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US-led strike kills 25 in Afghanistan

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A US-led airstrike has killed 25 people in eastern Afghanistan raising concerns about the growing number of civilian casualties in the war-torn country.

NATO said it targeted a militant stronghold in Paktika Province near the border with Pakistan on Monday night.

The western military alliance also issued a statement on Tuesday, claiming that the 25 killed were Taliban militants and some foreign fighters.

The US-led forces launch attack on alleged militant hideouts on a regular basis, but the strikes usually results in civilian casualties because of bad intelligence or flaws in the operations.

The latest attack comes as NATO has also stepped up its air offensives in neighboring Pakistan. Since 2008, nearly one thousand people have lost their lives in US drone attacks.

Civilians have been the main victims of violence in Afghanistan, particularly in the country's troubled southern and eastern provinces.

However, the US and its NATO allies downplay the number of civilian casualties.

According to statistics, there has been a 33 percent rise in the number of civilian casualties in Afghanistan since the start of 2010 compared to the same period last year.

A report by the UN said that the number of civilians killed in 2009 was higher than in any year since the start of the US-led invasion of the country in 2001. Over 2,400 civilians were killed in Afghanistan last year.

The 130,000-strong foreign presence in the country has so far failed to rid Afghanistan from the grip of a deadly insurgency and bring peace and stability to the country.