

At Least 33 Still Missing after U.S. Airstrike on Afghan Hospital



Kabul, October 9 (RHC)-- The medical aid agency Doctors without Borders says at least 33 people are still missing, five days after a deadly U.S. airstrike on its hospital in the northern Afghan city of Kunduz.

"We are continuing to try to contact the [missing] staff. We cannot speculate on their whereabouts," the charity said in a statement on Thursday. The agency, known by its French acronym MSF, said it has set up a hotline in a bid to trace 24 staff and the nine patients who are still unaccounted for.

The statement has sparked fears that the death toll may significantly rise. The latest tally for last Saturday's attack by U.S. fighter jets stands at 22 dead.

Meanwhile, Guilhem Molinie, MSF's Afghanistan representative, said during a press conference in Kabul on Thursday that more bodies could be found inside the hospital. "We are still in shock," said Molinie, adding: "We lost many colleagues and at the moment it's clear that we don't want to take the risk for any of our staff. We don't control the hospital."

Molinie also noted MSF has not yet received any assurances that would give them the "confidence" to return to Kunduz. MSF General Director Christopher Stokes has also said that the charity was reviewing the security conditions of "all its operations in Afghanistan."

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