

US Reduces Transparency While Escalating Air War in Afghanistan

By [The Bureau of Investigative Journalism](#)

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Featured image: F-16 Fighting Falcon at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan (U.S. Air Force photo/Tech. Sgt. Nicholas Rau)

For the first time this year, the Bureau has been unable to obtain monthly strike data from Resolute Support, the US-led Nato mission in Afghanistan. The missing data, covering the month of October, leaves us largely in the dark as air operations in Afghanistan continue to rise.

We began getting monthly strike totals in [September 2016](#). These were broken down by strike types, which detailed the number of strikes carried out against Afghanistan's branch of Islamic State and al Qaeda, for example.

The release of monthly data followed more than a year of pressure from the Bureau, alongside other organisations. We hoped the regular sharing of strike data represented a step towards greater transparency by the US military.

It is not clear why the data has stopped. Resolute Support had said they would provide the figures on November 5 and again on November 8, but have failed to respond to more recent emails.

In July and August, we received a breakdown of [US strikes in Afghanistan by province](#) which offered an unusually detailed picture of how the air war was being conducted. However, that has since stopped with Resolute Support citing "capacity" issues.

The failure to provide this data is particularly concerning as it comes at a time when the US air war in Afghanistan is escalating, with increasingly confusing official responses to allegations of civilian casualties, as recently [reported by the Bureau](#).

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