

Associated Press Report Says U.S. Aware of Bombing Hospital in Kunduz



Kabul, October 27 (RHC)-- A new report reveals U.S. troops were aware that they were bombing a functional hospital in the Afghan city of Kunduz in early October but thought it was being operated by the Taliban forces.

According to a report by the Associated Press on Monday, the U.S. Army Green Berets -- who requested the October 3rd deadly air strike on the hospital, run by the Doctors Without Borders -- were aware that they were targeting a functioning hospital.

A day before the American AC-130 gunship struck the hospital, a senior officer in the Green Beret unit wrote in a report that U.S. forces had discussed the hospital with the country director of the medical charity group, presumably in Kabul, according to two people who have seen the document.

As declared by Tim Shenk, a spokesman for the humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders, days before the attack "an official in Washington" asked Doctors Without Borders "whether our hospital had a large group of Taliban fighters in it," and "we replied that this was not the case. We also stated that we were very clear with both sides to the conflict about the need to respect medical structures."

All being said, the evidence adds to the growing possibility that U.S. forces could have violated the international rules of war by destroying the hospital.

On October 6, U.S. President Barack Obama was forced to apologize for the incident that left 30 people dead, a day after U.S. military commander General John Campbell in Afghanistan acknowledged the bombing.

Even if the U.S. believed the Taliban were operating from the hospital, the presence of wounded patients inside would have made an air attack on it problematic under standard U.S. rules of engagement and the international law of war.

The deadly strike, which lasted for more than an hour, led to the closure of the MSF-run trauma clinic, depriving tens of thousands of Afghans of health care.

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