

# Syria: One Year Since the Battle for Raqqa and the US and UK Refuse to Accept Responsibility for Civilian Deaths

By [Dr. Leon Tressell](#)

Global Research, October 18, 2018

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#), [Military and Militarization](#) and [WMD, US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

*A year ago the US led Coalition played a leading role in the battle for the Syrian city of Raqqa. Coalition forces carried out thousands of air and artillery strikes upon the city that left hundreds dead and helped destroy 80% of the city. A year after this [war of annihilation](#) US and UK governments are in complete denial about the war crimes they committed in the battle for Raqqa.*

On 10 September the US Department of Defence sent its '[final response](#)' to Amnesty International stating that the US refuses to accept any liability for civilian deaths caused by its air/artillery strikes and that it would not compensate families of the deceased or survivors. Nor would the US be prepared to investigate the massive loss of civilian life that was caused by its massive and indiscriminate bombing of the city.

The UK whose air force claims that it struck 216 ISIS targets in Raqqa has also issued the same blithe statements denying any culpability for the deaths of civilians. On 15 October Amnesty International noted that the [UK Ministry of Defence](#) (MoD)\* is still, "repeating 'incredible' claim its own Raqqa air strikes killed zero civilians.

On 24 September Airwars, founded by investigative journalist **Chris Woods**, issued a [damning report](#) on the claims of the UK government that its air force has not killed any civilians in Raqqa or Mosul:

"It is the view of Airwars that the Ministry of Defences claim of zero civilian harm from its actions at Mosul and Raqqa represents a statistical impossibility given the intensity of fighting, the extensive use of explosive weapons, and the significant civilian populations known to have been trapped in both cities,"

Amnesty International's new Secretary General, **Kumi Naidoo**, has just returned from a field visit to Raqqa. He has responded to the mendacious statements of the US and UK governments [declaring](#):

"Disturbingly, the Pentagon does not even seem willing to offer an apology for the hundreds of civilians killed in its 'war of annihilation' on Raqqa. This is an insult to families who - after suffering the brutality of IS rule - lost loved ones to the Coalition's cataclysmic barrage of firepower."

He further added that:

“One year after the battle ended, the obstacles to justice are still insurmountably high for victims and their families. It is completely reprehensible that the Coalition refuses to acknowledge its role in most of the civilian casualties it caused, and abhorrent that even where it has admitted responsibility, it accepts no obligation towards its victims.”

The people of Raqqa whose city was destroyed by the precision strikes of the Coalition military have largely been left to fend for themselves. The US and its UK partner in the coalition of the killing seem unwilling to help [rebuild the basic infrastructure](#) of a city that they played a such a major role in destroying. Water, electricity, medical and phone services need to be fully restored never mind the tens of thousands of homes, schools, hospitals and government buildings that need to be rebuilt.

Journalist **Patrick Coburn**, who has covered the conflict in Syria since its inception, visited Raqqa in [June](#) this year and observed:

“The claim by the coalition that its air strikes and artillery fire were precisely targeted against ISIS fighters and their positions is shown up as a myth as soon as one drives into the city. I visited it earlier in the year and have never seen such destruction. There are districts of Mosul, Damascus and Aleppo that are as bad, but here the whole city has gone.”

According to the [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#), OCHA, there has been, “large-scale destruction throughout the city, a critical level of explosive hazard contamination amidst insufficient resources for surveying and removal of explosive hazards, as well as a shortage of public services.”

Civilians have to contend with large amounts of unexploded Coalition ordinance and mines left by ISIS fighters which have [killed or injured over 1,000 civilians](#) since the battle for Raqqa ended.

Widespread looting by Kurdish troops and criminal elements together with mass unemployment are major problems that the local population have to contend with.

As we approach the centenary of World War One corporate politicians in the US and UK will shed crocodile tears and lament the tragic loss of life involved in that conflict. This will be accompanied by pious declarations that we should never let such slaughter take place again. Of course, such sanctimonious sentiments don't apply to the slaughter of civilians when it is carried out by America and Britain in pursuit of keeping their citizens [“safe from the threat of terrorism”](#).

\*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

## Note

\*I contacted the MoD for a comment and was told by its spokesperson that the UK was not responsible

for any civilian deaths in Raqqa. He assured me that I would receive a statement of the MOD's position via email but it did not materialise.

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [Dr. Leon Tressell](#), Global Research, 2018

---

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Dr. Leon Tressell](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)