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## Newtown, Afghanistan

Robert Dreyfuss  
December 24, 2012

Twenty children killed in Newtown, Connecticut, and a huge outpouring in response: wall-to-wall media coverage, an avalanche of flowers and stuffed animals, a river of ink in editorials, nationwide flags at half mast, memorial funds and much, much more.

Tens, hundreds, thousands of children killed in Afghanistan. Response: almost nothing.

Are Afghan children any less precious? Or does it make a difference that the killers were wearing American uniforms, piloting US helicopters and fighters, and operating drones?

There was the March 2012 case, of course, of the army sergeant who slaughtered children:

Stalking from home to home, a United States Army sergeant methodically killed at least 16 civilians, 9 of them children, in a rural stretch of southern Afghanistan early on Sunday, igniting fears of a new wave of anti-American hostility, Afghan and American officials said. ... The man gathered 11 bodies, including those of 4 girls younger than 6, and set fire to them, villagers said.

Or this, from October 2012:

The international military coalition in Afghanistan has confirmed that three children were killed in a coalition artillery strike in Helmand Province, expressing regret over the deaths and calling

them “tragic.”... Family members...said the children had been sent to gather dung, which farmers in the area dry and use for fuel.

Or this one, also from October 2012:

A firefight that raged for an hour between international forces and the Taliban in eastern Afghanistan killed four children who were in the area grazing their sheep and goats, local officials said. The international forces apologized for the episode Tuesday and said an investigation was under way.

Or this one, from February 2012:

The Afghan president, Hamid Karzai, accused NATO on Thursday of killing eight children in a coalition airstrike in eastern Afghanistan.

And from July 2012:

The fatal airstrike on Wednesday in Khost Province, which Afghan officials say killed eight children and two women, ignited outrage in neighboring villages, and it could deepen tensions between the Afghan government and Western authorities here.

Or this catastrophic one, from 2008, in which 60 children died (two, three, many Newtowns):

A United Nations human rights team has found “convincing evidence” that 90 civilians—among them 60 children—were killed in airstrikes on a village in western Afghanistan on Friday, according to the United Nations mission in Kabul.

There are hundreds of these cases, dating back to the earliest days of the war in Afghanistan, in 2001-2002.

Don't expect any wall-to-wall coverage by CNN anytime soon.