

Britain Killed our Children with its 'Precision' Bombing from Drones and Jets

By [Drone Warfare](#)

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And ISIS arrives in Afghanistan

Earlier this month, [Anthony Loyd wrote](#) from Kabul in Afghanistan about Pashtuns living in refugee camps or in remote villages of Helmand districts.

These Afghans, from the most heavily contested areas of Helmand, know at first hand the consequences of "precision targeting" and "smart bombs".

A local farmer, Mir Alam Ghamgen said:

"The British said they never targeted civilians deliberately but they killed them anyway. Whether they meant to or not, all it takes is one mistake with a bomb, civilians die, and the whole loyalty of a tribe can change."

He lost his two-year-old daughter and nine other family members, including two women and seven children, in an airstrike in the village of Turoba, just outside Sangin district centre, during heavy fighting between the British and Taliban in the summer of 2006.

"Until that bomb landed on my village, we had been pro-government and resented the Taliban. But then as we saw we were being killed by foreigners' bombs for nothing, our support changed, and we thought we might as well die in the name of the Taliban."

When asked about precision bombing: "We hated the Russians when they bombed us with artillery and missiles," said Tufan, a farmer from another Helmand district that saw repeated airstrikes during the British fight against the Taliban:

"The Russians never claimed to kill people intelligently, so when the British came, with improved weapons, boasting of drones and jets and good intelligence, we hoped it might be different. They didn't kill as many civilians as the Russians, but they killed civilians nevertheless, and we hated them for it."

No sympathisers of Isis, these men were measured in their understanding of the need to confront the terrorist group.

"It is not easy when you have an armed group that will not listen to negotiation

imposing itself upon the people and attacking everyone," Mr Ghamgen said. "But the British must remember that when foreigners kill civilians, it affects the local people in the opposite way to what they wish."

There is little positive legacy:

- Sangin and other districts, defended by the British with ground troops and airpower including drones, jets and helicopters, are again in danger of falling to the Taliban.
- Gunfire is now heard every night from the provincial governor's offices in Helmand's capital, Lashkar Gar.
- The Taliban fight with beleaguered Afghan troops in Babaji, which was cleared by British troops with heavy losses during Panther's Claw, the notoriously bloody British offensive of 2009.

The latest [Times report](#) is that Islamic State fighters have captured swathes of eastern Afghanistan. How will they be received by such local people?

Mr Ghamgen said:

"It's OK to kill Daesh, but if the foreigners do in Syria as they did here, it will work against them. All those bombs from drones and jets, all those lives, theirs and ours, for what? They made local people hate them. Helmand is still on fire now the British have gone, and we have no way of returning home."

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