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Afghan-American interpreter arrested in civilians torture case

July 8, 2013

[¹] Afghan defense officials on Sunday announced that the Afghan-american interpreter Zakaria Kandahari, who had been sought on charges of civilians murder, torture and abuse of prisoners was arrested.

Head of the intelligence for the Afgan defense minitry, Maj. Gen. Manan Farahi confirming the report said Zakaria Kandahari working for an American Special Forces Unit had been captured in Kandahar by the National Directorate of Security, the Afghan intelligence service.

Gen. Farahi further added Zakaria Kandahari escaped from an American base in January after President Hamid Karzai demanded his arrest. He was reportedly playing a leadership role, and not just that of an interpreter, in deciding whom to detain for questioning.

Zakaria Kandahari is accused in disappearances and deaths of at least 17 Afghan civilians who were detained by an American Special Forces Team.

General Farahi quoted by New York Times said investigators had determined that of the last 10 people who disappeared in Wardak, only in two cases was there any evidence of possible links with insurgents.

According to Afghan officials Zakaria Kandahari was seen in a video tape torturing the detained civilians, and the dead bodies of the victims were found near the Speical Forces military base.

The issue sparked tensions among the Afghan and US officials with Afghan officials blaming American personnel for being involved in the detentions of the missing civilians.

Afghan president Hamid Karzai ordered all American Special Forces to leave Maidan Wardak province following the accusations, however it was later agreed that US special forces only in Nerkh district should be replaced by Afghan special forces unit.