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UK Military Breach Widens: Intelligence and Special Forces Exposed in Afghan Leak

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A major data leak tied to Britain's involvement in Afghanistan has deepened, now implicating over 100 UK intelligence officers and Special Air Service (SAS) veterans. The scandal has intensified public concern after a High Court disclosure confirmed their personal information was among details leaked in early 2022.

The breach first made headlines due to the exposure of thousands of Afghan nationals who had assisted British forces during the two-decade conflict. However, revelations this week confirm that the compromised data also included sensitive identities from within British defence and intelligence communities. Among those named are both active and former members of the United Kingdom's Special Forces, as well as individuals linked to the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), commonly referred to as MI6.

The disclosure, which had previously been the subject of a super injunction, a legal mechanism that prevents media coverage, has now entered the public domain after legal restrictions were lifted. The use of such court orders to suppress reporting, especially in matters of public interest and national security, has sparked renewed debate over government transparency and media freedom. Although the injunction originated under the previous Conservative-led administration, it remained in effect well into the current government's tenure.

The leak occurred in February 2022 and reportedly stemmed from mishandled data within the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP), a program intended to protect Afghans who had worked with British forces. As the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan, many of those named in the breach have faced growing risks. Families of affected Afghans have voiced their fears to media outlets, citing direct threats and the inability to safely relocate due to the exposure.

Legal experts and former defence officials are now questioning the protocols that allowed such sensitive information to be mishandled. Sir Richard Dearlove, former head of MI6, has warned that the breach represents “a failure of operational security at the highest levels,” and has called for a formal inquiry. Calls are also mounting for Parliament to investigate how such a lapse could occur and what safeguards are in place to prevent similar incidents. This case has reignited concerns over data protection, operational accountability, and the ethical responsibility of Western nations to those who supported their missions abroad. It is now evident that the consequences of the withdrawal from Afghanistan continue to ripple far beyond its borders, with lives both Afghan and British still in jeopardy.