

EXHIBIT 2

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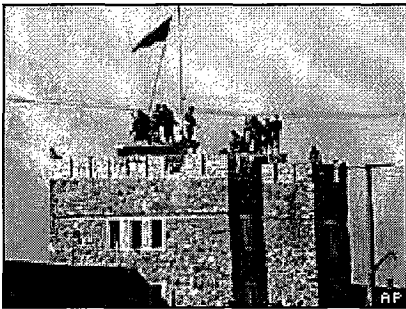
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Monday, 8 October 2007, 15:40 GMT 16:40 UK

Fifteen executed in Afghanistan



Fifteen people in Afghanistan have been put to death for crimes including murder, government officials say.

They say that the firing squad deaths are the second confirmed executions since the fall of the Taliban in 2001.

Officials say the 15 were shot at Afghanistan's largest prison Pul-e-Charkhi. The last such executions were in April 2004.

Pul-e-Charkhi is a huge prison complex built in the 1970s on the outskirts of the Afghan capital, Kabul.

Commonplace

Correspondents say the vast and run-down jail is notorious for the disappearance and torture of thousands of Afghans during the country's communist era.

Officials say the executions took place on Sunday evening according to Afghan law, which stipulates that condemned prisoners should be shot.



Correspondents say public executions were commonplace during the Taliban's rule, when many people were put to death at the war-shattered Kabul stadium.

The last person to be executed - in April 2004 - was military commander Abdullah Shah, who was found guilty of a series of murders.

Analysts say President Karzai may have authorised the latest executions because he wants to send out a message ahead of elections next year that he is tough on crime.

About 300 people are currently on death row for crimes such as murder, rape and armed robbery.

Others have been condemned for kidnapping and "political crimes" such as bombings and anti-government activities.

The Pajhwok Afghan News agency has reported that some of those who were shot on Sunday were "low-level militants". It did not state whether or not they were linked to the Taliban.