

CLAIMING OVER 12 SOLDIERS INVOLVED IN MASSACRE, AFGHAN LAWMAKERS CALL FOR END OF SOFA IMMUNITY

For the record, I don't trust the investigation the Afghan legislators did into last week's shooting of 16 civilians in Panjwai any more than I trust DOD's own investigation. But it's their country, and they're proceeding with their results—which allege that over a dozen Americans were involved in the attack.

'After our investigations, we came to know that the killings were not carried out by one single soldier. More than a dozen soldiers went, killed the villagers and then burnt the bodies,' lawmaker Naheem Lalai Hameedzai told dpa.

They're also claiming some of the women who were killed were sexually assaulted, which also seems dubious. That claim—like the claims the US has made—are made easier given that the victims have already been buried (as per Islamic custom).

The legislators are using their claims of wider involvement to call on Hamid Karzai to end the immunity US soldiers have under the Status of Forces Agreement.

'We have passed a resolution unanimously to dissolve the military contract, and we have sent the resolution to President Karzai. He has not signed on it yet,' Hameedzai said.

'After the Panjwai incident, we have decided that we do not need any such contracts any more,' he said.

Afghans have asked for a public legal

proceeding in Afghanistan for the alleged murderer. But, according to reports, he was flown to the US over the weekend, while the investigations continue.

Military officials with the NATO-led international forces have said the legal status of international soldiers is regulated in the military technical agreement between Afghanistan and the international community and 'very clearly regulates the responsibility for the legal handling of any activities of the international soldiers. '

As a reminder, an insistence on ending the SOFA is what got the US to withdraw from Iraq against our own wishes. So the threat to eliminate soldiers' immunity might lead us to withdraw earlier than planned.

Ultimately, we may never have more clarity on what happened at Panjwai. As Ken Hardy noted in my last thread on this incident, by evacuating the suspect, Staff Sergeant Robert Bales, to the US, the government has made it much less likely that Afghan witnesses will get to testify in the trial. Which will leave the one of at least two surveillance videos showing Bales activities, but possibly not those of others at the base.