

Taliban Condemns Prince Harry's Comment on Afghan Killings

Taliban leader says those killed 'were not chess pieces, they were humans'

By [Middle East Eye](#)

Global Research, January 09, 2023

[Middle East Eye](#) 6 January 2023

Region: [Asia](#), [Europe](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

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The Taliban administration in [Afghanistan](#) has criticised Prince Harry after the British royal said in his memoir that he had killed 25 Afghans when serving as a military helicopter pilot, describing them as "chess pieces removed from the board".

"The western occupation of Afghanistan is truly an odious moment in human history and comments by Prince Harry is a microcosm of the trauma experienced by Afghans at the hands of occupation forces who murdered innocents without any accountability," Abdul Qahar Balkhi, spokesperson for the Taliban-led Afghan foreign affairs ministry, said.

Harry's highly personal book *Spare* went on sale in Spain days before its global launch on 10 January. In one section of the [memoir](#), the 38-year-old recounts his two tours in Afghanistan, first as a forward air controller in 2007/08 and again in 2012, when he was an Apache helicopter pilot in the British Army Air Corps deployed to Camp Bastion in the south of the country.

"It's not a number that fills me with satisfaction, but nor does it embarrass me," Harry wrote, according to the Spanish version of the book. "When I found myself plunged in

the heat and confusion of combat, I didn't think of those 25 as people.

"They were chess pieces removed from the board, Bad people eliminated before they could kill Good people."

Anas Haqqani, leader of the Taliban, condemned the remarks on Twitter, [saying](#):

"Mr. Harry! The ones you killed were not chess pieces, they were humans; they had families who were waiting for their return. Among the killers of Afghans, not many have your decency to reveal their conscience and confess to their war crimes."

1/3- Mr. Harry! The ones you killed were not chess pieces, they were humans; they had families who were waiting for their return. Among the killers of Afghans, not many have your decency to reveal their conscience and confess to their war crimes. pic.twitter.com/zjDwoDmCN1

— Anas Haqqani(انس حقاني) (@AnasHaqqani313) [January 6, 2023](#)

"I don't expect that the ICC will summon you or the human rights activists will condemn you, because they are deaf and blind for you. But hopefully these atrocities will be remembered in the history of humanity," he added.

The Duke of Sussex also credited his effectiveness as an Apache gunner to his fondness for video games. "It's a joy for me because I'm one of those people who loves playing Playstation and Xbox, so with my thumbs I like to think that I'm probably quite useful," he said.

The Taliban, a militant group that first took power in Afghanistan in the 1990s, was not responsible for the 9/11 attacks but was accused by the US of harbouring fighters belonging to al-Qaeda, the group which was.

In late 2001, the US and its close allies invaded Afghanistan, which has remained in a state of turmoil and instability ever since. As of September 2021, more than 70,000 Afghan and Pakistani civilians are estimated to have died as a direct result of the war.

In addition to the Taliban, the royal was also [criticised](#) by his fellow British servicemen.

"That's not how you behave in the army; it's not how we think. He has badly let the side down. We don't do notches on the rifle butt. We never did," retired British Army colonel Tim Collins told [Forces News](#).

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