

# NATO: Afghan Civilians not Killed by Accident

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A British commander of NATO forces in Afghanistan insists that the strike that killed a dozen civilians last weekend, in fact, hit its intended target.

Major General Nick Carter said on Tuesday that the launched rockets did not veer off course, as previously claimed, but had struck the intended mark.

"We know now that the missile arrived at the target it was supposed to arrive at. It wasn't a rogue missile. There was no technical fault in it," Reuters quoted Carter as saying.

The commander reiterated that such missiles were now being redeployed after their use was temporarily suspended to probe the civilian fatalities.

The deaths were announced on Sunday. On the same day, NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) claimed that two rockets had landed three-hundred meters off target.

The British military has rejected the ISAF report, saying the rockets accurately targeted Taliban militants that often operate from civilian areas.

About 15,000 US-led forces have launched an offensive intended to impose Afghan government rule in one of the major Taliban strongholds in Helmand.

The incident has reportedly harmed efforts to win the hearts and minds of the local population.

JR/MB

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