

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نیاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/mar/19/afghanistan-american-imperialism>

## Afghanistan and American imperialism

**Afghans have been excluded from the judicial process after the shooting that left 16 dead.  
No wonder anti-US feeling is growing**

Glenn Greenwald

3/19/2012

US army staff sergeant Robert Bales is accused of slaughtering 16 Afghan villagers, including nine children, and then burning some of the bodies. The massacre took place in two villages in the southern rural district of Panjwai. Though this horrific crime targeted Afghans on Afghan soil, [Afghanistan](#) will play no role in investigating the crime or bringing the perpetrator (or perpetrators) to justice. That is because the US almost immediately whisked the accused out of Afghanistan and brought him to an American army base in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

The rapid exclusion of Afghans from the process of trying the accused shooter has, predictably and understandably, exacerbated the growing anti-American anger in that country. It is hard to imagine any nation on the planet reacting any other way to being denied the ability to try suspects over crimes that take place on its soil. A Taliban commander quickly gave voice to that nationalistic fury, announcing: "We want this soldier to be prosecuted in Afghanistan. The Afghans should prosecute him."

Demands that the atrocity be investigated by Afghans are grounded in part by reports that Bales did not act alone. While [US military](#) officials decreed from the start that Bales was the lone culprit, eyewitnesses in the villages reported the presence of multiple attackers. Many Afghans simply cannot fathom how such a large-scale attack could have been perpetrated by a single shooter. Bacha Agha of the Balandi village told the Associated Press: "One man can't kill so

many people. There must have been many people involved." He added: "If the government says this is just one person's act we will not accept it." President Hamid Karzai initially added fuel to those suspicions, notably accusing "American forces" of the attacks.

The suspicion that other American soldiers may have been involved, though unproven, is far from irrational. [The notorious American "kill team"](#) that deliberately executed random, innocent Afghan civilians (often teenagers) for sport, planted weapons on their bodies, and then posed with their corpses as trophies operated out a base in the same area. America's former top commander in Afghanistan, [General Stanley McChrystal](#), admitted: "We've shot an amazing number of people and killed a number and, to my knowledge, none has proven to have been a real threat to the force."

That US-Afghan tensions are at an all-time high due to recent events makes suspicions of a coordinated attack even more substantive. [As Robert Fisk recalled](#), the US army's top commander in Afghanistan, General John Allen, went out of his way just a couple weeks ago to tell his soldiers that "now is not the time for revenge for the deaths of two US soldiers killed in Thursday's riots" resulting from the burning of Qu'rans, and he urged his soldiers to "resist whatever urge they might have to strike back." Clearly, General Allen was concerned about coordinated military revenge attacks on Afghan civilians.

Afghan doubts about an exclusively American investigation are surely inflamed, again understandably, by the history of untruths by the US military about episodes of violence in Afghanistan. [As the war correspondent Jerome Starkey documented](#): "US-led forces in Afghanistan are committing atrocities, lying, and getting away with it."

Starkey was writing [in the wake of one incident](#) where the American military, thanks to his investigative reporting, got caught out over the wanton killing of Afghan villagers. In February, 2010, US forces entered a village in the Paktia Province in Afghanistan and, after surrounding a home where a celebration of a new birth was taking place, shot dead two male civilians (government officials) who exited the house in order to inquire why they had been surrounded, and then shot and killed three female relatives (a pregnant mother of 10, a pregnant mother of six, and a teenager).

The Pentagon then issued statements insisting that the dead men were insurgents and that the dead women were already gagged and killed inside the house by the time US forces had arrived, victims of an "honor killing." They depicted as liars the Afghan villagers who insisted that it was US soldiers who did the killing and that the dead were all civilians. [American media outlets largely regurgitated](#) the American military version uncritically. But enough evidence subsequently emerged disproving those claims such that [the Pentagon was forced to admit](#) that their original version was totally false and that, just as the villagers attested, it was US troops who killed the women.

As Starkey wrote: "This is perhaps the most harrowing instance" but "it's not the first time I've found Nato lying." Is it any wonder that Afghans do not trust the US government to conduct its own investigation and hold accountable those responsible?

What is most revealed by the decision to remove Bales from Afghanistan is the American belief that no other country – including those its invades and occupies – can ever impose accountability on Americans. This was seen most recently, and vividly, in Iraq.

President Obama's most swooning supporters love to credit him with "ending the war in Iraq," but that is simply not what happened. It was President Bush who entered into an agreement with the Iraqi government mandating the removal of all US forces by the end of 2011. Rather than comply with that agreement, [the Obama administration tried desperately](#) to persuade and pressure the Iraqis to allow American troops to remain beyond that deadline. But those efforts failed because of one cause: the refusal (or, more accurately, the inability) of the Malaki government to agree that US troops would be immunized and shielded from Iraqi law for any future crimes they commit on Iraqi soil.

One prime prerogative of all empires is that it is subject to no laws or accountability other than its own, even when it comes to crimes committed on other nations' soil and against its people. That was the imperial principle that finally compelled America's withdrawal from Iraq, and it is apparently what caused the US to quickly remove the accused shooter from Afghanistan. It may be understandable why the US perceives it in its interest to preserve this imperial power, but it should be equally understandable why its victims react with increasing levels of suspicion, resentment and rage.