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Hundreds of Afghans protest against US troops in Kabul city

March 16, 2013



Hundreds of Afghan protesters on Saturday protested against the presence US special forces in Maidan Wardak province of Afghanistan.

The protesters chanting “U.S. special operations forces out!” marched to the Afghan parliament building and demanded the release of nine local citizens they believe were detained by the US forces.

This comes as Afghan president Hamid Karzai had given the Americans until March 10 to remove all Special Operations troops from the province.

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The decree by president Karzai was given after following complains by local officials and residents of Maidan Wardak province.

U.S. officials have reportedly acknowledged four men arrested in the province in joint U.S.-Afghan raids, but had no information on the other five alleged detainees.

In the meantime the Ulema Council of Afghanistan also issued a threatening statement on Saturday demanding the withdrawal from Wardak as well as a transfer of the American-controlled prison at Bagram to Afghan control.

“If the Americans once again do not honor their commitments and keep on disobeying, then this will be considered as an occupation, and they may expect to see a reaction to their action.”

The government-funded council, which is the highest Islamic authority in Afghanistan, added that a series of recent anti-US remarks by Karzai were “the true voice of the Muslim people of Afghanistan”.

The statement referred to American forces in Afghanistan as “infidels,” echoing language used by the Taliban.

The fate of prisoners held in Bagram jail has been one cause of a sharp deterioration in US-Afghan ties, with President Hamid Karzai repeatedly pushing to be given full control of the facility north of Kabul.

Mr Karzai’s stance on Wardak, a key province adjacent to Kabul, was one of a series of anti-US moves in recent weeks as his relations with Washington have fallen to a new low.