

# *U.S.-led Coalition Confirms Killing 16 Civilians in Iraq and Syria*

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Washington, December 29 (RHC)-- The U.S.-led coalition has acknowledged the deaths of sixteen more civilians in its airstrikes against what it called Daesh positions in Iraq and Syria. The coalition released the figure in a Thursday statement, claiming that the civilian deaths were "unintentional."

The statement claimed that the total number of civilians it has killed in both countries has reached 817 since it began airstrikes there more than three years ago. The reported estimate of civilian deaths comes as independent monitors have time and again challenged U.S.-led coalition reports and revealed that the military campaign has significantly inflicted more civilian casualties.

The true civilian death toll of the U.S.-led bombing campaign in Iraq and Syria is much higher, the London-based Airwars organization has said. It has estimated that almost 6,000 innocent lives have been lost.

A recent New York Times survey in Iraq has revealed that about 20 percent of coalition air strikes have resulted in civilian casualties, which is a much higher proportion than the coalition's claimed 0.36 percent.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported on November 23 that 2,759 civilians, including 644 minors and 470 women, had been killed in U.S.-led aerial attacks against civilian areas in Syria over the past 38 months. The Britain-based monitoring group added that the air raids had claimed the lives of 98 people, including four children and as many women, between October 23 and November 23 this year.

The SOHR went on to say that the civilian fatalities had been mostly recorded in the northern provinces of Hasakah, Raqqah, Aleppo and Idlib in addition to the eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr.

In a statement released earlier this week, the Russian Defense Ministry accused the West of having rushed to provide aid to Raqqah to cover up its own crimes. The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be Daesh targets inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate. Such air raids began in Iraq in August of the same year.

The military alliance has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of fulfilling its declared aim of destroying the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group.

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