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US soldier to admit Kandahar massacre

May 30, 2013



A US soldier charged with killing at least 16 Afghan villagers in southern Kandahar province last year has agreed to plead guilty, his lawyers said on Wednesday.

Army Staff Sgt Robert Bales, 39, agreed to plead guilty in an effort to avoid death penalty. He is expected to enter into a guilty-plea agreement at the next court hearing on June 5.

In the much-denounced incident in Panjwai district, he slaughtered 16 civilians, many of them women and children. He will give specific details in open court as he pleads guilty to the massacre.

"He is ready to accept responsibility for what he has done. The plea has been accepted by the commanding general," Bales' attorney Emma Scanlan said.

The US Army too confirmed that Bales was scheduled to enter into a plea agreement. His sentencing phase of the trial is scheduled for September.