



UK Forces Violence Against Children, Afghanistan 2012

To: otp.informationdesk@icc-cpi.int

Hello

I served in the British Army in Afghanistan as part of Operation Herrick 16 (April to October 2012).

One of my duties was to provide 'top cover' (manning the machine gun on top of the vehicle) during Combat Logistic Patrols around Helmand.

We were instructed to escalate force against Afghan children (aged c.8 to 14 years) as we drove through their villages. My orders / instructions were:

- to throw stones at said children
- to fire mini flares (phosphorus) so that the flare would bounce off the ground near the children
- that threatening the children with rifles / machine guns had no effect, but that they were scared of pistols and that we could use these threateningly to intimidate and scare them

I refused to carry out these orders as i felt they endangered both British and Afghan lives and believed them to be illegal. I was consequently punished and humiliated for refusing this order. I did make alternative suggestions to how we could tackle the problem of children throwing stones at us / attempted thefts off moving vehicles but these were ignored.

I left the Army in April 2013 and waited six months (time limit that i was still subject to military law) before reporting this to the British Army Discipline office in October 2013, hoping some action would be taken. I do not believe that this has been actioned by the Brigadier whom i submitted a formal signed statement too, and i believe i have since suffered repercussions in civilian life for making this complaint.

I have since reported it to the UK Government Defence Select Committee, but again i do not think any action has been taken.

Is the use of phosphorus as an offensive weapon and general violence against children, by the British Army, a matter that the ICC would pursue?

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