

COLLATERAL DAMAGE OR CRIMES OF WAR? Women, children among 18 Afghans dead in NATO wedding strike

By [Global Research](#)

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Afghan villagers sit on the back of a vehicle carrying dead bodies of children who were killed in a NATO airstrike on a home in Sajawand village in Logar province south of Kabul on June 6, 2012 (AFP Photo/Sabawoon Amarkhil)

A NATO airstrike in the eastern Afghan province of Logar has killed 18 people, including women and children, local officials report. A NATO spokesperson said a team had been deployed to investigate the claims of civilian casualties.

Afghan authorities say the pre-dawn attack aimed at militants in the area hit a wedding. An AP photographer at the scene reported seeing the bodies of five women, seven children and six men piled in vans. AFP news agency also released a photo with victims piled into the back of a vehicle.

Local villagers are now reportedly driving the bodies to the capital of Logar province to protest the NATO strike which they say hit a house in the district of Baraki Barak.

NATO says it has received no reports of civilians killed in the pre-dawn operation targeting a Taliban leader.

ISAF released a statement, confirming a pre-dawn operation aimed at the capture of a Taliban leader in Logar.

"During the operation, insurgents attacked the Afghan and coalition troops with small-arms fire and a grenade," said the NATO statement.

In response, alliance forces *"returned fire and requested a precision airstrike."*

Meanwhile, multiple blasts killed 22 people and wounded at least 50 others as three suicide bombers blew themselves up in the southern city of Kandahar on Wednesday.

One bomber detonated a three-wheeled motorbike filled with explosives, police said. Then, as people rushed to assist the wounded, two other bombers walked up to the scene and blew themselves up.

The attack took place about five kilometers from the main gate of a massive military

installation run by NATO, and some 500 meters from an Afghan military base.

The Taliban has claimed responsibility for the bombings.

Civilian casualties mounting

Reports of NATO actions in Afghanistan causing civilian casualties are not rare. In the end of May, local officials from the eastern province of Paktia claimed that [a coalition strike killed an Afghan family, including six children.](#)

In February Afghan President Hamid Karzai accused NATO of killing seven children in a strike in the north-east of the country.

The casualties, however, do not always come from air strikes. In March an alleged shooting rampage by [a NATO soldier resulted in 17 civilian deaths](#) in the province of Kandahar. Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, who was accused of the massacre, was whisked out of the country to a US detention center.

Civilian deaths resulting from US-led coalition actions have been a bone of contention in Afghanistan for quite some time. Karzai has regularly condemned such events, saying the strategic partnership is meaningless if the lives of Afghan people are not safe.

Last year saw more than 3,000 Afghan civilians killed in violence according to a UN report. The document attributed 14 per cent of these deaths to actions by international and Afghan troops.



Afghan villagers search for dead bodies of people who were killed in a NATO airstrike on a home in Sajawand village in Logar province, south of Kabul on June 6, 2012 (AFP Photo/Sabawoon Amarkhil)



An Afghan villager stands at a house which was hit by a NATO airstrike in Sajawand village in Logar province, south of Kabul on June 6, 2012 (AFP Photo/Sabawoon Amarkhil)

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