

## More Holes in the Official Story on Zarqawi's Death

By [Prof Michel Chossudovsky](#)

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Theme: [Terrorism](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

Abu Musab Al Zarqawi's "safe house" was attacked by two Falcon F16 fighters. Two 500 lb laser-guided bombs were dropped on the site. The safe house was transformed into rubble. According to press reports, charred bodies had been removed from the rubble. Zarqawi's body, however, was virtually intact.

The bombs used in the attack are known for their destructive capabilities. The first bomb was a 500 lb. [GBU-12](#), guided to its target by a laser designator, with a "circular error probable" of 8 meters. The second bomb was newer far more sophisticated precision weapon: the [GBU-38 \(Joint Direct Attack Munition \(JDAM\)\)](#), guided to its target by satellite signal. (AP, 8 June 2006)

"The Iraqi police who first arrived at the scene removed many charred bodies ... the bombardment even melted the iron beams of the roof and windows of the homes."

Among the victims, according to the first official report, were two women and a child. "How is it Zarqawi's body remains intact as if he died in his bed"? asked one resident.

"Iraqi police pulled his body from the rubble and cleaned him up for his final mug shot. Finger prints proved who it was. There were six bodies in all, including a woman and child, possibly Zarqawi's wife and baby. And this man, Sheikh Abin al Rahman. Remember the name." ( David Martin on the Jim Lehrer News Hour, 9 June 2006)



Major General William Caldwell's at his June 8 Press Conference confirmed that Zarqawi had been killed in the blast.

'As far as the body itself, in terms of the explosion of the bomb, I mean, the pictures we provided to you were obviously — we had wiped off a lot of the blood and other debris because there was not a need to portray it in any kind

of de-humanizing his body. The intent was to show you that he, in fact, had died in that explosion. But there are far worse, graphic pictures that are very inappropriate, we felt, to share with anybody that were the result of the immediate strike.

From one day to the next, the official story was changed. Major General Caldwell revised his initial assertion that Zarqawi had been killed in the F16 air-raid.

The official story now reads; Zaraqwi was still alive “when US forces reached him after the devastating air strikes”. According to Caldwell’s statement, Zarqawi had been captured alive with a few visible scars and bruises on his face. While he was described as “fatally wounded”, he was, nonetheless, able to “roll off” the stretcher in which he was been carried out of the rubble, in an attempt to escape from his captors.

“Zarqawi attempted to sort of turn away off the stretcher... Everybody re-secured him back onto the stretcher, but he died almost immediately thereafter from the wounds he received from the airstrike... [Before he died, he] ‘mumbled a little something, but it was indistinguishable and it was very short,” said General Caldwell.

Al- Zarqawi also appeared to make eye contact with the troops, said Lt.Christina Skacan. “He made what seemed to them to be some kind of eye contact, he rolled a little to the side and then he passed away,” she said.

Asked whether it was possible al- Zarqawi could have been shot to death by the forces that found him, Caldwell said it is still uncertain, though he had seen nothing in the report he had read of the incident to indicate that al-Zarqawi received “wounds from some kind of weapon system.” (Chicago Tribune, 9 June 2006)

Caldwell also revised his story regarding “collateral damage”, asserting that no children were killed in the air-raid.

“U.S. officials at first had said that Zarqawi and at least five others had died, including a woman and a child, but then changed to say that seven people had died, none of them children.” ( Los Angeles Times, 11 June 2006)

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For details on Chossudovsky’s book [\*America’s “War on Terrorism”\*](#), [click here](#)

### **See also the following AP Report**

#### **Iraqi Raises Questions on al-Zarqawi Death**

Associated Press Report, 9 June 2006

Baghdad – US officials have altered their account of the death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, saying he was alive and partly conscious after bombs destroyed his hideout, and an Iraqi man raised fresh questions about the events surrounding the end of Iraq’s most-wanted militant.

The man, who lived near the scene of the bombing, told AP Television News on Friday that he saw US soldiers beating an injured man resembling al-Zarqawi until blood flowed from the victim’s nose.

When asked about the man’s allegations, military spokesman Maj. Gen. William Caldwell said he would check. In Washington, Pentagon spokesman Jeffrey Gordon said Saturday he was unaware of the claim.

“We frequently receive allegations which prove to be unsubstantiated,” Gordon said.

The Iraqi, identified only as Mohammed, said residents put a bearded man in an ambulance before US forces arrived. He said the man was found lying next to an irrigation canal.

“He was still alive. We put him in the ambulance, but when the Americans arrived they took him out of the ambulance, they beat him on his stomach and wrapped his head with his dishdasha, then they stomped on his stomach and his chest until he died and blood came out of his nose,” Mohammed said, without saying how he knew the man was dead.

A dishdasha is a traditional Arab robe.

A similar account in The Washington Post identified him as Ahmed Mohammed.

No other witnesses have come forward to corroborate the account of a man resembling al-Zarqawi being beaten. US officials have only said al-Zarqawi mumbled and tried to roll off a stretcher before dying.

On Thursday, the US military said al-Zarqawi was killed outright when two 500-pound bombs were dropped on his hideout.

But on Friday, the military said al-Zarqawi survived the bombing, which tore a huge crater in the date palm forest where the house was nestled just outside Baqouba, northwest of Baghdad.

Iraqi police reached the scene first and found the 39-year-old al-Zarqawi alive.

“He mumbled something, but it was indistinguishable and it was very short,” Caldwell, a spokesman for US-led forces in Iraq, said Friday.

Iraqi police pulled al-Zarqawi from the flattened home and placed him on a makeshift stretcher. US troops arrived, saw that al-Zarqawi was conscious and tried to provide medical treatment, the spokesman said.

“He obviously had some kind of visual recognition of who they were because he attempted to roll off the stretcher, as I am told, and get away, realizing it was the US military,” Caldwell told Pentagon reporters via videoconference from Baghdad.

Al-Zarqawi “attempted to, sort of, turn away off the stretcher,” he said. “Everybody re-

secured him back onto the stretcher, but he died almost immediately thereafter from the wounds he'd received from this airstrike."

Caldwell has not mentioned any other physical interaction between US troops and al-Zarqawi.

So much blood covered al-Zarqawi's body that US forces cleaned him up before taking photographs.

"Despite the fact that this person actually had no regard for human life, we were not going to treat him in the same manner," Caldwell said.

AP footage of the date palm grove showed debris - concrete blocks, shoes and sandals - scattered over a wide area around a large crater. Trees around the blast site were ripped from their roots.

The airstrike killed two other men, two women and girl between the ages of 5 and 7 who were in the house, but only al-Zarqawi and his spiritual adviser have been positively identified, he said.

From a helicopter hovering above, a wide swath of destruction could be seen. The debris around the site included a women's slip and other pieces of clothing. Charred dresses, torn blankets, thin sponge mattresses and pillows were in the crater itself.

The debris of concrete blocks and twisted metal reinforcement bars included a pillow with a floral pattern, sandals and a foam mattress with the covering torn off. A cooling unit and part of a washing machine also were in the area.

Lt. Col. Thomas Fisher of the 1st Battalion, 68th Armored Cavalry said his men showed up at the site about five minutes after the blast and cordoned it off. He said they had a patrol in the area already.

"We didn't know it was Zarqawi, we just knew it was a time-sensitive target," he said at the scene early Saturday. "We suspected who it was."

Caldwell also said experts told him it is not unheard of for people to survive a blast of that magnitude. He said he did not know if al-Zarqawi was inside or outside the house when the bombs struck.

"Well, what we had found, as with anything, first reports are not always fully accurate as we continue the debriefings. But we were not aware yesterday that, in fact, Zarqawi was alive when US forces arrived on the site," Caldwell said.

His recounting of the aftermath of the airstrike could not be independently verified. The Iraqi government confirmed only that Iraqi forces were first on the scene, followed by the Americans.

For three years, al-Zarqawi orchestrated horrific acts of violence guided by his extremist vision of jihad, or holy war - first against the US soldiers he considered occupiers of Arab lands, then against the Shiites he considered infidels.

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