# Asylum rejections for Afghan commandos spark allegations of war crime cover-up



A significant controversy is unfolding regarding the asylum applications of Afghan commandos, known as the "Triples," who fought alongside British forces. Recent revelations have emerged concerning the rejection of 1,585 applications by a Special Forces officer, whose actions appear to be safeguarding sensitive information regarding British military conduct in Afghanistan. These commandos, still at risk from Taliban reprisals, are seen as potential witnesses to alleged war crimes committed by UK Special Forces during operations from 2010 to 2013.

Court documents highlight that the officer dismissed every request, despite the known danger these former soldiers face since the Taliban's resurgence. This rejection coincides ominously with the initiation of a High Court inquiry probing allegations that three separate SAS (Special Air Service) units executed around 80 Afghan captives during night missions. These operations were reportedly conducted in collaboration with the Triples, raising questions about the motivations behind denying their asylum.

Former veterans minister Johnny Mercer has publicly expressed his outrage over the treatment of the Triples. Speaking to a judicial inquiry, he described his efforts to highlight these issues to senior civil servants, only to be met with defensiveness. Mercer stated, "When I raised this as happening to the most senior civil servants in UK Government, one in particular from UK Special Forces claimed he was 'offended' that I could make such a suggestion." This dismissal of valid concerns has spurred Mercer's readiness to support any potential legal action against the government, categorising the situation as "criminal negligence" while voicing fears for the safety of those left vulnerable by the government’s actions.

The ongoing inquiry is exploring troubling allegations that at least 80 Afghan civilians may have been subject to extrajudicial killings by UK forces, a claim bolstered by accounts of a systematic approach to eliminate "fighting-age males" during tactical raids. Testimonies from bereaved families and military insiders assert a culture within special operations that exhibited a "casual disregard for life." Amidst these accusations, serious doubts have arisen over practices of data handling and alleged cover-ups of unlawful killings believed to have involved UK troops.

Adding to the complications are claims by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) that there was no overarching policy preventing the Triples from seeking asylum. However, this assertion faced a swift reversal during the inquiry, revealing a bureaucratic obstacle that effectively blocked their requests. The MoD's contradictory stance raises further concerns over accountability and promptness in resolving the applications of those who served alongside British forces. These allegations not only paint a troubling picture of military conduct in Afghanistan but also exacerbate the plight of Afghan allies now seeking protection in the UK.

The inquiry into the conduct of British special forces underscores the broader implications of military actions and the responsibilities owed to local allies. As the investigation continues, it will shed light on the intersection of ethical accountability, military honour, and the urgent need for a more humane approach to asylum seekers who risked their lives alongside UK personnel. The moral and legal responsibilities to those who served must be confronted, particularly as the deadline for judicial findings approaches later this year.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14744821/Afghan-commandos-denied-asylum-witnessed-war-crimes-British.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/jul/02/eighty-afghan-civilians-may-have-been-summarily-killed-by-sas-inquiry-told> - An inquiry into UK Special Forces' conduct in Afghanistan between 2010 and 2013 revealed that up to 80 Afghan civilians might have been victims of summary killings by three separate SAS units. Lawyers representing bereaved families presented evidence suggesting a policy of terminating all fighting-age males during night raids, regardless of the threat they posed. The inquiry also highlighted internal military concerns about a 'casual disregard for life' and the deletion of critical data related to these operations.
3. <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2023/10/25/pjxo-o25.html> - The 'Independent Inquiry relating to Afghanistan' is investigating allegations of unlawful killings by UK Special Forces in Afghanistan. The inquiry focuses on 54 alleged killings of Afghan civilians between 2010 and 2013, including incidents where Afghan partner units refused to serve with UK forces due to their behavior. Evidence suggests a policy of executing 'fighting age' Afghan males, regardless of threat, and concerns about cover-ups and inadequate investigations by military police are also being examined.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2024/feb/19/uk-special-forces-blocked-resettlement-applications-from-elite-afghan-troops> - UK Special Forces have been accused of blocking resettlement applications from Afghan commandos, known as the 'Triples,' who fought alongside British troops. This action occurred amid a public inquiry into alleged war crimes by the SAS in Afghanistan between 2010 and 2013. The blocking of applications raises concerns about potential conflicts of interest, as Afghan commandos could be key witnesses in the inquiry. The Ministry of Defence is conducting a review of these applications, but delays and inconsistencies have been reported.
5. <https://www.afintl.com/en/202502172269> - The UK Ministry of Defence confirmed that British Special Forces rejected the resettlement requests of over 2,000 Afghan commandos, known as the 'Triples,' who served alongside UK forces in Afghanistan. This decision has been linked to concerns that these commandos could provide crucial testimony regarding alleged war crimes committed by UK forces. The blocking of applications has left many former commandos vulnerable to retaliation by the Taliban, highlighting the complexities of resettlement processes for Afghan personnel.
6. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghan_unlawful_killings_inquiry> - The Afghan Unlawful Killings Inquiry is an independent investigation into allegations of unlawful killings by UK Special Forces in Afghanistan between 2010 and 2013. The inquiry examines claims of summary executions, cover-ups, and inadequate investigations by military police. It also scrutinizes the blocking of resettlement applications from Afghan commandos who served alongside UK forces, raising concerns about potential conflicts of interest and the safety of these individuals amid ongoing investigations.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-68358760> - Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer testified to a public inquiry, recounting 'horrific' accounts from former Afghan special forces members about the SAS executing unarmed detainees and children. These testimonies include allegations of a policy within UK Special Forces to kill 'fighting age' Afghan males, regardless of threat. The inquiry is investigating these claims as part of a broader examination of UK forces' conduct in Afghanistan between 2010 and 2013, including potential cover-ups and inadequate investigations.