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Afghan colonel arrested over prisoners torture in Wardak

June 4, 2013



According to reports, the government of Afghanistan has arrested a senior army colonel for illegally handing over prisoners to a man working with a U.S. special forces team who was accused of torture and killings.

Tensions escalated between the Afghan government and the international coalition security forces over the alleged detention, torture and murder of villagers in Nerkh district of central Maidan Wardak province by security forces earlier this year.

Afghan president Hamid Karzai later also ordered all foreign troops to leave Nerkh district.

A senior Afghan official quoted by Reuters News Agency said that the Afghan colonel had admitted to handing over several prisoners to a man known as Zakeria Kandahari, who is accused of torturing and killing the villagers.

Zakeria Kandahari has reportedly spent several years with the US forces in Afghanistan, and he has been accused in committing human rights abuses along with the US troops in Wardak province.

In the meantime a senior US official told Reuters that Kandahari had no official status with U.S. forces in Wardak.

“This colonel was handing over detainees to Kandahari, thinking that Kandahari worked for the (U.S.) special forces and they had the authority to question any detainee,” an Afghan official said.

“This was irresponsible and that’s why (the colonel) was himself detained and is being investigated,” he said.

However the arrest of the senior Afghan colonel has not been confirmed by Afghan security institutions so far.