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Afghans call on US-led troops to leave

March 3, 2011

A day after a NATO airstrike killed nine Afghan children in Kunar province, hundreds of angry Afghan protesters rally against US-led military operations in the war-torn country.

Nearly two hundred Afghans came to the streets in Kunar province, calling on the United States to leave their country, a Press TV correspondent reported on Wednesday.

“We do not need the US help in reconstructing the country or fight the Taliban. No matter if we die of hunger, we just want the US to leave Afghanistan,” a protester told Press TV.

Witnesses say the victims were collecting wood when US warplanes dropped bombs on a mountainous area.

Top NATO Commander General David Petraeus has apologized for the deadly incident.

The deaths bring to over 70 the number of Afghan civilians killed during US-led air-strikes in Kunar over the past two weeks.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has condemned the foreign forces for what he calls “the daily killing of Afghan civilians.”

“I once again point out that NATO and ISAF must focus on terrorist bases and havens or otherwise, with the daily killing of innocent civilians, they will cause huge problems for

themselves," Karzai said in a statement issued by his office in a clear reference to militants' hideouts in Pakistan.

Thousands of Afghan civilians have lost their lives in operations by foreign troops since the US-led invasion of the Asian country in 2001.

US-led forces admit to Afghan 'tragedy'

Press TV

March 3, 2011

The commander of the US-led foreign forces in Afghanistan, General David Petraeus, has admitted that a NATO airstrike has killed nine civilians in the war-torn country.

Petraeus said in a statement on Wednesday that he was "deeply sorry for the tragedy," warning the troops responsible for the attack could face disciplinary action, Los Angeles Times reported.

The statements came after Afghan President Hamid Karzai earlier had slammed foreign forces for what he called "the daily killing of Afghan civilians."

NATO has always evaded responsibility for the killing of hundreds of Afghan civilians during airstrikes, claiming that the attacks target Taliban militants. However, Karzai has said that villages are not the bases and havens of terrorists.

Nine children, aged between seven and nine, were killed in a US-led aerial operation in Afghanistan's northwestern province of Kunar late Tuesday, police said.

The incident has aroused public fury among Afghans who are already replete with anti-US sentiments. On Wednesday hundreds of people staged demonstrations in protest against killing of civilians by foreign forces.

Thousands of Afghan people have so far lost their lives as a result of military operations by the foreign troops since the 2001 US-led invasion of Afghanistan.

Insecurity is on the rise across the country despite the presence of over 150,000 US-led forces there.