

US-trained Afghan Security Forces Committing “Systematic” Torture and Extra-legal Killings

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Afghan government security forces and affiliated paramilitary units, developed under the US occupation, are engaged in a daily, ongoing campaign of terror against the country's civilian population, according to a Human Rights Watch (HRW) report released this week, "Today We Shall All Die."

The puppet regime in Kabul, established by the US and NATO powers after the overthrow of the Taliban government in October 2001, presides over a web of criminalized security forces and politicized crime syndicates that oppress and plunder the population, all while drawing on a steady stream of resources from Europe and North America, HRW found.

"The administration of former President Hamid Karzai installed many powerful warlords and failed to confront others, while many others have been funded by and worked alongside international forces, further entrenching them politically into the fabric of Afghan society. In this way impunity in Afghanistan is both a domestic and foreign problem for which the solution resides not only in Kabul but in foreign capitals such as Washington, DC,"

HRW wrote.

Forces aligned with the Kabul government regularly commit a range of criminal violations of the basic rights of the population, including extra-legal killings, disappearances, extortion, robbery, rampant sexual abuse and arbitrary detentions. Money flowing into Afghanistan from US and European governments for security and logistics contracts is channeled by high-ranking Afghan officials to maintain private militias, HRW found.

"The perpetrators of these abuses are persons in positions of authority or persons who operate with their backing ... they occupy positions in almost every level of government, from local militia commanders to ministerial rank,"

HRW reports.

To prepare the report, HRW interviewed some 120 members of communities across eight Afghan provinces that have been affected by the violence. Based on these interviews, HRW drew up eight case studies of leaders within the official Afghan security forces and the broader network of semi-formal militant groups that wield power in the hinterland.

One militant leader highlighted by the report, Abdul Shujoyi, was recruited as a fighter for

the Afghan Security Guards (ASG) and worked directly with US occupation forces beginning from at least 2009.

Elder villagers interviewed by HRW stated that “everyone has seen [Shujoyi] with the Americans,” with the militant leader paying frequent visitings to a US facility known as Forward Operating Base (FOB) Anaconda.

Shujoyi spends “a good deal of time on the US base at Khas Orugzgan,” according to investigative work published by the *Sydney Morning Herald*. “Cover by US Special Forces has emboldened and protected Shujoyi,” a reporter for the *Herald* found on the basis of extensive interviews with local sources.

By 2011, at the instigation of US Special Forces officers who used their connections to the government to override the opposition of the local governor and tribal leaders, Shujoyi rose to command elements of the Afghan Local Police (ALP), a militia network set up by US forces occupying the country in coordination with the government in Kabul.

ALP forces under Shujoyi’s command repeatedly raided villages around Kukhtaba, robbing and murdering inhabitants, including children, in 2011 and in following years, HRW reported. Multiple accounts from villagers state that Shujoyi’s forces killed local children by stoning.

In November 2012, local residents submitted a list of 121 victims they said were killed by Shujoyi’s men since 2009, while also reporting that militants under Shujoyi’s command regularly raped villagers, and stole their motorcycles and wheat yields at gunpoint.

HRW highlighted another figure, Commander Azizullah, who served as a senior officer with the Afghan Security Guard (ASG), while it was involved in joint combat operations with US forces.

A UN report from 2010 found that Azizullah repeatedly engaged in arbitrary detention and execution of children. After joining the ALP in 2011, reports emerged that Azizullah was overseeing similar abuses, including forcible conscription of child soldiers into his militias.

A village teacher told HRW that he was arbitrarily detained and savagely beaten by ALP militiamen led by Azizullah during a 2012 raid. The ALP forces arrived in Ranger trucks accompanied by US military personnel, the teacher said.

Azizullah remained in command of a local ALP detachment as of June 2014, according to HRW.

Kandahar police chief Abdul Razziq, a man with close ties to the US military who received praise from a top US general for establishing “security” in areas under his control, encourages systematic use of torture by forces under his command, a separate UN report found.

Referring to the professional murderers and thugs surveyed in the report, HRW noted that “the Afghan government has empowered rather than apprehended them” and has done so “with the backing of the US and other international supporters.”

Indeed, what the psychopathic criminals depicted in the HRW report all have in common is their close collaboration with the US military and its special operations units. In its drive to reorganize and dominate global politics, US imperialism forges alliances everywhere, with

the most deprived forces, as the necessary instruments of its global agenda of subjugation and mass murder.

Before leaving office, in the wake of the US-orchestrated power sharing agreement that placed Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah in power last fall, the Karzai government granted sweeping amnesty to state criminals, HRW reported. As under Karzai, top Afghan military, intelligence and administration officials of the Ghani regime directly carry out and supervise murder, torture and rape, HRW found.

The formal end of US combat operations in Afghanistan on December 31, 2014, has by no means halted the US-directed slaughter. US commandos continue to carry out a “secret war” throughout the country, coordinating and directly executing targeted assassinations against anyone suspected of opposing the government.

The first act of the Ghani regime’s “national unity” government was to sign off on the permanent occupation of the country by some 10,000 US troops, who will continue to enjoy full legal immunity for civilian “collateral damage” produced by their operations.

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