

US Has Not Committed War Crimes: “Underestimates” Civilian Death Toll in Iraq and Syria by 95%

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A new report claims a U.S.-led coalition is bombing civilians to death and covering it up.

The United States-led coalition that is bombing Iraq and Syria may be underreporting the civilian toll of that war by as much as 95 percent, according to a new report released Friday by the monitoring group Airwars.

The U.S.-led coalition, which includes nations such as Britain, France and the Netherlands, has been bombing Islamic State group targets in Iraq and Syria since 2014, carrying out more than 13,121 airstrikes, or just over 19 a day. The vast majority of the strikes are carried out by the U.S., according to Airwars—68 percent in Iraq and 82.5 percent in Syria—with an estimated civilian death toll of at least 1,312 people.

Over the past six months it’s gotten worse, according to Airwars. “Between December and May, in both Iraq and Syria, there was a marked increase in the number of alleged casualty incidents and civilian death attributed to coalition actions,” it says. In Iraq, the group reports that between 297 and 518 civilians were killed by coalition airstrikes in this time. In Syria, between 197 and 274 civilians were killed, “a 38 percent increase in likely civilian deaths above the previous six months.”

The U.S. has admitted to [killing just 20 civilians](#). Its allies have admitted to none. “If correct, Airwars data suggests the coalition may be underreporting civilian deaths by more than 95 percent,” [the report says](#).

The worst incident for civilians occurred on March 19 in the Islamic State-occupied city of Mosul, when at least 25 innocents were killed when coalition airstrikes hit Mosul University in the middle of the day. As teleSUR reported at the time, such a strike on a civilian institution—confirmed by the U.S. Department of Defense—may constitute [a breach of international law](#).

The U.S. and its coalition allies are not the only foreign governments reportedly killing civilians in the region. Of 630 alleged incidents where civilians died in Syria as a result of international airpower, 91 percent have been attributed to Russia, according to Airwars, killing between 2,792 and 3,451 civilians between December 2015 and May 2016, largely as the result of airstrikes targeting non-Islamic State forces and civilian areas, [“particularly in and around Aleppo.”](#)

The Russian government says its airstrikes have not killed any civilians since they began in Sept. 2015.

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