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10 killed in separate US airstrikes in Afghanistan

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Ten people, including children, have been killed in two separate US airstrikes in eastern and central-eastern Afghanistan

A US midnight airstrike on Saturday killed five people and severely injured three civilians in the central-eastern province of Maidan Wardak.

Earlier on Friday, at least five civilians, including three children, were killed in another US airstrike in an area a few kilometers from Jalalabad city, the capital of the eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar.

“Last night around 11 p.m., five civilians aged between 12 and 20 carrying air guns wanted to go hunting birds some eight kilometers (five miles) from the center of the city of Jalalabad. They were targeted and killed by a foreign forces airstrike,” said provincial police spokesman, Hazrat Hussain Mashreqiwal.

A NATO spokesman has confirmed the airstrike without referring to the casualties.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Atif Shinwari, a spokesman for the Nangarhar education department, said three of the civilians killed in the air raid “were school children, two were brothers.”

Many civilians have lost their lives in US-led airstrikes and operations in various parts of Afghanistan over the past decade, with Afghans becoming increasingly outraged at the seemingly endless number of the deadly assaults.

The US claims its airstrikes target militants, but local sources say civilians have been the main victims.

In September, a US-led airstrike left at least 16 civilians, including women and children, dead in Kunar Province in eastern Afghanistan.

Afghan officials said the attack targeted a truck and killed all on board. However, NATO denied that civilians died, saying the attack had killed militants.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has repeatedly questioned the legality of the drone strikes and on numerous occasions has called on Washington to stop the attacks.

The United Nations says the US-operated drone strikes pose a growing challenge to the international rule of law.