



UNAMA HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT ON MASS KILLINGS IN MIRZA OLANG

KABUL, 20 August 2017 - The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) released today the initial findings of its human rights fact-finding into the 3 to 5 August attack on Mirza Olang village in Sayyad district of Sari Pul province.

UNAMA verified allegations that Taliban and local self-proclaimed Islamic State / Daesh fighters killed at least 36 persons, including civilians and person *hors de combat*, during the attack on Mirza Olang. At least half of the killings took place on Saturday 5 August when Anti-Government Elements stopped families trying to escape the village, separated women and young children, and killed at least 18 people, both civilians and Pro-Government Militia who were *hors de combat* at the time of their killing. Others, including one woman, were reportedly shot while they tried to escape from the village.

“I condemn this blatant targeting of civilians and persons *hors de combat* in clear violation of international law,” said Tadamichi Yamamoto, the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Afghanistan. “The perpetrators of these killings and crimes must be held accountable.”

With regard to allegations of beheadings, UNAMA found no evidence to substantiate such claims. The human rights team through their interviews with witnesses and officials were also unable to verify other claims about abductions of women and sexual violence. Further investigations by competent authorities are required into the allegations of sectarian hatred as a factor in the killings in Mirza Olang, whose residents are mainly Shi’a Muslims.

The Mission welcomes the appointment of a senior team from the Office of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Interior to investigate the attack.

UNAMA’s report makes recommendations to Anti-Government Elements, including that they immediately cease the deliberate targeting of civilians. The report also encourages prompt, impartial and transparent investigations of the attack and killings in Mirza Olang, and to ensure accountability for perpetrators and appropriate redress for the victims.

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The full UNAMA Report ‘Attacks on Mirza Olang Village, Sari Pul Province’ is available at <https://unama.unmissions.org/protection-of-civilians-reports>

UNAMA is mandated to support the Afghan Government and the people of Afghanistan as a political mission that provides 'good offices' among other key services. 'Good offices' are diplomatic steps the UN takes publicly and in private, drawing on its independence, impartiality and integrity, to prevent international disputes from arising, escalating or spreading. UNAMA assists the process of peace and reconciliation; monitors and promotes human rights, including the protection of civilians in armed conflict; promotes good governance; and encourages regional cooperation. The Mission also promotes coherent development support by the international community.