

Death Toll from U.S. Airstrike on Kunduz Hospital Rises to 30



Paris, October 26 (RHC)-- The death toll from a U.S. airstrike on a hospital in Kunduz, northern Afghanistan, run by Doctors Without Borders, has reached 30. "MSF announces with sadness that the death toll is still rising," said the group, also known as Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), in a Sunday statement.

"The total number of dead is known to be at least 30, including 10 known patients, 13 known staff, and seven unrecognizable bodies that were in the wreck of the hospital."

The deadly airstrike on October 3, which lasted for "more than an hour," according to the MSF chief, led to the closure of the MSF-run trauma clinic in the city of Kunduz, depriving tens of thousands of Afghans of health care.

Taking responsibility for the airstrike, Washington claimed it was a mistake, while President Barack Obama was forced to apologize to the MSF under mounting pressure from international aid groups.

The French-founded charity, meanwhile, warned that the toll could still go up. The new death toll comes as three probes by U.S., NATO and Afghan officials have been launched into the attack, which has also drawn global condemnation.

NATO said over the weekend that its initial investigation confirmed that the reports of civilian casualties were credible, and that the Western military alliance would go on working with the Afghan government to fully identify the victims. However, the MSF has called for an independent probe by an international fact-finding commission.

“We need to know the degree to which the lines between military and civilian targets have been blurred,” Jason Cone, MSF executive director in the US, wrote in the New York Times on Saturday, adding, “(Only then) can we better understand the risks our teams in Afghanistan and elsewhere will face.”

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