

Traitor Afghan soldier who murdered three Australian soldiers is quietly set FREE in a prisoner exchange deal with the Taliban - and Australian officials have no idea where he is

- **Former Afghan National Army sergeant Hekmatullah released from house arrest**
- **He killed three Australian soldiers back in 2012 and vowed he would do it again**
- **A government spokesperson said officials lost track of the killer after his release**
- **Grieving families of the soldiers ruthlessly murdered are desperate for answers**

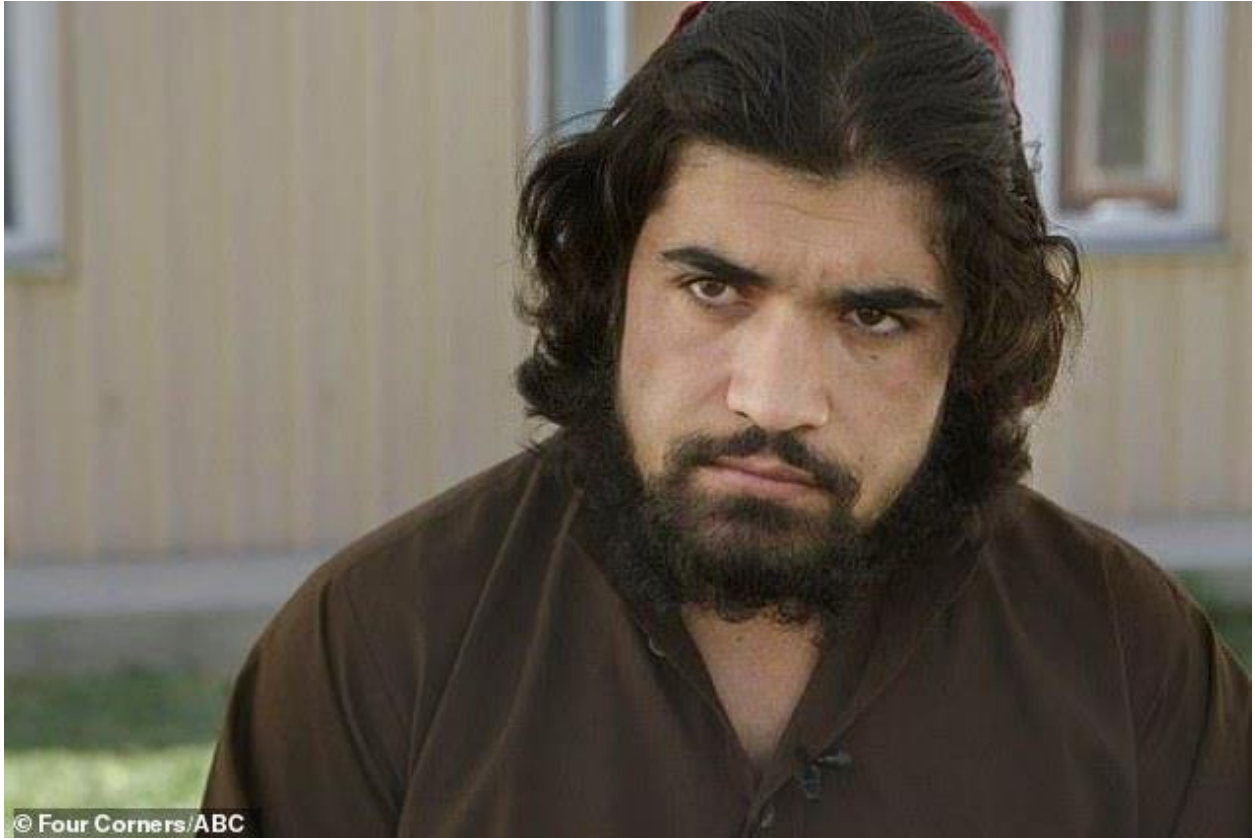
By [Olivia Day For Daily Mail Australia](#)

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A rogue Afghan soldier who ruthlessly murdered three Australians soldiers has been set free and officials have no idea where he is.

Former Afghan National Army sergeant Hekmatullah shot Lance Corporal Stjepan 'Rick' Milosevic, Private Robert Poate, and Sapper James Martin while they were playing cards near Australia's main base in Tarik Kowt in August 2012.

The so-called green on blue attack also wounded two others, prompting a six-month manhunt that ended in Hekmatullah's arrest in [Pakistan](#).



Former Afghan National Army sergeant Hekmatullah (pictured) killed three Australian soldiers and wounded two others near Australia's main base in Tarik Kowt in August 2012



Hekmatullah was quietly released from house arrest in Doha shortly after Taliban forces took power in Kabul (pictured, Taliban fighters in Kabul on October 3)

However, the confessed killer was released from house arrest in Qatar shortly after Taliban forces invaded and occupied Kabul, [The Australian](#) reported.

Defence officials informed the grieving families of Hekmatullah's three victims, but until now did not disclose his release to the public.

The rogue Afghan soldier was one of 5,000 people released in a prisoner exchange with the US as part of peace negotiations.



Rogue Afghan soldier Hekmatullah (pictured) has vowed he will kill again

He was consequently flown to Doha where he remained under house arrest before he was recently allowed to walk free.

In another blow to the families of the murdered soldiers, Australian authorities admit they no longer know where the rogue Afghan soldier is.

'His whereabouts cannot be verified,' a government spokesman said.

'We share the sorrow of Australians at this outcome and again offer our condolences to the families and the loved ones of our three fallen soldiers.'

While Hekmatullah is predicted to return to family in Afghanistan the whereabouts of the six other 'high-risk prisoners' under house arrest remains unclear.

Kelly Walton, the widow of Lance Corporal Milosevic, said many of her questions regarding her husband's cold-blooded killer remain unanswered.

Defence was unable to confirm if Hekmatullah was allowed to stay in Qatar, or was transported to Afghanistan.





Pictured Above: Lance Corporal Stjepan Milosevic, Sapper James Martin and Private Robert Poate

Officials were similarly unhelpful when she asked whether the confessed killer was being monitored by international agencies or had a passport.

The liaison officer who was tasked with breaking the news to Ms Walton said he was told to advise Hekmatullah was released from house arrest.

Hugh Poate, the father of Private Robert Poate, said defence officials provided their 'general lack of transparency' by not disclosing his release to the public.

Mr Poate said he expected the Afghan soldier's to be set free after the US withdrew from Afghanistan in July, following two decades of warfare.

Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Home Affairs administrators will be questioned by a Senate committee on their knowledge of Hekmatullah's release on Monday.



Defence, Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs administrators will be questioned by a Senate committee on their knowledge of Hekmatullah's release on Monday (pictured, Afghan Taliban fighters near the Afghanistan - Pakistan border)



Long-range patrol vehicles carry Sapper James Martin and Private Robert Poate to the aircraft that will return them to their families in Australia in September of 2012

The consequences of the Taliban's rule in Afghanistan will also be examined with a reflection on the withdrawal of Australian troops, first announced in April.

Following Hekmatullah's arrest in the Pakistani city of Quetta the soldier confessed to the murders and vowed he would kill again.

Australia indicated the killer should serve a 'just and proportionate' sentence but his victims families said this wasn't enough.

Family of the slain Australian soldiers said the US should have been encouraged to kill Hekmatullah with a drone strike when he was spotted in Pakistan.