

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نباشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.strategic-culture.org/news/2015/08/09/war-crimes-in-iraq.html>

War Crimes in Iraq

Brian CLOUGHLEY

8/9/2015



At the moment the city of Fallujah in Iraq is occupied by Islamic State (ISIL) savages and is reported by the [Pentagon](#) to be under bombardment by strike aircraft of «US and coalition military forces». On 31 May, for example, «near Fallujah, one airstrike struck an ISIL tactical unit, destroying two ISIL fighting positions».

Western television and newspapers do not often carry details of such airstrikes. Indeed the western media rarely provide information such as that in [al-Araby](#) whose reporter was told by a health services spokesperson in Fallujah that «fighter jets and helicopters [dropped] barrel bombs on several neighbourhoods in Fallujah on Sunday [5 July, 2015] killing 29 civilians, including three entire families, and injuring at 41 others».

Fallujah was first subjected to ruthless attacks during the US war on Iraq when in 2004 it was twice besieged by US soldiers and Marines who finally destroyed much of the city after massive artillery bombardments and round-the-clock airstrikes. (The artillery fired White Phosphorous shells in the anti-personnel role.) And now, as [stated](#) by that saintly organisation, the UN High Commission for Refugees, «increased clashes following the launch of an Iraqi government offensive in Anbar have forced more than 250,000 civilians across the province to flee their homes since April. Since the beginning of the crisis early last year more than a million Iraqis from Anbar have been displaced».

The population of Fallujah continues to suffer horrifically and the Kurdish news agency [Rudaw](#) reported on 28 July that «3,243 corpses have been transported to the hospital, 279 of them were women and 249 were children», following airstrikes by «Iraqi jets and coalition warplanes on Fallujah neighbourhoods since early 2014».

Appalling war crimes have been committed by «coalition forces» in their aerial blitz on Fallujah, but its inhabitants are no strangers to such brutality.

In 2004 US ground and air forces committed war crimes in and around Fallujah, setting the scene for the future of all Iraq.

It is very rarely that mainstream TV networks and newspapers in the United States report on war incidents that could give rise to international criticism of their country, but sometimes it is unavoidable, and one particularly evil crime in Fallujah was covered by some papers. *The New York Times* had to [record](#) on 16 November 2004 that «A United States marine shot and killed a wounded and apparently unarmed Iraqi prisoner in a mosque in the former insurgent stronghold of Falluja, according to pool television pictures broadcast Monday... The shooting on Saturday was videotaped by a pool correspondent [of NBC News] who said three other previously wounded prisoners in the mosque also had apparently been shot again by the marines inside the mosque».

The Washington Post reported the incident at the time, but it can't be tracked in the archives. What appeared in the paper was «The killing of a wounded Iraqi by a US Marine in Fallujah was termed a "tragic incident" by the US military commander in Iraq on Tuesday as Arab satellite channels replayed unedited footage of the shooting as often as every half-hour. **While US networks declined to air the actual shooting** [emphasis added], Arab networks such as al Jazeera and al Arabiya broadcast the entire incident, with graphics and narration illustrating the sequence of events. At times, the images were frozen. The gunshot splashed blood against the wall behind the Iraqi's head, and the man's body went limp».

Nothing was done about this horrific war crime. Nobody expected there to be a proper investigation, and none was held. US forces were never held accountable for even the most obvious violations of the Geneva Conventions.

An Iraqi Associated Press photographer, Bilal Hussein, stayed in Fallujah during the city's dying days in 2004 and his record of the carnage and destruction is stark and shocking. When «US soldiers began to open fire on the houses... I decided that it was very dangerous to stay in my

house», and he decided to escape across the Euphrates River which flows on the western side of the city. «I wasn't really thinking», he said. «Suddenly, I just had to get out. I didn't think there was any other choice... I decided to swim... but I changed my mind after seeing US helicopters firing on and killing people who tried to cross the river». A family of five was shot dead as they tried to cross, and he «helped bury a man by the river bank, with my own hands... I kept walking along the river for two hours and I could still see some US snipers ready to shoot anyone who might swim». He gave up the idea of being killed by a combination of bullets and drowning and managed to get away unscathed, and he was extremely lucky, because US snipers were most active.

In the week that Hussein saw the family being slaughtered by US gunships the Western media was portraying the Marines and soldiers destroying Fallujah as heroes. The Daily Telegraph of the UK and its Australian clone, the Sydney Morning Herald, entranced their readers in an [article](#) in November 2004 with an opening sentence that «After seven months in Iraq's Sunni triangle, for many American soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division the opportunity to avenge dead friends by taking a life was a moment of sheer exhilaration». It reported a psychotic Sergeant Anyett as screaming «Yeah», he yelled. «Battle Damage Assessment — nothing. Building's gone. I got my kills, I'm coming down. I just love my job».

As I wrote on 18 November 2004 : «He just loves his job? He loves killing people? Is this real? Is he a real person? Can he be a human being? I wore army uniform for 36 years and served in three places in which there was a certain amount of disturbance and even a modest amount of firing on the two-way range: Cyprus, during the 'Emergency'; Borneo in Malaysia when Indonesia was trying to invade it ; and Vietnam, where nationalist patriots were trying to unite their country. And during my entire service I never heard a soldier say that he loved killing people. Apart from anything else (I mean such weird things as morality, dignity and decency), it would have been considered bizarre that anyone could think such a thing. If someone had said he loved killing people he would have been put very swiftly into the hands of the shrinks, the psychologist team, who would have ensured that he was removed from the army and given intensive treatment in a quiet and caring hospital until he regained his sanity and was fit to rejoin the human race».

But Sergeant Anyett and the rest of the demented killers in Fallujah were regarded as heroes and protected from any war crimes investigation.

Little wonder the US military are loathed, feared and despised throughout Iraq and in much of the rest of the world. They haven't got «boots on the ground» again in Iraq – yet – but their legacy lingers, and nowhere is it so rancid as in Fallujah, where war crimes continue.