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Polish troops face trial over Afghan civilians' killings

On January 9, 2013



Around four Polish troops are due to face trial for killing Afghan civilians in eastern Afghanistan.

The incident took place around five years back and at least eight Afghan civilians including women and children were killed after Polish troops opened fire on a wedding party in Nangar Khel village.

The seven Polish troops were cleared of the war crimes by Polish court due to lack of evidence but the military prosecutors have appealed to the Supreme Court of Poland which resulted in re-trial of four troops while the acquittal of the three others were upheld.

Andrzej Oscieki, Lukasz Bywalec, Damian Ligocki and Tomasz Borysiewicz are reportedly the four Polish troops are going to face retrial for the incident.

The Polish troops deployed under the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) attacked the village in eastern Paktika province of Afghanistan with at least 24 mortar rounds and automatic weapons which killed at least eight civilians including three children.

The prosecutors urged to sentence the Polish troops belonging to 18th Airbone-Assault Battalion with 5 to 12 years of prison.

However the accused British troops are saying that they were responding to Taliban fire and that the civilian deaths had come from faulty mortar equipment.

But the prosecutors deny the claims of the soldiers and said that the incident took place several hours after a differnt patrol was attacked by militants.

Poland has deployed around 2,500 troops in Afghanistan, serving under the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force and it was the first time Polish soldiers had been accused of violating the Hague and Geneva Conventions protecting civilians.