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## US-Backed Warlords Trade Reprisal Killings With Taliban

Posted By John Glaser

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Hundreds of Afghan villagers in the northern province of Kunduz staged a protest this week after [US-backed warlords murdered up to 16 civilians as a reprisal](#) for a Taliban assassination of a member of their militia.

These pro-government militias are among the gangs trained, supported, and protected by US Special Operations forces. These militias are the brainchild of Gen. David Petraeus who set them up to act as a bulwark against the Taliban.

But they can be just as brutal as the Taliban. “Many residents complain that the groups often operate outside the law, [extort unofficial taxes](#) from local residents and are prone to act on the basis of ethnic loyalties,” reports the New York Times.

These militias have been using US support to [assert their authority and commit severe crimes against Afghan civilians](#). A Human Rights Watch [report](#) from last September “documents serious abuses, such as killings, rape, arbitrary detention, abductions, forcible land grabs, and illegal raids by irregular armed groups in northern Kunduz province and the Afghan Local Police (ALP).”

In a separate incident last week, the Taliban beheaded two children – a 12-year old boy and a 7-year old girl – were also reported to be reprisal killings: the Taliban’s retaliation for acts of the Afghan Local Police.

“Reports that the young boy was killed by the Taliban to avenge his brother’s service with the Afghan Local Police highlight the challenges in establishing rule of law in Afghanistan,” Amnesty International [said in a statement](#).

America’s build up of pro-government militias coupled with the resilient Taliban insurgency are contributing to violent factionalism and warlordism across Afghanistan.

NATO’s training of Afghan Local Police has been suspended in recent days – not in response to their relentless brutality aim at Afghan civilians, but only to curb the “insider attacks” in which trainees turn their guns on NATO soldiers.

The fact that Obama uses taxpayer money to fund, arm, and train militias widely accused of human rights abuses is bad enough. But the policy is also sowing the seeds of further chaos and potential civil war once the US finally decides to leave.