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44 Afghan soldiers missing in United States since 2015: Pentagon

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At least 44 Afghan soldiers deployed to the United States for training have gone missing in less than two years, it has been reported.

According to officials in Pentagon, at least 8 soldiers have vanished from the training in United States only in the month of September this year.

Pentagon spokesman Adam Stump told Reuters the total number of Afghan troops who have gone missing since January 2015 is 44, a number that has not previously been disclosed.

“The Defense Department is assessing ways to strengthen eligibility criteria for training in ways that will reduce the likelihood of an individual Afghan willingly absconding from training in the U.S. and going AWOL (absent without leave),” Stump said.

According to the paper, some 2,200 Afghan troops have received military training in the United States since 2007 — the incidents raise questions about security and screening procedures for the programs.

However, the official who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said there was no evidence any of those who had absconded had carried out crimes or posed a threat to the United States.

This comes as reports emerged late last month suggesting that three Afghan army cadets went missing from a training exercise in Cape Cod military base in Massachusetts state.

The missing soldiers were identified as Maj. Jan Mohammad Arash, Cpt. Mohammad Nasir Askarzada, and Cpt. Noorullah Aminyar.

Earlier, two Afghan policemen identified as 22-year-old Mohammad Yasin Ataye and 24-year-old Mohd Naweed Samimi vanished during a training visit in United States last week.

The two were among the 31 Afghan police officers who are on a visit in United States to work with the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).