



CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCE
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General Petr Pavel
Chairman
Military Committee
NATO Headquarters

Dear Petr

Thank you for taking the time to speak with me on Sunday, as discussed a book entitled 'Hit and Run' was published in New Zealand. This book suggested that members of the New Zealand Special Air Service may have engaged in unlawful conduct while participating in a specific coalition operational mission on 21/22 August 2010 in Afghanistan. This book can be construed as alleging that the New Zealand Defence Force were involved in a coalition operation that deliberately targeted civilians and deliberately destroyed property on a large scale.

Such allegations are of serious concern to me because they strike at the heart of the professionalism and integrity of our New Zealand Defence Force personnel, and of our coalition partners. Where such allegations have substance, I must act upon them.

I have reviewed all the information currently available to me thoroughly. The information I have seen clearly shows the New Zealand Defence Force and coalition personnel involved in this operation taking deliberate steps to ensure that the operation was conducted in accordance with the Law of Armed Conflict and the rules of engagement. My current view of this matter is that there was no unlawful conduct as alleged.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Incident Assessment Team investigated this operation. The report is entitled *Incident Assessment Team Executive Summary, 26 August 2010: CIVCAS Allegation during TF-81 Level II Deliberate Detention Op in Tigiran Village, Talawe Berfak District, Baghlan Province, RC North*. The New Zealand Defence Force was provided with the Executive Summary of the investigation, which states **PSR(R)1, PSR(IC)4**

However, in order for me to confirm the efforts that our personnel went to in order to minimise the risk of harm to civilians and their property, I seek your support in releasing to me the full report.

Please be assured that my request is intended to enable me to demonstrate the significant efforts and risks our military forces go to in attempting to safeguard civilians, and the professional manner in which they conduct themselves.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

T.J KEATING
Lieutenant General
Chief of Defence Force