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Rival Taliban Factions Reach Ceasefire, But Mansour Absent

By Jason Ditz *On*
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Months of bloody infighting over the leadership of the Taliban movement has reportedly ended, with a deputy from the splinter faction headed by Mullah Rasool announcing that talks had ended in a ceasefire and an agreement to exchange prisoners.

Questions remain, however, as the splinter delegation was only able to meet with Haibatullah Aktund, a deputy of leader Mullah Mansour, and was told Mansour is refusing to meet with anyone over “security issues.”

On December 2, Mullah Mansour was reportedly “seriously wounded” in a gunfight among Taliban commanders in Quetta, Pakistan. The Taliban denied that he was wounded in the incident, calling it “propaganda,” but he hasn’t been seen in public since.

This is only adding to the speculation that he's in bad shape, with concerns about the Taliban not being forthcoming about leadership changes underscored by the revelation in mid-2015 of founder Mullah Omar's death, leading to Mansour's election. Omar was revealed to have been dead for years.