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Afghan Villagers Fall Victim to Neighboring US Firing Range

By John Glaser

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Along the outer edge of the largest U.S. Army base in Afghanistan, [a firing range sits on a training ground facing Afghan villages where civilians have been killed](#), dismembered, crippled, and burned by U.S. military ammunition.

Bagram Airbase is located just north of Kabul and the training ground, unfenced and poorly marked, has made numerous Afghan villagers the victims of unexploded ordnance, errant bullets, and metal shrapnel.

“There is no barrier between nearby villages and the range,” reports the Washington Post, “it is unclear where the dusty townships end and the vast military training area begins. The only apparent warnings are scrawled in faded, barely decipherable English lettering on concrete blocks: ‘Small Arms Range’ and ‘Weapon Range.’ There is no translation in Dari or Pashto, the two most common languages in Afghanistan.”

The U.S. Army’s official safety regulations instruct soldiers to “protect civilian and military populations who live and work near live-fire operational ranges,” while Pentagon recommendations state that “physical controls, including fences, barriers, and signs should be constructed where necessary, and will require on-going maintenance.”

But the U.S. has refused to build a fence or barrier around the firing range or to relocate it away from civilians, arguing it would be too expensive. One has to wonder how much they would pay if their children and loved ones were being killed and mutilated, instead of nameless Afghans.

Below are some of photographs the Washington Post has published of the Bagram training grounds, the surrounding villages, and a few of the innocent Afghans effected by their neighboring war base. The Post's captions will also appear with the photos. You can view the whole gallery [here](#).



A girl walks past her home in Parwan province. The East River Range, which is used as a firing range by U.S. and NATO forces, is seen in the distance. Javier Manzano / For The Washington Post



Abdul Rahman, 18, was grazing his sheep when he accidentally detonated a 40mm grenade on the ground, resulting in the loss of his left hand. He lost his right hand a few years ago when he encountered unexploded ordnance in his village in Parwan province. Javier Manzano / For The Washington Post



Some Afghan locals say some rockets do not explode on impact because of the area's sandy ground. Many residents are being injured as they graze their animals or go out collecting metal parts. Two concrete blast walls, with signs written in English, are the only warnings about unexploded ordnance in an unfenced field. Javier Manzano / For The Washington Post



Twelve-year-old Azizadullah, left, sifts through a pile of shrapnel, live bullets, bullet casings and rocket parts at this home in Afghanistan's Parwan province. Many in his community, which is next to Bagram Airfield about an hour's drive northeast from the capital of Kabul, collect metal from test sites and mine fields so they can sell it as scrap to local traders. U.S. and NATO forces conduct missile tests on the mountain range close to this community. Many residents are being injured by unexploded rockets and ammunition. Javier Manzano / For The Washington Post