

Will Washington be Held Accountable for Its War Crimes?

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For more than a decade, the United States has been steadily increasing the scale of its illegal military operations across the Middle East, resulting in hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths.

Eighteen years ago, the US invaded Afghanistan under the pretext of ousting the Taliban who allegedly granted sanctuary to Al-Qaeda. According to a study released by Brown University, more than 140,000 Afghan militants and civilians have died in the fight.

Since December 2001, the United States has been conducting various operations in Somali, and even today the Pentagon carries out both air strikes and ground operations, accompanied by a constant toll of civilian lives.

Back in 2003, Washington launched Operation Iraq Freedom to strip Saddam Hussein of WMDs he didn't even have and to convert Iraq into a "democracy", plunging this country into a state of perpetual chaos guaranteeing that it will remain a Western bastion in the Arab and Islamic World for years to come.

Eight years ago, the US succeeded in destabilizing Libya, when US warplanes attacked the troops of Libya's most successful ruler to date - Muammar Gaddafi. Back then, Washington took every step to ensure his government would be ousted and its key leaders murdered. The Libyan conflict has since produced tens of thousands of dead. In 2016, Barack Obama said that Libya was probably the "worst mistake" of his presidency.

The seven years of war in Syria resulted in a death toll of half a million Syrian nationals. Here, American troops are stationed illegally to fight ISIS and "indigenous ground forces." The strange wording that Washington uses in its official rhetoric is no coincidence, since more than on one occasion US armed forces have opened fire on both Syrian government troops and civilians, with no official rationale ever being given to explain this brutality.

In Yemen, the United States has been backing Saudi Arabia's efforts to put an end to the Houthi rebellion for three years. Washington carries on supplying Saudi authorities with high-precision weapons, combat aircraft and intelligence. This war has already triggered the largest humanitarian catastrophe of the 21st century, with 20 million people finding themselves on the brink of starvation.

No Justice for Somalia

Amnesty International has recently [released](#) a report titled, USA/Somalia: Shroud of Secrecy Around Civilian Deaths Masks Possible War Crimes. This report contains accounts of more

than 150 eye-witnesses and relatives of the victims of US armed forces in Somalia. Additionally, one can find expert opinions, satellite images and other factual information that blows the lid off the scale of US military operations in this war-torn country. This report alone states that some 14 civilians were killed and 8 more injured in the course of ongoing hostilities. And how many more deaths go unreported and or without investigation in Somalia every month?

The authors of the above mentioned report state that over the last couple of years Washington would launch over a hundred drone strikes in Somalia, with 24 of them occurring this year. This means that under the Trump administration, the number of UAV strikes in Somalia increased threefold.

Amnesty International states that those attacks “appear” to have violated international humanitarian law, and “may amount to war crimes.” Even though it doesn’t take an expert lawyer to establish what constitutes a blatant violation of international law and what doesn’t, it’s important that the international community begins increasing the number of such reports, even with some of them mired with overtly cowardly wording.

No Peace for Afghanistan

There’s more than enough convincing evidence showing that Washington ignores the ever increasing number of civilian casualties that accompany its military operations in Afghanistan. According to UN experts, over the last month alone the Pentagon would:

On March 12, carry out an air strike with a single UH-60L Black Hawk in the Andar District of Ghazni Province resulting in 11 civilian deaths. The helicopter displayed the colors of the 101st Airborne Division operating from Bagram Air Base.

On the following day, a Thunderbolt A-10A of the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing attacked a detachment of Afghan National Security Forces near the town of Tarinkot, leaving 5 Afghans servicemen dead and 10 more injured.

On March 17, two civilians were shot dead by a unit of US special operations forces near the village of Churak some 150 miles to the north of Kabul.

On March 20, 4 civilians were killed in the Wardak Province as a result of a strike launched by an MQ-9 Reaper UAV from the same 455th Air Expeditionary Wing.

On March 23, [similar circumstances](#) in the area of Bakhshi of the Kunduz Province resulted in a death of 13 civilians, including 10 children.

All of the reports presented above were confirmed by data from the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

Thus, for ordinary Afghans, religious extremists do not represent quite the same threat as the US armed forces who are allegedly fighting these radicals.

Hundreds of other similar cases of US criminal activity across the Middle Eastern region can be cited, with Washington refusing to take responsibility for any of them.

It’s particularly curious that against this backdrop US State Department spokesman Robert

Palladino had the [audacity](#) to describe an attack launched by the Saudi-led coalition against a Save the Children-supported hospital in Yemen “awful,” while urging Riyadh to conduct a thorough investigation.

However, Robert Palladino didn't say a single word about Washington's intentions to conduct any similar such investigation of any in a long list of similar attacks conducted by the US armed forces themselves all over the world. This fact shows that the United States has become accustomed to impunity from all manners of crimes, which explains why the Pentagon couldn't be bothered with ensuring the safety of the civilian populations amid its various global military operations. The grief of the families of thousands of innocent victims is of little concern to those calling the shots in Washington. They are simply shrugged off as collateral damage. The US doesn't want to know how many times it has violated international humanitarian law or how many war crimes it has committed.

So will the United States be held accountable for its crimes or will the international community once again be too willing to continue looking the other way?

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