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<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/12/08/276857/200-afghan-teens-detained-by-us-forces/>

200 teens detained by US forces in Afghanistan: Report

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The United States says that its military has detained more than 200 teenagers in war-torn Afghanistan since 2008.

The US Department of State revealed that the Afghan teenagers were held at a military prison next to Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan and a few of them are still imprisoned at the Detention Facility in Parwan.

The figure was released in a report sent every four years to the United Nations regarding the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The US military held the teenagers to “prevent a combatant from returning to the battlefield,” the report claimed.

Jamil Dakwar, the director of the American Civil Liberties Union’s human rights program, said on Friday that if the average age is 16, “This means it is highly likely that some children were as young as 14 or 13 years old when they were detained by US forces.”

Dakwar also criticized the length of the detentions, which the State Department report said was one year on average.

“This is an extraordinarily unacceptably long period of time that exposes children in detention to greater risk of physical and mental abuse, especially if they are denied access to the protections guaranteed to them under international law.”

Tina M. Foster, the executive director of the International Justice Network which represents adult and juvenile Bagram detainees, said, “I’ve represented children as young as 11 or 12 who have been at Bagram.”

“I question the number of 200, because there are thousands of detainees at Parwan,” Foster stated on Friday.

“There are other children whose parents have said these children are under 18 at the time of their capture, and the US doesn’t allow the detainees or their families to contest their age.”

The United States and its allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 on the pretext of combating terrorism. The offensive removed the Taliban from power, but years into the invasion, insecurity remains in the country.