

Press Release

Australia's War Crime Report

The Australian government is set to release details of alleged war crimes committed by Australian Defense Forces in Afghanistan.

Persistent claims of misconduct by Australian forces in Afghanistan have been surfacing for years, including against those awarded distinguished medals for their service in Afghanistan.

The Australian government, for its part, has been dragging its feet on this front and made every attempt to bury these testimonies. With its hand forced, the Australian government will now release a 'redacted' version of its war crimes inquiry.

Hizb ut Tahrir / Australia says the following in this regard:

1. The devastation of the allied invasion of Afghanistan needs no introduction. Australia, as part of this effort, is responsible for the wholesale destruction of an entire nation. A report, on the back of self-imposed enquiry, will never alleviate Australia of the criminality meted out against the entire Afghan population.

2. The horrors inflicted in Afghanistan are known realities. The levelling of entire cities, the employment of the most destructive weaponry experienced since Hiroshima, the establishment of torture chambers, Bagram Airbase, rendition programs and kill charts, with the dead paraded as nothing more than memorabilia for depraved soldiers. The world is not waiting for an enquiry to capture the nature or magnitude of what was experienced firsthand.

3. There is absolutely no confidence in Australia investigating itself for alleged war crimes. On the basis of national security, the true horrors of Australia's conduct in Afghanistan will never be acknowledged, in the same way Barack Obama prevented the release of the most incriminating imagery from Abu Ghraib in Iraq.

4. Enquiries of this sort are nothing more than tokenistic, face saving exercises. Individuals may be sacrificed, promises of improvement offered, assurances of highest standards reiterated. But the ugly reality of Australia's war machine will continue unabated, cloaked in a benign benevolence and further validated by a hollow judicial process.

5. Australia's former Prime Minister John Howard offered a 'sorry' in response to the disaster that was the Iraq invasion. George W Bush accepted they got intelligence 'wrong'. Words and platitudes in lieu of millions of lives perished and entire nations ruined. There has never been any accountability, nor can there ever be when criminals are tasked with investigating themselves.

No doubt, Scott Morrison will extend this tradition when his hand is forced too. Unsurprisingly, the conclusion has already been drafted when he says pre-emptively: 'There is some disturbing conduct here, but we cannot take that and apply it to everyone who has pulled on a uniform and if we did this, that would be grossly unjust'.

6. Australia's war crimes investigation seems in part to be an effort to undermine the possibility of Australian forces tried in the International Criminal Court (ICC). This is the same court whose judges America has threatened with retribution should a criminal case be raised against them. Leaning on America's example, Australia has sought to circumvent the ICC too, insisting only Australians can investigate Australian conduct. Whilst there is no confidence in the ICC as a body, even the pretence Australia being held to the same standards as everybody else is too much to bear.

7. The world is in desperate need of a new mode of conduct. For far too long criminal states in both the East and West have acted with absolute impunity. International frameworks established to regulate the post WWII order were designed as an extension of such power, and the decades that ensued witnessed one of the greatest transfers of wealth and power known to man, all on the backs on the poorest and most destitute.

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