

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

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**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Taliban edict on Hindus**

The EU was deeply concerned to receive information about the edict of the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, ordering all Hindus in Afghanistan to wear identity marks.

The EU notes that the Taliban claim to be seeking to identify Hindus to avoid them being harassed "by mistake". The EU recalls that the Taliban have to respect and protect the human rights of all persons belonging to the ethnic and religious minorities in Afghanistan. Forcing persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities to wear distinctive clothing or identity marks is a form of discrimination which is prohibited by international human rights law. The EU urges the Taliban leadership not to implement this unacceptable decision which will violate the human rights of Hindus in Afghanistan.

Moreover, the Taliban leadership is called upon to respect the human rights of all persons, without distinction.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, and the EFTA countries members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this declaration.

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