

U.S.-led coalition admits killing over 1,300 civilians in Syria and Iraq



Baghdad, June 28 (RHC)-- The U.S.-led military coalition purportedly fighting the Daesh terrorist group has admitted killing over 1,300 civilians since it started its military campaign in Iraq and Syria nearly five years ago.

"The coalition conducted 34,514 strikes between August 2014 and the end of May 2019," the alliance said Thursday. During this period, it "assesses at least 1,319 civilians have been unintentionally killed by coalition strikes." The military alliance said it was still assessing 159 additional reports of civilian casualties.

The figure is far lower than the death tolls given by groups that have monitored the aerial raids in the two countries. Airwars, an NGO that monitors civilian casualties from air strikes worldwide, estimates more than 8,000 civilians have been killed in US-led raids.

In a report released in late April, the UK-based Amnesty International and Airwars found that air and artillery strikes by the US and its allies killed more than 1,600 civilians just in four months in the northern Syrian city of Raqqah.

Daesh has been almost purged from entire territories it used to control in Syria and neighboring Iraq. However, sporadic attacks by the group are still reported in the two countries. The U.S. and its allies have been bombarding what they call Daesh positions inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from the Damascus government or a UN mandate. U.S. military says its forces continue to conduct Syria strikes despite Trump's troop withdrawal order.

The strikes have on many occasions resulted in civilian casualties and failed to fulfill their declared aim of countering terrorism. The Syrian government has strongly condemned the airstrikes, stressing that they have not been authorized by the Syrian government or the UN Security Council.

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