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US faulted for Afghan mercenary use

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Afghan officials have criticized the US-led military forces in Afghanistan for arbitrary deployment of local armed forces, describing the move as a further threat to the security in the war-ravaged country.

The council of northwestern province of Badghis has warned that the effort may bring about insecurity in the province, a Press TV correspondent in Afghanistan reported on Tuesday.

The head of the council Feizollah Azimi said the foreign forces have set up two groups -- each comprised of 600 locals -- in the towns of Bala Marghab and Ghades, assigning them to provide security in the regions.

Azimi pointed out that the US-led forces have so far armed 40 members of the groups and that they continue to do so.

The foreign forces have taken this measure arbitrarily without informing Afghan security officials and the people's representatives in the provincial council, he said.

The head of the council went on to say that the identities of the locals employed by the foreign forces as police officers are still unknown and that has caused concern among the Afghan officials.

The foreign forces have not even coordinated the move with the police chief of the province, Azimi pointed out.

Afghan officials and people are worried that the local armed forces may misuse their arms and equipment to spread violence and insecurity in the region.

Earlier, the US-led forces also announced that they had established local armed forces in Harat province. The move sparked fierce criticism from the provincial officials.

According to a UN announcement, more than 2,700 Afghan civilians lost their lives in 2010. The overall figure is the highest annual death toll since the US-led invasion of Afghanistan ten years ago.