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Four US-Backed Afghan Police Found Guilty of Rape

By John Glaser

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Four US funded and trained Afghan Local Police were [found guilty of rape on Wednesday](#), in one of the first instances of the thuggish militia group being held to account for its actions.

The four police officers, from Kunduz Province in northern Afghanistan, were sentenced to 16 years in prison for raping 18-year old May of Lal Bibi, although they said their plan was to appeal the verdict.

The Afghan Local Police (ALP) was created in July 2010, and the aim is to reach about 30,000 fighters before withdrawal. In March 2011, Petraeus told the Senate that the ALP is “arguably the most critical element in our effort to help Afghanistan develop the capacity to secure itself.”

But the ALP 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).”

The accused were indignant throughout the trial, with one of them denying what happened was rape because there was “a marriage contract with one of the men” and another claiming the victim was too ugly to have been raped by him and his cohorts.

The ALP has been accused of “beating teenage boys and hammering nails into the feet of one boy,” although no arrests were made. “In April,” the report documents, “four armed ALP

members in Baghlan abducted a 13-year-old boy on his way home from the bazaar and took him to the house of an ALP sub-commander, where he was gang raped.” The perpetrators are well known, but no arrests have been made.

The ALP has raided several houses, stolen personal belongings, beat residents, and illegally detained a number of Afghans. Like in the other cases though, no arrests or investigations have been initiated because of the militias’ patronage links to senior Afghan officials.

One of the accused, following the verdict, said he “would prefer [Taliban leader] Mullah Muhammad Omar’s regime to this unjust government.”

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 bolstering those who decry the US-backed Kabul government and making a post-withdrawal civil war more likely.