

Canada must withdraw from 'inhumane' war: Taliban spokesman

Last Updated: Friday, June 13, 2008 / 5:29 AM ET [Comments0](#)[Recommend18](#)
[CBC News](#)

A Taliban spokesman is urging Canadians to pressure their government to pull its troops out of war-torn Afghanistan.

In an interview with CBC News, Qari Yousef Ahmadi said the only reason Canadians are involved in the war is because the United States influenced them to join.

"I ask the Canadian people to ask their government to stop their destructive and inhumane mission and withdraw your troops," said Ahmadi, speaking on his cellphone from an undisclosed location in Afghanistan.

"Our war will continue as long as your occupation forces are in our land."

Ahmadi, considered by Western media outlets to be a legitimate representative of the Taliban central council, said the Taliban will continue to fight occupation forces until they are driven out of the country, just as the Afghan mujahideen resistance continued to fight Russian troops until they withdrew in the 1980s.

Ahmadi said if the public knew the truth about the Afghan war, they would be horrified.

He said NATO countries are hiding the true number of casualties they've had since the mission began in 2001.

Killing more civilians

He also argued that while NATO accuses the Taliban of killing more civilians than soldiers with its suicide bombing, the United States is killing even more civilians when it bombs villages and towns.

"I invite you to contact these people in the villages; you can find out for yourself," he said.

Canadian military analyst Sunil Ram said Ahmadi's points are not completely off base. Ram said independent studies show that the American military has underestimated the number U.S. soldiers killed and wounded.

Ram, a former officer in the Canadian Forces who teaches at the American Military University in Charlestown, W.Va., said Canada's tally of dead soldiers is accurate — a total of 85 soldiers have been killed since Canada first sent troops to Afghanistan in February, 2002.

But Ram noted that the number of wounded has never been made clear.

He also agrees that the U.S. has done widespread bombings during the mission.

"The Americans will come in and flatten a village," he said. "It's standard tactic."

Eradication of poppies 'secondary'

Ahmadi also touched on the Afghan drug trade in his interview with CBC News, denying the allegations that the Taliban is funded by profits from poppy crops and the heroin trade.

He said that while Taliban is against the drug trade, because it is Islamic, the organization is not focused on eradicating Afghanistan's numerous poppy fields.

"Our priority is to expel the foreign soldiers who have invaded our countries," he said. "At the moment, eradication of the poppies is a secondary issue."

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