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Russian Foreign Ministry Slams U.S. Over Kunduz Hospital Attack

October 05, 2015



Afghan staff react inside a Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) hospital after an air strike in the city of Kunduz, Afghanistan, on Oct.3, 2015.

Russia's Foreign Ministry has called for an investigation into an attack on a hospital in the northern Afghan city of Kunduz on Saturday, blaming the U.S. military for the deaths of more than 20 civilians.

“We demand an immediate objective investigation into the events and the punishment of those responsible for the tragedy,” the ministry's spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said in an online statement published Monday.

The attack on Saturday took place as Afghan government forces backed by U.S. air power tried to retake Kunduz after it was captured by Taliban insurgents last week.

Aid group Medecins Sans Frontieres, or MSF, which had been running the hospital, said on its website that 23 people had been killed in the raid: 10 patients and 13 MSF staff members.

The medical aid organization called the bombing a “war crime” in an online statement Sunday.

“This is far from the first time that the indiscriminate use of U.S. military force in Afghanistan has led to the deaths of innocent civilians,” Zakharova said in the Foreign Ministry's statement.

U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter on Sunday promised the U.S. would be “full and transparent” in sharing the results of its own probe into the incident.

Russia's statement comes at a time when it has come under fire for reportedly killing Syrian civilians after launching an air offensive last week.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said Saturday that at least 39 civilians — including eight children — had been killed in Russian air strikes in Syria since Wednesday, Reuters reported.

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