

# افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نېاشد تن من مېباد      بدین یوم وېر زنده یک تن مېباد  
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم      از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

[www.afgazad.com](http://www.afgazad.com)

[afgazad@gmail.com](mailto:afgazad@gmail.com)

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/18/world/asia/taliban-used-child-soldiers-in-kunduz-battle-rights-group-says.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/18/world/asia/taliban-used-child-soldiers-in-kunduz-battle-rights-group-says.html?_r=0)

## Taliban Used Child Soldiers in Kunduz Battle, Rights Group Says

By DAVID JOLLY

2/17/2016

Child soldiers recruited by the Taliban were used in the battle to overrun the northern city of Kunduz last year, a prominent human rights organization said on Wednesday.

Human Rights Watch reported 13 cases of children recruited to fight for the Taliban in that battle. Its researchers found that the insurgents used Islamic religious schools in the area “to provide military training to children between the ages of 13 and 17, many of whom have been deployed in combat.”

Human Rights Watch said the Taliban begin indoctrinating children from as early as 6 years old. The United Nations has documented that children as young as 10 participated in the fighting in Kunduz, the capital of Kunduz Province.

That northern city was captured in September by Taliban fighters; government forces, backed by United States air power, reclaimed the city days later.

The cases of children found by Human Rights Watch to have fought for the Taliban in that battle included Malek, 14, from the Chahardara district of Kunduz, who was recruited by his teacher. His job was to carry rocket-propelled grenades in a Taliban unit.

An image taken from social media showed a child soldier, Wasil Ahmad, being declared a hero for leading an Afghan militia's defense against a Taliban siege last year. The 10-year-old was killed by a Taliban hit man two weeks ago.

The insurgents rejected the Human Rights Watch report.

"The recruitment of children in the ranks of Islamic Emirate is strictly prohibited," Zabihullah Mujahid, a Taliban spokesman, said in a statement. He cited the Taliban code of conduct that forbids boys too young to grow beards from military camps, from performing jihad or staying with fighters.

[Under international law](#), military recruits must be at least 18, and training or employing soldiers younger than 15 is considered a war crime.

In [Afghanistan](#), insurgents and some government forces continue to use child soldiers, a practice that is particularly widespread among the militias known as the Afghan Local Police. The government of President Ashraf Ghani has been trying to crack down on the use of children, but a lack of accountability at the district and village level limits the reach of the central government.

A 10-year-old boy named Wasil Ahmad, who had fought with the Afghan Local Police against the insurgents, [was killed by a Taliban hit man](#) outside his home in southern Oruzgan Province two weeks ago.

Leila Zerrougui, the [United Nations](#) special representative for children and armed conflict, told a small group of journalists in Kabul on Wednesday that the government needed to be "leading by example," and that whenever violations were discovered, police and military commanders "must be held accountable."

Ms. Zerrougui said there was "no doubt" that government forces had improved their efforts since signing an agreement in 2014 aimed at ending recruitment of children, but that "we still need to ensure more control on how people join the local police."

The United Nations maintains that the bulk of the recruitment of child soldiers is conducted by the Taliban, despite militants' claims to the contrary.

[Afghanistan](#) is one of seven countries that have signed on to the United Nations' "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign. The others are Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Yemen.

"In this country, the majority of the people are under 18," Ms. Zerrougui said, adding: "Many are being deprived of their basic rights. They're not going to school, they're prevented from having hopes for the future."

She called for help from the West, appealing to concerns about the migrant crisis. "If they have access to a better future, then you'll have people who will stay," she said.