

Public Statement

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Afghanistan: Amnesty International condemns reported summary executions by the Taleban

Amnesty International condemns the reported execution of Abdul Haq and others on 26 October 2001. The circumstances of Abdul Haq's killing suggest that he may have been extra-judicially executed after he was taken prisoner. "The prohibition of murder is a fundamental principle of international law," Amnesty International said. "All those taken prisoner in the fighting currently taking place in Afghanistan must be treated humanely and should not be executed".

Article 3 Common to the 1949 Geneva Conventions prohibits "murder of all kinds" and "the passing of sentences and the carrying out of executions without previous judgement pronounced by a regularly constituted court". Common Article 3 applies to the internal conflict in Afghanistan and is generally considered a fundamental standard for any kind of armed conflict.

According to reports, Abdul Haq entered Afghanistan several days before his capture in order to consolidate resistance against the Taleban. Abdul Haq, a commander who fought against Soviet troops and Soviet-backed government forces (1979-1989), had been on a mission allegedly to generate support for the return of the Afghan King, Mohammad Zahir Shah. He was reportedly executed, together with his deputy Sayed Hamid, on the same day of his capture in an ambush by Taleban forces. At least one more man accompanying Abdul Haq is believed to have been executed.

A *fatwa*, or religious edict, issued in Kabul in September 2001 reportedly imposes the death penalty for spying. It is believed that this fatwa is being applied by the Taleban against captured opponents. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all circumstances and calls for anyone accused of spying to be tried fairly and not be executed.

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