



National Latina/o
Psychological Association
Asociación Nacional de Psicología Latina

October 9, 2015

The Honorable Ash Carter
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Carter:

The members of the National Latina/o Psychological Association are absolutely outraged by the apparent inaction on the part of U.S. government officials to protect Afghan children from pedophiles on U.S. military installations in Afghanistan.

Media reports allege that scores of children are being used as “sex slaves” at the hands of American backed militia, and service members have been instructed to ignore the sexual abuse so as to not interfere with the broader military mission. These reports point towards a disturbing suggestion that strategy trumps integrity and that there is little value for the lives of innocent children. Ignoring these egregious acts is tantamount to condoning behavior that psychological science has demonstrated will cause significant physical and emotional harm to these children over the course of their lifespan. The increased risk for devastating consequences that stem from childhood sexual abuse is well-established and it is our responsibility to speak out against these reprehensible acts of exploitation. We are also extremely troubled by the reports that American personnel who have taken action and/or spoken out may have been disciplined rather than lauded for their intervention.

We share the same concerns outlined in a letter addressed to you by the American Psychological Association dated 9/22/15. We must protect young children at all cost and with no exception. Children must be supported and nurtured if a society is to make any progress. We cannot sit idly by and watch innocent lives be destroyed. The effects of a collective inaction will be far-reaching for all involved as we also acknowledge the impact on the bystanders who are powerless witnesses to this horrific situation. Thus, we strongly urge the Department of Defense to act upon these allegations and protect the young lives that are being preyed upon by American backed Afghan allies. We trust and hope that you will stand for what is right and just and demonstrate to the world that the U.S. does not tolerate child abuse of any kind. We stand ready to provide support and guidance around this very difficult issue.

Sincerely,

NLPA Leadership Council
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