

AI Index: PRE 01/325/2011
29 June 2011

Afghanistan: Authorities must look to the International Criminal Court to prosecute Taliban attacks

The Afghan government must work with the International Criminal Court to investigate those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Afghanistan, Amnesty International said today, after an attack on a Kabul hotel claimed by the Taliban left at least 10 people dead.

The attack is the latest in a series of serious attacks by insurgents deliberately targeting civilians, including a car bomb attack on a hospital in Afghanistan's eastern Logar province on 25 June, which killed at least 27 people, including many women and children.

“There has been a surge of attacks amounting to violations of international humanitarian law on the part of the Taliban and other insurgent groups – they are becoming far bolder in their deliberate, killing of civilians, which is a war crime, plain and simple,” said Sam Zarifi, Amnesty International’s Asia-Pacific Director.

“These attacks underline the urgent need for the Afghan government to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Court to investigate allegations of war crimes by all sides to the conflict in Afghanistan.” said Sam Zarifi.

Afghanistan is already a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The ICC Prosecutor is currently conducting a preliminary examination in Afghanistan and has requested information from the Government of Afghanistan but not yet received an answer.

“The Afghan people are crying out for justice. The Afghan judiciary is unable and unwilling to deliver for them – only an international, independent body such as the ICC can play this role,” Amnesty International’s Asia Pacific Director Sam Zarifi said.

According to the United Nations the vast majority of civilian casualties are attributed to the Taliban and other insurgent groups. The UN reported that May was the deadliest month for civilians in Afghanistan since 2007, with 82% of civilian casualties attributed to anti-government groups.

“All parties to the conflict, including the United States and NATO, must be held accountable for violations of the laws of war,” said Zarifi.