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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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3 US Marines get slap on wrist for acts of desecration in Afghanistan

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The US military says it is disciplining nine Marines and Army soldiers over two incidents that occurred in Afghanistan in 2011 and 2012, one involving the desecration of Afghan dead bodies and the other the desecration of the Holy Qur'an.

The administrative punishments issued to the nine soldiers on Monday could include reduction in rank and forfeiture of pay. However, the punishments fell short of criminal prosecution.

Three Marines pled guilty to charges of urinating on the dead bodies of Afghans and posing for pictures with the dead.

“Three Marines received non-judicial punishment today for violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice for their role in the desecration and filming of deceased Taliban that became public in January 2012,” the military said in a statement.

The statement did not provide further details on the penalties handed to the convicts, but it noted that action against other Marines involved in the incident would be announced at a later date.

The video footage, which was posted on the video-sharing website YouTube and other websites on January 11, shows the four members of the US Marine Corps in camouflage uniforms making lewd jokes while urinating on the bodies of three Taliban militants.

The actions shown in the video occurred in the Musa Qala district of Helmand Province, in southwestern Afghanistan in July 2011.

The US Marine Corps had said it would investigate the video.

Meanwhile, the US Army spokesman said that six Army soldiers were given administrative punishments for their role in the burning of copies of the Qur’an and other religious materials.

A US military investigation said up to 100 copies of the Qur’an and other religious texts from a detention center library were burned on February 20 in Afghanistan.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has called for a public trial for the soldiers.