

U.S. military whitewash report finds no wrongdoing in Syria strike

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A whitewash report by the Pentagon clears U.S. forces of the heavy bombardment in Baghuz, Syria — the Islamic State's last holdout — on March 18, 2019. Photo: Giuseppe Cacace/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

Washington, May 18 (RHC)-- A Pentagon investigation claims it has found no wrongdoing in a 2019 U.S. military strike against an eastern Syrian town that killed at least 80 civilians.

The U.S. military claims it staged the airstrike against members of the Takfiri terrorist group of Daesh in the town of Baghuz in Syria's Deir al-Zawr Province.

The investigation, whose results came out on Tuesday, was launched last year after The New York Times reported that the military had covered up the civilian deaths.

The report said back then that a U.S. legal officer "flagged the strike as a possible war crime" and that "at nearly every step, the military made moves that concealed the catastrophic strike." The Times report said many of the fatalities were women and children.

The probe, however, alleged that the American ground force commander for the U.S.-led coalition—which has invaded the Arab country under the guise of fighting Daesh—had received a request for the strike from US-backed Kurdish militants. The commander "received confirmation that no civilians were in the strike area" and authorized the strike, the investigation claimed.

"No Rules of Engagement or Law of War violations occurred," the investigation said. In addition, the commander "did not deliberately or with wanton disregard cause civilian casualties," it claimed.

The U.S. and its allies invaded Syria in 2014 under the pretext of fighting terrorists. The terror outfit had emerged as Washington was running out of excuses to extend its regional meddling or enlarge it in scale.

The U.S. military interference was, however, surprisingly slow in confronting the terrorists, despite the sheer size of the coalition that had enlisted scores of Washington-allied countries.

Numerous reports and regional officials would, meanwhile, point to Washington's role in transferring Daesh elements throughout the region and even airlifting supplies to the group.

In 2017 and at the height of the coalition's military campaign in Syria, Russia drew a parallel between the destruction that was being caused by the U.S.-led forces and the wholesale bombing campaign against the German city of Dresden during the World War II.

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