

Hospital bombing in Afghanistan was premeditated, AP reports

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New media revelations have confirmed that the US airstrikes against a Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) medical center in Kunduz, Afghanistan were premeditated and deliberate, constituting a flagrant war crime. The bombings, which lasted for nearly an hour and a half, killed at least 22 civilians, including 12 hospital staff and 10 patients.

Citing an anonymous former intelligence official, the Associated Press reported Thursday that American special operations analysts in Afghanistan had been gathering intelligence on the hospital days before it was destroyed on October 3. The official asserts that the analysts “had assembled a dossier that included maps with the hospital circled,” supposedly because they believed a Pakistani intelligence operative was coordinating Taliban activity from inside the hospital.

The AP report notes, “The intelligence suggested the hospital was being used as a Taliban command and control center and may have housed heavy weapons.” After the attack, “some US analysts assessed that the strike had been justified,” while concluding “that the Pakistani, believed to have been working for his country’s Inter-Service Intelligence directorate, had been killed.”

However, MSF has repeatedly asserted that no gunmen, weapons or ammunition were housed in their facility. Further, none of the victims killed by the air strikes have been publicly identified as Pakistani, and MSF says that none of its staff at the hospital were Pakistani.

Meinie Nicolai, president of the operational directorate of MSF, said, “There were only Afghan staff and nine international staff, none of whom were from Pakistan, working in the hospital. There was absolutely nothing that indicated at any level, including at senior management, that any of our staff was

working for Pakistani intelligence.”

Nicolai noted that these new details confirm “that the hospital was intentionally targeted, killing at least 22 patients and MSF staff. ...This would amount to a premeditated massacre.”

NBC News also reported Thursday that “cockpit recordings reveal that the crew actually questioned whether the air strike was legal” amid the five separate strafing runs during the attack. The Daily Beast reported that during classified briefings on Capitol Hill last week, the military withheld both the audio and video from inside the cockpit, “even when a lawmaker directly requested to listen to the audio.”

The Department of Defense cited its ongoing internal investigation as their reason not to share the recordings, a further indication that the military operates as a law unto itself. The recordings could contain incriminating dialogue in which higher-ups order their questioning pilots to carry through a premeditated war crime.

In official statements regarding the hospital bombing, US military commanders have changed their story repeatedly. For the first three days after the attack, the military failed to state that innocent civilians were killed. The Pentagon refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing and sought to place the blame on Afghan forces, going so far as to withhold the fact that the air strikes were carried out by the US. A US military spokesman in Afghanistan described the deliberate decimation of the hospital as “collateral damage.”

Days later, US Army General John Campbell told reporters that “Afghan forces advised that they were taking fire from enemy positions and asked for air support from US forces... An airstrike was then called to eliminate the Taliban threat and several civilians were accidentally struck.”

The following day, speaking before the Senate Armed

Services Committee, Campbell finally acknowledged US responsibility for the attack, declaring, “To be clear, the decision ... was a US decision made within the US chain of command. A hospital was mistakenly struck.” Campbell declared, “We would never intentionally target a protected medical facility.”

When asked about any US troops on the ground, Campbell said, “We had a special operations unit in close vicinity that was talking to the aircraft that delivered those fires.” MSF President Joanne Liu later described these remarks as “an admission of a war crime.”

Nicolai has challenged the blatantly fabricated US narrative, telling the AP that the MSF staff “reported a calm night and that there were no armed combatants, nor active fighting in or from the compound prior to the airstrikes.” Afghans who worked at the hospital have also told the AP that no weapons were fired from inside the hospital compound.

The latest revelations expose all the previous claims by Obama administration and military officials as lies. The deliberate targeting of a hospital is a war crime that flows from the predatory war that has gone on for fourteen years.

The revelations from the AP came the same day as Obama announced that the US will keep 10,000 troops in Afghanistan, likely through at least the end of his presidency.



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