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## Report Names Abusers in Afghan Wars

By [CARLOTTA GALL](#)

KABUL, Afghanistan, July 17 - The first report to cover human rights abuses committed over the full two and a half decades of war in Afghanistan was released here on Sunday, identifying militia leaders responsible for some of the worst atrocities since 1978; many are candidates in the national elections scheduled for Sept. 18.

"The point of the report is to name names," said Patricia Gossman, who wrote the 180-page report for an independent research organization, the Afghan Justice Project, set up to document war crimes and financed mainly by the Open Society Institute, founded by the financier George Soros.

"To get information into the public domain is the only tool at this point available in the time we have in the next several months to at least ensure that there is some information about people that we believe have enough serious charges against them, that they should not be considered candidates for these posts," she said.

The report holds some important faction leaders and military commanders who are running for seats in the upper and lower houses of the Afghan National Assembly responsible for commanding troops that committed mass rape, torture, and indiscriminate shelling and killing. It implicitly criticizes the policy of the Afghan government and the United Nations of drawing warlords into politics to try to shift the country from a long history of fractured rule through force.

Afghan law excludes convicted war criminals from holding office, but any such trials are hard to foresee, given the policy of inclusion, as well a struggling judiciary and limited documentation of crimes.

The Afghan Election Commission, which has vetted candidates, announced last week that, after putting 208 candidates on a list for disqualification, it was barring only 11 candidates because of their links to armed groups.

The 11 include only one commander of any significance, said an Afghan human rights official; the others were mostly midlevel regional commanders.

The report, with many new firsthand interviews with witnesses and victims, focuses on the series of leaderships in power since 1978.

Some of the worst abuses of the entire period of war occurred under Afghan Communist leaders, from April 1978 until December 1979, the report says, with mass arrests and disappearances, summary executions, torture and massacres. The ensuing 10-year occupation by the Soviet

Union was characterized by indiscriminant bombing and reprisals against civilians, and widespread arrests, detention and torture. The report cites the entire Soviet Politburo and security ministries, as well as Afghan ministers serving during the Soviet period.

Cited in particular were Sayyid Muhammad Gulabzoi, who as the interior minister controlled the police force, and Shahnawaz Tanai, who as defense minister was in charge of the Afghan Army.

Mr. Gulabzoi has registered as a candidate for Parliament from his home province of Khost. Mr. Tanai's newly registered political party is fielding candidates.

The mujahedeen factions that took power after the Soviet withdrawal are all blamed in the report for committing atrocities, from the shelling of civilian areas to executions and mass rape of civilians.

Faction leaders, as well as individual commanders, are identified. One is Abdul Rasul Sayyaf, who holds no official position but retains considerable influence as leader of one of the jihadi parties. Another is Muhammad Mohaqeq, who ran against Hamid Karzai in the election for president last year. A third is Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, who currently holds a ceremonial military position.

The report points out that one of the country's current vice presidents, Karim Khalil, was also a factional leader commander in the early 1990's.

It also notes that Hajji Sher Alam, whose men were directly involved in one of the most notorious massacres of 1993 - at Afshar in western Kabul, where a whole district was flattened amid mass killings and rapes - was recently appointed governor of Ghazni Province, south of Kabul. Ms. Gossman called his appointment "appalling."

The report moves on to detail the worst massacres of the Taliban military offensives in the late 1990's, and identifies Taliban commanders. Ms. Gossman said some were at large in Pakistan and some in American custody, although they are not being held on suspicion of war crimes.

In the most recent cases of abuses, the report criticizes United States forces for mistreating detainees, and for working with many commanders who were suspected of crimes, enabling those men to entrench themselves in the new power structures.

Ms. Gossman said her project had only covered a fraction of the crimes committed during the years of war. Civil society groups were meeting to see how they could disseminate the report to a wider audience, and the government was moving slowly to establish the necessary structures within the administration to deal with the issue, she said.

"Afghans very much want the opportunity to be able to tell their stories," she said, and have not had that chance. "What happened to them, what happened to their families. So many have been victims and so many have never had what is really a right to the truth, a right to be acknowledged officially.