

“Mother of All Bombs”: The Dark Sides of Afghanistan’s MOAB Tragedy are Unfolding

By [Sami Karimi](#)

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Featured image: A [Massive Ordnance Air Blast](#)– or more commonly known as the Mother of All Bombs - (MOAB) weapon is prepared for testing at the Eglin Air Force Armament Center on March 11, 2003. (Source: [Wikimedia Commons](#))

The GBU-43/B (Massive Ordnance Air Blast) which is colloquially known as “Mother of All Bombs” is a term that is still clinging on to our minds, importantly for its malignant consequences leaving in the ground. The appalling health impacts that are coming into the surface open the door for researches into further potential aftereffects.

An array of reasons has been placed behind the use of MOAB including mine extraction. **Zahir Qadeer**, an Afghan Member of Parliament alleged that a blast of this magnitude was needed to generate a crack in the mountain and enable mining process to proceed. He refused MOAB wrecked any harm to the Islamic State’s strongholds even though they are abounding there.

The use of destructive weapon as such could kill several birds with one stone. It earned **Donald Trump** somewhat uplift in status amid disgraces whirling around White House at that time. It also played a commercial advertisement for purchasers of the US arms, in part for being over-hyped.

In an interview, an Afghan environment protection expert explained that MOAB-like bombs exposes hazardous chemicals into air that causes cancer, respiratory and digestive problems, deformities in babies, strokes, high blood pressure and weakened vision. It severely contaminates food and water that even stay afloat to affect next generation.

A psychologist, **Jaffar Ahmadi**, described that such blasts spawn psychological disorders and fear among the affected population. The stricken people, he says, feel petrified and insecure. According to data, MOAB annihilates living things within a range of five km and its effects persist in air for decades. It also robs away oxygen for inhalation in a matter of several km from epicenter.

The Kabul-based Killid Group ventured into villages where MOAB-hit people had a ton of words to utter. A resident of Asad Khil village, **Ghazeer**, said that the bomb has born health hazards. He told Killid group:

“My Children are scared to sleep at night. Our skin is itching; small spots have appeared on the bodies of all people here. Our throats hurt. We are scared”

Another interviewee from the same village, **Noor Bibi** told the media group that the fierce explosion has almost blinded her. She acknowledges that:

“The bomb turned people blind and deaf. I can’t see anything, my skin is itching, my four grandchildren have chest problems and they also complain about their eyes”

In 2001, a day after the US soldiers first set foot in Afghanistan and captured Bagram airbase, it aerially attacked the final Al-Qaeda sanctuaries in notorious Tora Bora district in eastern Afghanistan. The air campaign continued until December 6 so intensely that a missile would land every two minute. It incurred great human fatalities and extensive financial loss. According to history records, the explosions would produce ear-splitting sound that caused ear-bleeding in many districts.

Sometime later, investigations found that the US had used short-range nuclear missiles. It left behind scores of creepy instances such as a drop in animal breeding in the area, a dramatic fall in agricultural products, and a few goats gave birth to defective babies.

Some British media reported that radioactive materials have also been observed in the area. Following the US bombings in many southern provinces, several babies were born eerily unlike normal humans, which doctors associated with the existence of radioactive material.

Afghanistan is far ill-equipped to move into timely investigations and take on preventative measures in sites where fatal exposures have been reported following the use of vicious weapons. A senior WHO official told BBC’s One Planet that no demand was made by Afghan authorities regarding the investigation of depleted uranium used by the US forces in 2001.

A Canadian investigation group initiated a research right after the US invasion of Afghanistan into the use of weapons containing depleted uranium (DU). The group found a startling degree of uranium in Afghans as result of testing urines which, in some samples, was multifold the result of Gulf War victims. At the time, the hospitals recorded a mounting number of malformed babies. Even the wildlife and plants were infected.

The Uranium Medical Research Center (UMRC) chief Dr. **Asef Dracovic** in an interview with Al-Jazeera television in 2002 said that the US forces used more DU weapons in Afghanistan than they used in the Persian Gulf War and the Balkans War. He said:

“A large number of health specialists in Afghanistan and international observers regard the risen number of birth defects to be the direct result of the US dropping of DU bombs on Afghanistan”.

Uranium is most likely used in warheads to maximize the effectiveness and destructivity of the weapon. [According to reports](#), by comparison, the US-UK armed forces have used three times more uranium-based weapons in Afghanistan than they did in Iraq or in the Balkans. The reports elaborate that the Weapons of Mass Destruction used in Afghanistan are more powerful than those used in Iraq and possibly elsewhere.



U.S. forces and Afghan commandos are seen in Asad Khil near the site of a U.S. bombing in the Achin district of Jalalabad, east of Kabul, Afghanistan, Saturday, April 17, 2017. (Source: Rahmat Gul, STF)

The UMRC concluded two different types of researches with fruitful findings. They recognized the utilization of uranium-based weapons by discovering mysterious forms of metal in Afghan soil samples, as well as found out symptoms of illnesses associated with DU contamination. They, as did a Canadian research group, analyzed urines from residents of eastern Jalalabad city of Afghanistan with positive results.

Dr. Wazir, a surgeon at Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital gave accounts of instances that bolstered the allegations of DU use near Tora Bora district in 2001. He said that a 10-year-old boy with superficial injuries died from respiratory problems after the bombing. Among dozens of cases, three other teenage patients, dr. said, who were rushed to hospital with minor wounds from the bombings, succumbed hours after breathing difficulties and internal bleeding.

Victims of such weapons suffer without injuries, burns or other forms we witness in ordinary blasts. There is, instead, bleeding from mouth, nostrils, ears, bleeding through urine and stool, vomiting and others that are signs of agony.

Many Taliban members assaulted by the US airstrikes in 2001 have died the same way. Surprisingly, some Taliban affiliates who survived the bombings, died after returning to their native villages. Their families were baffled about their weird reactions in moments leading to death. The weapon's implications were as severe as in some cases it melted the rifles of the Taliban in their hands, yet there was no trace of burn in bodies.

Another independent DU researcher, **Dai Williams** described there has been 50 to 100 times greater health hazards in Afghanistan than had been in Balkans from the usage of uranium-based weapons, depleted uranium or other forms of uranium.

As a postscript to the use of dangerous weapons in Afghanistan, Pakistan buried a huge heap of nuclear waste in southern Helmand province of Afghanistan. An Afghan environment protection expert, **Humayun Kazem** explained that Pakistan availed the opportunity of

amicable relations with the Taliban regime between 1996 and 2001 and reached out to southern Helmand province to dispose of its nuclear wastes. According to his accounts, it now needs billions of dollars to be safely decontaminated. There is no report of human infections from exposure to the buried wastes so far.

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