person updates on the refugee processing and resettlement processes from Afghanistan to the USA.

SITUATION IMPACT

By God's grace, we effectively leveraged our network to help guide hundreds of individuals and families to safety. This was possible because Concilium:

- Pushed real-time threat information through secure internet portals to over **100+ organizational partners**.

- Assisted **over 200 individuals** (Western expatriates and Afghans) safely flee Afghanistan.
- Held **regular briefings via secure digital platforms** to relay current information and answer questions from facilitators with their own contacts in need.
- Published **25 written products** involving strategic forecasts, crisis response guidance, and attack warnings to the **30+ organizations** we are actively supporting
- Answered over **500 inquiries** via email.
- Provided general guidance for over **100+ organization** representatives.
- Routinely **conducted due diligence** on potential misinformation and false claims.
- Provided **first-person on the ground reports** from refugee transition sites at Al Udeid Air Force Base in Qatar, Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany, and resettlement transition sites in northern Virginia providing critical situational awareness on refugee processing and resettlement process for missionaries and their agencies engaged in resettlement programs.

STAFF IMPACT

This abrupt shift in daily operations had a profound impact on our staff. Our staff was reoriented away from their daily routines and towards 12-hour+ shifts, fielding multiple meetings, phone calls, emails, and messages at once. While our diverse staff consists of seasoned missions and security professionals, this was indeed an intense time for our small but impactful team.

Staying true to our commitment to the Great Commission and discipleship, we called our Afghanistan support staff and their spouses for an in-person Critical Incident Debrief where they were guided by our Member Care team to reflect on the previous two weeks in a healthy way. More importantly, our Member Care team contextualized this debrief with the Lord our God as our Refuge and Strong Tower and encouraged our staff to lay their burdens before the Lord, so that we could continue to operate for the glory of God, confident in his sovereignty over all.

LESSONS LEARNED

Towards the end of the Debrief, Concilium's Executive Leadership came to the following conclusions:

- Non-governmental organizations supporting Afghanistan have a great need for a due diligence and information corroboration.
- Nefarious actors and criminal intent were and are rampant throughout this chaos and confusion.
- Many Christian organizations struggled to operate in a Christ-like manner during this tumultuous time.

ORGANIZATIONAL IMPACT

EXTERNAL

Within a few days, Concilium earned the reputation as a “trusted agent” among evangelical ministries, faith-based organizations, government agencies, and other public and private sector entities. We take this position very seriously. Along with our routine briefings for our partners, we began to expand our circle to include new ministries, non-governmental organizations, and even government affiliated partners. We understood the value of collaboration and engaged in thorough vetting of each new partner prior to initiating collaboration.

INTERNAL

Concilium understands that you don't rise to the occasion, you fall to the level of your training. Understanding that our staff came from various parts of the organization, we were amazed by our staff's own capacity for crisis management and rapid response. To maximize the efficiency of Concilium's future large-scale crisis management operations and further equip our staff, we have begun to develop mandatory training for all staff in the areas of field security, crisis management, first response, strategic analysis and more. Beginning with our own courses in these areas and developing new organization-specific curriculum as needed, we are staying true to our vision of equipping our own staff to share the Gospel with boldness, legitimacy, and competence.

MOVING FORWARD

We praise the Lord for his mercy and grace that allowed us to aid in these efforts. However, we know that our call to serve has just begun.

The Concilium Watch Center is currently operating in an adjusted capacity with a focus on the following areas:

1. Evacuation Response
 - a. Direct involvement in the safe relocation of Western evangelical missionaries and Afghan Christians through direct contacts on the ground and partner organizations, both government and non-governmental organizations.
2. Strategic Analysis
 - a. Concilium's staff of analysts, subject matter experts, and seasoned professionals provide strategic analysis on the region and current situation in Afghanistan through regular briefings, written products, and

individual organizational consulting to assist in sound decision making by the faith-based organization beneficiaries we support.

3. Member Care Resources

- a. Provide facilitators for spiritual and emotional support through critical incident stress debriefing for agencies, families, and individuals.

4. Crisis Management Support

- a. Build capacity for ministries, organizations and agencies with training, consulting, and guidance for developing dedicated crisis management teams managing ongoing, chronic, response to this crisis.

5. Domestic Support Relocation

- a. Support local ministries involved in Afghan relocation by facilitating networking opportunities for best practices, as well as materials and resources to equip church leaders serving refugees in their local communities.

DONOR IMPACT

Concilium was blessed by multiple small and large donations from donors who trusted us to steward their funds to support our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan. At the time of this report, we have received approximately **\$210,000**.

Going forward, we intend to use these funds and any additional funds collected, for the following:

- Costs related to the ongoing engagement with Concilium beneficiaries in need of evacuation resources and support to safely depart Afghanistan.
- Development of a dedicated crisis response program based on lessons learned from Concilium's Afghanistan response to better serve Concilium's missionary and persecuted Christian beneficiaries in need of Concilium crisis services and support around the world.
- The development and implementation of a more robust and multi-faceted training program for Concilium personnel to better prepare them emotionally, spiritually, and physically for the rigors of crisis management ministry unto the least of these.

APPENDIX I. PARTNER TESTIMONIALS

“Concilium does civil military affairs right.” – High ranking military official

“This briefing was very insightful for me. What a great group!” – United Nations Representative, Faith-based organization

“You are truly a blessing. Thank you for these briefings, I am grateful for the dialogue and exchange of information.” – Global Safety & Security Director, Faith-based Organization

APPENDIX II. TIMELINE OF EVENTS

AUGUST 15th: The Taliban seeks to establish itself as a legitimate government and announces that foreign civilians who stay in Kabul will be allowed to register with the new government. The US maintains control of the Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) and parts of Kabul during the evacuation.

AUGUST 16th: The US Department of State repeats shelter-in-place guidance for US citizens and Afghans as they fill out Repatriation Assistance Requests. Some non-U.S. Christian expatriates have reportedly passed through a Taliban checkpoint without incident. Taliban fighters in some areas of Kabul are going door-to-door looking for people who worked for NGOs, foreign governments, and the Afghan government, former Afghan police and soldiers, and women in government and media.

AUGUST 17th: The Taliban and the US government conclude negotiations for the safe passage of civilians to the airport through August 31st. The Taliban set up multiple checkpoints around the airport and prevent the passage of Afghan nationals while allowing the passage of foreigners. Taliban forces allude to no violence against women, while emphasizing that Sharia Law will be the basis of governance. Islamic State jihadists (ISK) are determined to pose a threat in the Kabul area and may attempt attacks against the airport. Taliban capture multiple US military biometrics devices that contain the biometric data of Afghans who supported American and coalition forces, known as HIIDE (Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment).

AUGUST 18th: Passengers with valid travel documents for entry into the United States will be prioritized over those who do not have valid documents. The situation at the airport continues to be reported as chaotic and dangerous by both media and field sources. Afghan nationals continue to experience difficulties passing through the several Taliban checkpoints. Both Taliban forces and US troops have fired shots into the air at different times to control crowds. Reported evidence indicates inconsistent implementation of supposed Taliban policies. Multiple sources have told us that the Taliban's possession of HIIDE's biometric identification data poses a low threat to foreigners and a moderate threat to Afghan nationals.

AUGUST 19th: The Taliban blocks the gates to HKIA and assaults those seeking to evacuate. There are also first-hand reports of Taliban going door to door identifying individuals and detaining them or murdering them outright.

AUGUST 20th: More than 1,000 Taliban fighters from Helmand and Kandahar provinces in southern Afghanistan had been summoned to Kabul to take over security in the capital. Their local culture has a strong tradition of revenge, known as “Badal.” Taliban’s central leadership has often been concentrated in Kandahar and in nearby Quetta, Baluchistan province, Pakistan. Resistance fighters in the area of the Panjshir Valley take control of Pul-e-Hesar district of Baghlan province. The Government of Uzbekistan does not appear sympathetic to Afghan refugees and returned 150 refugees to Afghanistan.

AUGUST 21st: Military helicopters and special operations forces teams pick up several hundred US citizens and Afghan nationals from various parts of the city. The German military reportedly deploys two helicopters for the same purpose. The US Embassy in Kabul issues a Security Alert advising US citizens to avoid traveling to Hamid Karzai International Airport and to avoid airport gates due to “potential security threats outside the gates at the Kabul airport.” There is an acute cash shortage. Fighting reported in Andarab, Deh Saleh, and Banu districts. So far, territorial gains by resistance fighters have not opened safe corridors for overland evacuations from Kabul.

AUGUST 22nd: Overland evacuation is high-risk. Overland evacuees should expect to pass through local militia and/or Taliban checkpoints enroute to the border. Instructions and routes for accessing the airport are constantly changing. Suspected Islamic State-Khorasan Province terrorist plots targeting evacuees have emerged. Taliban control the major border crossings, there are multiple reports of commercial traffic and individuals entering and exiting the country. Pakistan does appear to be accepting travelers at the present time. Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan surged troops to their side of the border in early July and conditions appear to be relatively stable. The Sher Khan Bandar border crossing, north of Kunduz, is the primary trade route into Tajikistan. This trade route is a lucrative source of income for the Taliban, making any long-term interruptions counter to the Taliban’s interest. Tajikistan has committed to support up to 100,000 Afghan refugees and has begun construction on refugee camps. Iran is not accepting Afghan refugees. Turkmenistan is not permitting commercial traffic to enter their country. Armed resistance to the Taliban appears to be gaining momentum in the north, and risks may increase over the short term on the route to and north of Kunduz.

AUGUST 26th: The Taliban and Northern Alliance agree to stop attacking each other. At least two explosions were reported at HKIA and the nearby hotel. Several were killed and injured, including American military members. The attack seems to originate from the ISK. Before today, there are an unreported number of casualties from the chaos at the airport and borders, though at least seven people died at HKIA as of August 22. An estimated minimum of 120,000 refugees have been evacuated from Afghanistan. The US estimates it has evacuated over 82,000 people from Afghanistan since the mid-August takeover. There may be up to 1,500 citizens still left in the country.

AUGUST 27th: Gates at HKIA are closed. Pakistan is not currently hospitable to refugees, even though refugee infrastructure is in place. The Pakistani police say there have been

no refugees entering Pakistan so far, despite other reports. The National Resistance Front/Northern Alliance appears to have rejected negotiations with the Taliban since yesterday's Kabul bombings, which they condemned; now may be a future counter-terrorism partner for Russia and NATO. Taliban put a Tajik leader of the terrorist group Jamaat Ansarullah in charge of the Tajikistan border in five districts of Afghanistan's Badakhshan region. Three districts of Takhar and Badakhshan are now contested. ISKP presence predominantly in Nuristan, Laghman, and Kunar provinces, and one specific area of Ghazni province. Australia and France have completed their evacuations.

AUGUST 28th: Taliban checkpoints are turning away large numbers from the airport. Drone strike kills 2 high profile ISIS targets. US State Department reports approximately 350 Americans are still looking to evacuate. The US is leaving Kabul airport, though currently still in charge of airport and airport gates. Reports of 100 aircraft still to depart every 24 hours from HKIA. France and Britain will propose an emergency resolution on Monday 8/30 to create a safe zone in Kabul to protect people trying to leave the country. Banks are operational with a max of \$200 every 24 hours.

Civil servants are protesting at banks, needing more. The Taliban cannot access the central bank's \$9 billion in reserves. The International Monetary Fund has also suspended the transfer of some \$450 million. The Taliban asked women doctors and health care workers to return to work. The UK has completed evacuations. Turkey recognizes the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, working with Qatar to operate the airport in consortium.

AUGUST 29th: A large explosion heard in a neighborhood northwest of HKIA - US air strike against a vehicle containing one or more ISK suicide bombers. Reports of a family, including 9 civilians, killed in a secondary explosion this morning, following the US strike. There is a NOTAM from the FAA: US operators are now banned from operating in country outside specific flights to Kabul. Taliban condemns ISIS-K strike at HKIA and strike following the US. strike. Zabihullah Mujahid says the Taliban expects to take full control of Kabul airport following US withdrawal and will announce a full cabinet in the coming days. Pakistani border guards shot dead a suspected Afghan refugee and wounded three others on Friday as they allegedly tried to cross over illegally from Afghanistan. Taliban and rebel forces skirmished just outside the Panjshir Valley. The Taliban cut telephone and internet connections to the valley. National Resistance Front/Northern Alliance refute claims that Taliban has seized Panjshir Province.

AUGUST 30th: At least one attempted rocket attack has occurred against HKIA; landed in a nearby neighborhood. The Uzbekistan government is in opposition to receiving refugees as the US Embassy struggles to process SIV applications in the country. The government of Uzbekistan will not grant flight clearance to any plane that does not have an onward destination and clearances. The government of Uzbekistan will not allow Afghans without a valid Uzbek visa to stay in Uzbekistan during the long-term procession of US visa applications. Refugees are crossing the Panj River into Tajikistan by raft/boat.

The National Resistance Front spoke critically against the U.S. for the 29-AUG drone strike on an ISK suicide squad. The NRF Twitter account calls it a “revenge strike” and claims the victims to be Panjshiris – and does not mention ISK. New National Resistance Front district control map is released. The three districts of Badakhshan and Takhar that were reported then as “contested” are again marked as under Taliban control. Heavy fighting in Andarab district, and new resistance being reported in Kapisa province. ISK claims responsibility for the rocket attack directed against HKIA.

AUGUST 31st: the United States government has officially announced its withdrawal of military and diplomatic assets from Afghanistan. The Taliban has overrun the former Afghan government and is currently constructing its new formal government mechanism in Kabul to include members from affiliate networks such as Al-Qaeda Haqqani network.

Concilium is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. We are a Gospel-centered, Great Commission ministry focused on risk, security, and crisis management resources to empower the voice and presence of the Gospel throughout the nations. Concilium is connected to over 100 mission sending organizations. In this capacity we constantly provide subject matter expertise in personal and organizational security as well as crisis management through training, consulting and written products. Click here to view our [financial information](#).