

Memo to America: Stop Murdering My People

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Amid increasing civilian deaths and resurgent warlordism, Afghan women's leader Malalai Joya writes that Hamid Karzai and the U.S. are losing credibility in Afghanistan day by day.

By Malalai Joya, [The Daily Beast](#), April 19, 2010



Almost every day, the NATO occupation of our country continues to kill innocent people. Each time, it seems, military officials try to claim that only insurgents are killed, or they completely deny and cover up their crimes. The work of a few courageous journalists is the only thing that brings some of these atrocities to light.

For instance, it was only after the reporting of Jerome Starkey of the Times of London that officials admitted to the brutal Feb. 12 murder of two pregnant women, a teenage girl, and several young men in a night raid at a home where a family was celebrating the birth of a child.

Night raids, air raid “mistakes,” firing on civilian buses and cars at checkpoints—the occupation finds many ways of killing the people of Afghanistan. The excuses and lies for these deaths are like salt in our wounds, and it is no wonder that protests against the U.S. military are growing. The Afghan people have had enough.

In recent weeks, there has been much talk about Hamid Karzai’s threats to join the Taliban and about his supposed differences with the American government. But for Afghans, Karzai long ago lost all credibility. The joke among our people is that Karzai doesn’t do or say anything without consulting the White House first. No amount of nationalistic rhetoric or demagoguery on his part will change this perception.

Everyone in Afghanistan knows that Karzai was placed into power with the backing of the United States and its allies, and to this day he relies on their support. His regime would not last a day without it. And Afghans know too well the reality of his corrupt government: It has

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delivered nothing to the country's poor other than sorrow and destitution, while filling the pockets of drug traffickers, warlords, and its own corrupt officials.

Afghanistan has had puppet leaders before, rulers who served only the interests of foreign occupiers, whether British or Soviet. But Karzai may be the most hated puppet in our history; he has empowered some of the most brutal internal enemies of ordinary Afghans, warlords of the Northern Alliance like Sayyaf, Dr. Abdullah, Rabbani, Mohaqiq, Ismael Kahn, Dostum and many others. Even his two vice presidents, Fahim Qasim and Karim Khalili, are notorious fundamentalist warlords. The president's brother in Kandahar, Ahmed Wali Karzai, is another thug in power whose links to the drug trade and the CIA have been widely reported.

Karzai made headlines by threatening to "join the Taliban," but the reality is that for more than eight years he has had no problem working with fundamentalists who are the ideological brothers of the anti-women Taliban. In fact, Karzai himself used to support the Taliban when he was a minor tribal leader in Kandahar in the 1990s, and for years he has been negotiating to bring Taliban leaders into his puppet regime. Some of them are already serving in his regime, and the U.S. government has been encouraging these negotiations by creating the false categories of "moderate" and "extremist" Taliban.

He has also been reaching out to that most brutal warlord and criminal, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a mujahideen leader known for killing civilians and currently designated a terrorist by the U.S. government. Karzai recently appointed Abdul Hadi Arghandewal, an infamous leader of Hekmatyar's party, as his minister in charge of the economy. These negotiations and flexible alliances by Karzai and the U.S. government are nothing new. For three decades, the U.S. has backed these criminals: Hekmatyar, al Qaeda and other fundamentalists in the 1980s, the Taliban in the 1990s, and now Karzai and his warlord allies.

Progressive-minded Afghans want to break out of this circle of warlordism once and for all. It is ironic that Karzai talks about the possibility that a "national resistance" could develop in Afghanistan. He should know that the prime target of such a movement will be his own regime and its foreign supporters.

Our people are deeply fed up. They have organized many anti-U.S. protests in the past months and if the occupation continues, the resistance will only grow. More than eight years of occupation have made life bleak, and we are tired of being pawns in the U.S. and NATO's game for control of Central Asia.

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We can no longer bear the killing of our pregnant mothers, the killing of our teenagers and young children, the killing of so many Afghan men and women. We can no longer bear these “accidents” and these “apologies” for the deaths of the innocent.

We salute the anti-war movements in the NATO countries. Here, we will struggle to our last breath to stop this war that is tearing apart our beloved Afghanistan.

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*Malalai Joya, now 31, was the youngest member of the Afghan parliament, elected in 2005. In 2007 she was suspended from parliament because of her consistent criticism of the warlords and other human-rights abusers in the Karzai regime. Joya has survived five assassination attempts to date, and has written her life story in the book *A Woman Among Warlords* (with Derrick O'Keefe, Scribner, 2009). She writes from Kabul, Afghanistan.*