

150 civilians dead in air raid: Villagers

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KUNDUZ CITY: Residents of the Chahar Dara district in northern Kunduz province say more than 150 civilians were killed and 20 others wounded in Friday's air strike by NATO-led forces.

The bombing in the Haji Aman village came as insurgents and residents emptied oil into jerry canes from tankers hijacked by Taliban militants from the Kunduz-Baghlan Highway.

Inhabitants of the area told Pajhwok Afghan News all those killed in the bombardment were civilians and there were no Taliban at the site at the time the attack took place. Fighters had left the scene after they asked the people to take fuel for free.

An elder from Sarak-i-Bala neighbourhood, Abdul Rahim, said 15 children were among the 50 people of Yaqubi village killed in the bombing raid.

The man, who lost two sons in the incident, argued: "Poverty brought us to this stage." No guerrillas were among the dead, he said, explaining that the fighters left well before the deadly assault.

A 50-year-old woman bitterly cried while standing in front of her ruined house. She said her three sons, husband and a grandson perished in the bombardment. Locals showed this reporter as many as 50 graves of civilian victims.

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This reporter saw the graves of those killed in the air strike. Seventy of the fatalities were from the Yaqubi and Maulvi Naeem villages and the rest from three other areas.

Meanwhile, Kunduz Governor Eng. Muhammad Omar said a delegation from Kabul had arrived in the district to investigate the incident and determine the exact number of civilian deaths.

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