

**AFGHANISTAN** Approximately 80 prisoners

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of approximately 80 prisoners held by the United Front (commonly known as the Northern Alliance) at Shibarghan, Northern Afghanistan, as they may be at risk of torture or extrajudicial execution.

The prisoners, eighteen of whom are said to be seriously injured, belonged to Taleban forces who had surrendered to the United Front at the besieged city of Kunduz, northern Afghanistan. On 25 November, violent fighting, which reportedly lasted a few days and left hundreds dead, broke out between Taleban prisoners and United Front guards at Qala-i-Jhangi prison, outside the city of Mazar-i Sharif.

The circumstances surrounding the fighting inside Qala-i-Jhangi prison remain unclear, but reports indicate that some prisoners overpowered guards and seized firearms. United States air strikes were used against the Taleban prisoners and British and American special forces were also reportedly involved.

Initial reports indicated that all those held at the Qala-i-Jhangi prison had been killed. However, on 1 December, approximately 80 Taleban prisoners emerged from the prison's basement after United Front forces regained control.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Amnesty International has called for an inquiry into the deaths in Qala-i-Jhangi prison, focusing specifically on what triggered the fighting; any shortcomings in the holding and processing of the prisoners; as well as the proportionality of the response by the United Front, United States and United Kingdom forces. The United Front has stated that it would allow such an inquiry to take place. The United Kingdom has however rejected such a proposal as has the US-led coalition in Islamabad.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- expressing grave concern for the safety of the approximately 80 survivors from Qala-i-Jhangi prison;
- expressing concern at reports that hundreds of prisoners may have been killed within Qala-i-Jhangi prison, demanding a full and independent investigation into the killings, and that the findings of such an inquiry be made public;
- calling for immediate steps to be taken to protect detainees held throughout Afghanistan, urging the authorities to guarantee that none of the detainees will be tortured or ill-treated, and asking that those injured be granted access to medical care;
- calling for proper registration of all detainees in military and civilian custody.

**APPEALS TO:**

The Prime Minister  
The Rt. Hon Tony Blair, MP  
10 Downing Street  
London

United Kingdom

**Telegrams: Prime Minister, London, UK**

**Fax: +44 207 925 0918 / 207 270 0196**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

The President of the United States

President George. W. Bush

The White House

Office of the President

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

Washington DC 20500, USA

**Telegrams: President Bush, Washington DC, USA**

**Fax: + 1 202 456 2461**

**Salutation: Dear Mr President**

His Excellency

The Ambassador

Embassy of the Islamic State of Afghanistan

31 Princess Gate

London SW7 1QQ

United Kingdom

**Telegrams: Ambassador, Embassy of Afghanistan, London, UK**

**Fax: +44 207 581 3452**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

and to diplomatic representatives of United Kingdom, United States and Afghanistan/United Front accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 January 2002