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## MSF: 19 killed, 37 wounded in coalition airstrike on Kunduz hospital

October 3, 2015



The international medical organization Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said Saturday that the death toll as a result of a coalition airstrike has increased to 19 people which includes at least twelve staff members of the organization and at least seven patients.

A statement by MSF said at least 37 people were also injured in the airstrike which includes 19 staff members of the organization.

“This attack constitutes a grave violation of International Humanitarian Law,” MSF said. “All indications currently point to the bombing being carried out by international Coalition forces. MSF demands a full and transparent account from the Coalition regarding its aerial bombing

activities over Kunduz on Saturday morning. MSF also calls for an independent investigation of the attack to ensure maximum transparency and accountability.”

MSF President Meinie Nicolai said “This attack is abhorrent and a grave violation of International Humanitarian Law. We demand total transparency from Coalition forces. We cannot accept that this horrific loss of life will simply be dismissed as ‘collateral damage’.”

According to MSF, the organization’s trauma hospital in Kunduz was hit by a series of aerial bombing raids at approximately 15 minute intervals from 2:08 AM until 3:15 AM local time today.

The main central hospital building, housing the intensive care unit, emergency rooms, and physiotherapy ward, was repeatedly hit very precisely during each aerial raid, while surrounding buildings were left mostly untouched, MSF added.

“The bombs hit and then we heard the plane circle round,” said Heman Nagarathnam, MSF head of programs in northern Afghanistan. “There was a pause, and then more bombs hit. This happened again and again. When I made it out from the office, the main hospital building was engulfed in flames. Those people that could had moved quickly to the building’s two bunkers to seek safety. But patients who were unable to escape burned to death as they lay in their beds.”

MSF also added that the bombing took place despite the fact that MSF had provided the GPS coordinates of the trauma hospital to Coalition and Afghan military and civilian officials as recently as Tuesday, September 29, to avoid that the hospital be hit.

Some of the most critically injured patients were transferred to a hospital in Puli Khumri, a two hour drive away, MSF said, adding that the MSF team desperately tried to save the lives of wounded colleagues and patients, setting up a makeshift operating theater in an undamaged room in the aftermath of the attack.

“Besides resulting in the deaths of our colleagues and patients, this attack has cut off access to urgent trauma care for the population in Kunduz at a time when its services are most needed,” said Nicolai. “Once again, we call on all warring parties to respect civilians, health facilities, and medical staff, according to International Humanitarian Law.”

According to MSF, at least 394 wounded people were treated by MSF since the fighting broke out on Monday and at least 105 patients and their caretakers were present in the hospital at the time of the aerial attack, alongside more than 80 international and national MSF staff.