

# Pentagon investigation shows US missile struck girls' school in Minab

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The preliminary findings of the Pentagon's internal inquiry, as reported by the *New York Times*, reveals that the US military carried out a war crime in Minab on the first day of the Trump administration's illegal war against Iran.

The facts revealed by the *Times*, based upon comments by "US officials and others familiar with the preliminary findings," expose that the strike which killed at least 150 children is part of the criminal war whose strategic aim is the colonial subjugation of Iran by American imperialism.

On Saturday, February 28, the first day of the war against Iran, the girls' elementary school in Minab in Hormozgan province, was obliterated by a precision missile strike while classes were in session. Witnesses report that the school was "triple tapped," hit by three distinct strikes in succession, collapsing the roof onto children aged roughly 7–12 and their teachers.

Iranian media and officials have reported between 168 and 180 were killed, with at least 150 schoolchildren among the victims, making it the deadliest strike against civilians in the opening phase of the conflict.

The school complex was a former military facility that had been converted, years before the war, into an all-girls' elementary school adjacent to the Sayyid al-Shuhada naval complex used by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy. According to reporting by the *New York Times* and other media outlets, the February 28 strikes began around the time when children typically arrive and are in class on a working Saturday in Iran, underscoring that the school would have been fully occupied.

Investigations by the *Times* using satellite imagery, social media footage and verified videos show that a Tomahawk cruise missile, launched by US forces, struck the adjacent naval facility, and that the school was hit with a precisely timed salvo on the target area. The evidence shows that the children and teachers of Minab were incinerated and buried under rubble by a deliberate US missile strike carried out with the full knowledge that they were located beside an Iranian military installation.

The *New York Times*' report on the preliminary Pentagon inquiry affirms that the missile that struck the school was American. US Central Command (CENTCOM) planners generated the target coordinates for the Minab strikes based on data supplied by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) that treated the Shajarah Tayyebbeh campus as part of an integrated military complex.

However, as the *Times* documents, the school had been fully

separated from the naval base years ago. The watchtowers dismantled, fences erected, multiple public entrances opened, grounds cleared, sports fields laid out and the building repainted in bright colors as a functioning elementary school. Yet DIA databases, used to feed CENTCOM's targeting software and kill-chains, had not been updated to reflect the transformation of the facility.

The *Times*' report exposes the barbaric decision-making process for launching precision-guided strikes against the enemies of US imperialism. This includes the following steps:

- Agencies such as the DIA and the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency maintain target folders, imagery and map layers on Iran's military infrastructure.

- Planners at CENTCOM, working with intelligence analysts, assemble strike packages against "high-value" nodes—command centers, naval and missile facilities, logistics depots—in line with campaign objectives ratified by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the civilian leadership.

- Computer modeling and imagery analysis are used to generate projected civilian casualties, while lawyers attached to the military command vet whether planned strikes meet the elastic standards of "proportionality" and "necessity" under the Pentagon's rules of engagement.

- Depending on the circumstances, approval to launch the strike may be delegated to theater commanders or escalated up to the Secretary of Defense and the president.

In the case of Minab, the preliminary inquiry states that CENTCOM planners relied on DIA data and concluded that the school building remained part of the Sayyid al-Shuhada complex, leading to "insufficient weight" being given to the obvious civilian presence.

In other words, even in the Pentagon's own language, US officers consciously authorized a Tomahawk strike on a built-up area that either they believed included an active school or that they did not bother to verify despite ample open-source evidence that it was a school.

Furthermore, the *Times* indicates that the base was struck again roughly two hours after the initial barrage, implying that commanders had real-time battle damage assessments and were aware of the devastation in the vicinity. The decision to continue the attack demonstrates that the killing of civilians, including scores of schoolgirls, was not unforeseen but an expected consequence of the military operation.

Given all of these reported facts, the question must be asked: Were Hegseth and Trump notified that the selected targets in Minab included a girls elementary school? If they were notified, did Hegseth and Trump give the final order to go ahead with the Tomahawk missile strike?

Confronted with the evidence that a Tomahawk missile fired by US forces destroyed the school, President Donald Trump has responded with a mixture of crude deflection and brazen lying. At press conferences in the days following the massacre, Trump repeatedly insisted that Iran itself might be responsible, claiming that Tomahawk missiles are “generic,” widely sold to “many countries,” and asserting—falsely—that “Iran also has some Tomahawks.”

In one exchange, when asked about reports that “a Tomahawk missile likely destroyed that Iranian girls’ school,” Trump replied that Tomahawks are “one of the most powerful weapons around” and are “sold and used by other countries,” adding that “whether it’s Iran, who also has some Tomahawks ... or somebody else,” the incident was “being investigated.”

Defense analysts and fact-checking outlets note that only three US allies—Britain, Australia and Japan—have purchased variants of the Tomahawk missile, all of them under tight controls that exclude transfer to third countries such as Iran.

No other party in the conflict possesses this weapon, and no plausible mechanism exists by which Iran could have used a US-origin Tomahawk to bomb its own girls’ school. Trump’s claim that Tomahawks are “generic” and widely marketed is a lie formulated for the purpose of buying time for the Pentagon and political establishment to develop a narrative that acknowledges a “mistake” that is separated from the core aggressive war policy.

When asked by news media about the strike, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth and White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt stonewalled and repeated the line that the administration will “await the results” of its official investigation. They refused to acknowledge US responsibility even as the Pentagon’s preliminary findings have been leaked to media outlets.

These White House officials no doubt have access to the same operational logs, battle damage assessments and intelligence feeds that form the basis of the Pentagon’s inquiry and the *New York Times*’ story. The refusal of Hegseth and Leavitt to acknowledge US responsibility is a political calculation that helps to reinforce Trump’s Big Lie: the narrative that Iran, and not the US itself, is the “world’s leading state sponsor of terrorism.”

Publication of the leaked details of the preliminary results of the Pentagon investigation is being used by the *Times* to promote its own narrative of the US-Israeli war against Iran. This narrative presents the girls’ school massacre as the outcome of “outdated targeting data” and “human error.” This “analysis” is in fact part of an ideological campaign that separates the specific war crime from the war policy that produced it in the first place—a policy that the Democratic Party and the editors of the *New York Times* both agree with.

While the *Times* presents the strike as the tragic by-product of a complex technological system in which databases are imperfect, analysts overworked and decision makers under pressure, the political significance of the incident is minimized. What is

excluded from this narrative is the basic fact that the entire war against Iran is an illegal and criminal war of aggression.

The destruction of the girls’ elementary school is treated by the *Times* as a bureaucratic snafu, rather than a product of the barbaric aims of US imperialism to subordinate the entire globe to its strategic aims. If US decision makers were prepared to wipe out a children’s school, then the massacre is not an aberration, but an expression of an objective underlying logic of the war itself.

The lies advanced by the Trump administration closely parallel those used to justify the Israeli war crimes in Gaza. For months, the Israel Defense Forces, with the full backing and resupply of the US government, have waged a campaign of collective punishment and extermination, targeting schools, hospitals, refugee encampments and residential apartment blocks and killing tens of thousands of civilians.

In Gaza, as in Minab, each atrocity is justified as either a legitimate act of “self-defense,” an attack on alleged “human shields,” or an unfortunate “mistake” resulting from faulty intelligence. The conscious, systematic destruction of civilian life is cloaked in the language of “precision strikes” and “collateral damage.” In both cases, the goal is the same: to terrorize an oppressed population into submission, to depopulate territories and clear the path for imperialist domination.

In the immediate aftermath of the Minab strike, both Trump and Netanyahu suggested Iran bombed its own school. This is a recycling of the grotesque claims that Palestinian resistance fighters were responsible for the bombing of hospitals and UN schools in Gaza.

The Pentagon has known from the first hours that a Tomahawk-class weapon launched by its platforms hit the vicinity of the Shajarah Tayyebah school and that casualty figures exceeded a hundred. The delay in the official acknowledgement of responsibility for the school massacre is because the Trump administration is spending more time and resources on crafting an official justification for the mass murder than it did while carrying out the missile strike in the first place.



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