

PHR

Physicians for
Human Rights

20 years of advancing health, dignity and justice

A. Frank Donaghue
Chief Executive Officer

Leonard S. Rubenstein JD
President

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert S. Lawrence, MD
President

Frank Davidoff, MD
Vice President

Holly G. Atkinson, MD
Immediate Past Chair

Chris Seton Abele
Argosy Foundation

Greg C. Carr
Carr Foundation

Felton Earls, MD
Harvard Medical School

Carola Eisenberg, MD
Harvard Medical School

H. Jack Geiger, MD, MSci
City University of New York Medical School

Justice Richard J. Goldstone
Justice of the South African
Constitutional Court, Retired

Joel Lamstein
President, John Snow, Inc. (JSI)
President, World Education, Inc.

Jennifer Leaning, MD, MPH
Harvard School of Public Health

Burton J. Lee, MD
Indian River County, FL
Commissioner of Health

Vin Ryan
Schooner Capital Corporation

Anne Stetson, JD, MIA
Lighthouse Consulting

Gerald E. Thomson, MD
Professor of Medicine Emeritus
Columbia University

Ronald Waldman, MD, MPH
Columbia University

December 22, 2008

General David D. McKiernan (USA)
USFOR-A/ISAF Commander

Dear General McKiernan:

I am writing to formally request that you, in your role as Supreme Commander of all NATO forces in Afghanistan, directly contact the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) to offer ISAF assistance to ensure that the Dasht-e-Leili mass grave near Sheberghan is immediately protected. Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) sent a letter to President Karzai last week asking him to request ISAF assistance in securing the site (see attached). As you know, McClatchy Newspapers reported on December 11, 2008 that the site had been, at least partially, destroyed, allegedly by General Abdul Rashid Dostum.

PHR, in its own capacity and under contract to the UN, has been investigating the Dasht-e-Leili mass grave and the events surrounding its creation for seven years. We are deeply concerned that evidence of possible war crimes may have been removed from the site—a serious violation of international law. The site must be urgently protected, both to allow substantiation of the alleged recent tampering with the mass grave and to protect any remaining evidence of the original alleged war crimes.

Additionally, PHR asks you to coordinate any ISAF protection operation in support of GoA efforts to secure the site with UNAMA. It is essential that, under GoA leadership, ISAF and the UN move speedily to establish a security cordon around Dasht-e-Leili, launch an official investigation into the case, and make sure that any witnesses are protected.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. Thank you.

Sincerely,



A. Frank Donaghue
Chief Executive Officer
Physicians for Human Rights