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NATO Airstrike Kills 10 Afghan Civilians

By John Glaser

February 13, 2013

A NATO air strike killed 10 Afghan civilians, five of them children, in eastern Afghanistan on Wednesday, and wounded five other innocents, according to Afghan officials.

“Foreign forces carried out the attack by themselves without informing us,” Kunar Governor Fazlullah Wahidi told Reuters.

Four Taliban fighters were also allegedly killed in the strike or associated strikes in the area, in the Shigal district of Kunar province.

According to a recent United Nations report, US attacks and airstrikes have killed hundreds of children in recent years, “due notably to reported lack of precautionary measures and indiscriminate use of force.”

In describing the UN report, the American Civil Liberties Union reported, “hundreds of children have been killed in attacks and air strikes by US military forces, and those responsible for the killings have not been held to account even as the number of children killed doubled from 2010 to 2011.”

Some US military officials are unhappy about the criticism they receive when Afghan children are killed or injured because of US operations, claiming that insurgents recruit children to plant bombs, so killing children is actually fair game.

“It kind of opens our aperture,” said Army Lt. Col. Marion Carrington. “In addition to looking for military-age males, it’s looking for children with potential hostile intent.”

In his State of the Union speech on Tuesday night, President Obama announced further troop withdrawals of up to 34,000 soldiers by the end of this year, adding that America’s military presence in Afghanistan will continue on beyond 2014.