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Afghanistan: Investigate ‘despicable’ beheadings of children

In separate incidents in Afghanistan, a 12-year-old boy was found beheaded on Wednesday and a 7-year-old girl was reportedly beheaded and had her legs amputated by unknown assailants on Thursday.

Amnesty International’s Deputy Director, Asia-Pacific Programme, Polly Truscott said:

“These two acts of despicable killings of children in Kandahar and Kapisa provinces must be subject to prompt, independent and thorough investigations – those responsible must be held to account in trials that meet international standards of fairness, without use of the death penalty.

“Reports that the young boy was killed by the Taleban to avenge his brother’s service with the Afghan Local Police highlight the challenges in establishing rule of law in Afghanistan. The Taleban have denied responsibility. In the past, Afghan insurgent groups have targeted civilians – including children – for their perceived allegiance to the government.

“All parties to the armed conflict in Afghanistan – government forces, international troops, the Taleban and other insurgent groups – must respect their obligations under international humanitarian law. Civilians must be protected from harm at all times and must never be targeted.”

These two incidents come days after Amnesty International condemned the brutal killing of some 17 men and women who were taking part in a music party in Musa Qala district of Helmand province. The Afghan government accused the Taleban of the killings – which took place in an area under their control – but the Taleban also denied responsibility for this attack.

The Taleban reportedly beheaded a 14-year-old Afghan boy in Zherai district in mid-August for “spying” for the Afghan government.