

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0906

September 23, 2015

The Honorable Ashton Carter
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Carter,

We are writing to express our deep concerns over recent media reports of Department of Defense policies prohibiting U.S. troops from reporting human rights violations and ordering them to ignore the abuse of children at the hands of our Afghan allies. Further, these service members have faced discipline and career termination.¹

A recent *New York Times* story outlined several examples in which U.S. troops witnessed child rape as it occurred and were told to ignore it based on 'cultural considerations.' Additionally, U.S. military personnel who intervened to prevent sexual assaults were disciplined. It is alarming that U.S. military personnel are impeded from reporting, intervening or investigating egregious violations of human rights, much less acts committed against children. We are concerned that there is no policy requiring U.S. military personnel to report such violations or military commanders to investigate them. The White House stated: "We continue to urge the Afghan and civil society to protect and support victims and their families, while also strongly encouraging justice and accountability under Afghan law for offenders."² We respect and support the Afghan government's legal authority and jurisdiction; however, there are allegations reported by U.S. personnel that occurred on U.S. and jointly-held bases. We cannot tolerate the sexual exploitation of children on our military bases.

Because of these concerns, we request the Department provide a response to the following questions as soon as possible, but no later than October 23, 2015. We request that the answers include any Department documents on procedures and policies for handling reports of human rights violations by coalition forces:

1. Are foreign military personnel forbidden from engaging in child sexual abuse on U.S. or jointly-held military bases?

¹ Joseph Goldstein, "U.S. Soldiers Told to Ignore Sexual Abuse of Boys by Afghan Allies," *New York Times*, September 20, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/21/world/asia/us-soldiers-told-to-ignore-afghan-allies-abuse-of-boys.html>.

² Nicole Duran, "White House Dodges on Child Rape in Afghanistan," *Washington Examiner*, September 21, 2015, <http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/white-house-dodges-on-child-rape-in-afghanistan/article/2572538>.

2. What is the Department of Defense policy for reporting suspected misconduct and criminal activity by Afghan Local Police?
3. What are the legal obligations of U.S. military commanders and service members to report sexual assaults and to intervene to prevent the sexual exploitation of civilians?
4. Are Afghan military and police personnel permitted to house or employ civilians on U.S. or jointly-held bases?
 - a. If so, what legal jurisdiction governs these civilians?
 - b. What policies for conduct are Afghan civilians working or living on-base held to?
5. What procedures and protocols are in place to hold Afghan Local Police accountable for the resources and training that the U.S. military provides?
6. Are reports by U.S. military personnel of illegal behavior by allied forces documented and investigated?
 - a. What follow-up by U.S. military personnel is conducted in order to ensure that the local authority's response is sufficient?
 - b. What actions are taken to ensure the safety of U.S. military personnel and Afghan civilians during the course of investigations?
 - c. Has any Department of Defense inspector general or law enforcement agency investigated child sexual assaults reports made by U.S. military personnel?
 - d. Will the Department of Defense request assistance from the Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation in investigating the reports of child rape and related murders on U.S. bases in Afghanistan?
7. What is the status of personnel actions against Major Brezler and Sergeant First Class Martland?³

If you have any questions about this request, please contact Jordan Kaye at 202- 225- 3034. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Ron DeSantis
Member of Congress

³ Goldstein, "U.S. Soldiers Told to Ignore Sexual Abuse of Boys by Afghan Allies."