**Afghan Couple Stoned to Death by Taliban**

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VOA News

*http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/asia/Afghan-Couple-Stoned-to-Death-by-Taliban-100779669.html*

Afghan officials say Taliban militants have publicly stoned to death a man and a woman accused of having an affair.

The killings took place Sunday in Mullah Qali, a village in the northern province of Kunduz.

The man was married to someone else and the woman was engaged. Both of them were in their 20s.

A Taliban official who refused to give his name told the French news agency AFP that the couple confessed before they were killed.

Earlier this month, Taliban insurgents reportedly flogged and executed a pregnant woman in the western province of Baghdis.

Human rights group Amnesty International called the killing a heinous crime. The human rights group said it was the first stoning death it could confirm to have taken place in Afghanistan since the Taliban was overthrown by U.S.-led forces in 2001.

Amnesty said the stoning came two days after Afghanistan's highest Islamic religious body, the Council of Ulema, called on the government to enforce sharia or Islamic law punishments more strictly, as a concession to the Taliban in an attempt to end the war.

The international rights group urged the Afghan government to ensure human rights are protected as it deals with the Taliban.

The ancient practice of death by stoning has been abandoned by most Islamic countries. It is still a legal punishment in Iran, which justifies it under sharia.