

***The U.S. massacre (war crime) in Bala Baluk:***

***“Truckloads of Bodies” - Reuters***

In memory of and sympathy for

127-147 (prelim.) civilians killed  
Countless others wounded, like



An Afghan child burned and lacerated by U.S. aerial fire, photo by Agence France Presse

during 5 – 7 P.M. on May 5, 2009

in the villages of Granai (Gerani) and Gangabad (Ganj Abad) in Bala Baluk district of Farah Province, when U.S war planes called-in by U.S. Marine special operations forces (U.S. 2nd Marines Special Operations Battalion India Company, MSOC-I) embedded with Afghan troops, obliterated seventeen homes. As predicted, the *Obama surge* has led to soaring Afghan civilian casualties (now however with “deep, deep regrets” offered by Hillary and Barack). Killing civilians is a war crime with or without regrets.



Source: AP photo by Abdul Malek

The sequence of events for U.S. massacres is familiar:

1. Claim to have killed insurgents/terrorists

2. Deny local accounts of civilian casualties
3. Claim they are 'investigating civilian casualties'
4. Apologize when (and if) independent sources are able to access the area for the truth
5. Try to blame the Taliban for their own incompetent and brutal air-raids.





Other victims of the U.S massacre in Bala Baluk district (the second photo was taken by Abdul Malek, A.P.)

Some Taliban fighters had gathered in the area and as Afghan ground forces arrived a battle erupted. Villagers from Ghanabad fled into what they believed was the safety of homes in Gerani village, some 5 kms to the east. The Afghan forces with their U.S. Marine mentors called-in close air support which then bombed the area villages for about an hour. The results were predictable.



A girl injured in the U.S. air strike

Village elder, Hajji Issa Khan from Gangabad, used his tractor to carry the dead to a central area where assembled relatives could mourn their dead. He said, "In this operation there were 127 people killed. I can tell you exactly because my driver was carrying those...people to the center of town and he came and told me that he carried 127 people" (quoted in *The Guardian* 5/6/2009). The International Red Cross sent a team to investigate. It reported that on Tuesday afternoon it had seen dozens of bodies in graves while villagers were digging through the rubble to retrieve the remains of others. Jessica Barry said, "There were bodies, there were graves, and there were people burying bodies when we were there." Barry said that among those killed was a first aid male volunteer for Afghanistan Red Crescent who died along with 13 members of his family (including 5 daughters and 3 sons). She underlined that they were killed while sheltering in their home.



Villagers displaying pieces of a U.S. projectile

Former government official Mohammad Qadderdan said between 100 and 120 people were killed in the attacks. He said, "these were houses that were full of children and women and elders were bombed by planes. It is very difficult to say how many were killed..." He added that this U.S assault was worse than Azizabad, referring to the U.S strike in August 2008 which killed over 90 innocent civilians.

An official in western Afghanistan says he collected the names of 147 people who residents say were killed in a disputed incident involving U.S. forces and Taliban militants. A member of Farah's provincial council helped investigate two sites where fighting took place this week. Abdul Basir Khan says 55 people died at one location and 92 at another. He says many of the dead

were buried in mass graves. Khan said Thursday he compiled the numbers from family interviews and visiting grave sites, and gave it to a delegation of investigators from Kabul. Abdul Basir Khaikhah, a member of the provincial government's investigating team, confirmed that the villagers' lists contained 147 names. He said he had seen two mass graves and more than 40 individual graves in the two villages. Other victims in the Farah hospital included:



Abdul Basir Khan, a member of Farah's provincial council, said irate villagers ferried some 30 bodies in trucks from the scene to the provincial capital, Farah, to show the carnage to the governor. Khan added, "It was difficult to count because they were in very bad shape. Some had no legs." An outraged Member of Parliament from Farah Province, Rohul Amin, said that as many as 130 civilians had perished. Another legislator, Mohammad Naim

Farahi, stated, "the governor said the villagers have brought two tractor trailers full of pieces of human bodies to his office to prove the casualties that had occurred...everyone in the governor's office was crying, watching this shocking scene." Farahi said he talked with someone he knew personally who had counted 113 bodies being buried. Later, more bodies were pulled from the rubble and some injured died at the hospital. A girl named Shafiqah being treated for wounds in her face and two severed toes at Farah hospital said, "We were at home when the bombing started. Seven of my family members were killed." Others were injured and being treated in Farah hospital:



The **independent Pajhwok Afghan News** reported that the village of Gerani was destroyed in the U.S air attack. A resident said 123 bodies had been retrieved by Tuesday evening. One family lost 23 members. A tribal elder,

Abdul Manaan, told *Pajhwok* that 52 people had been killed in one area and another 65 in another region.

For 60-year-old Haji Mohammad Shah, a villager in Farah who lost nine family members including his wife, daughter and grandchildren in the attack, no apologies will ever be enough.

"We don't want anything from the government or those who killed them. Nothing can replace my family," he added, weeping.

The bombings, that lasted around an hour, killed 50 members of neighbor Sayed Azam's extended family, Azam told *Reuters*.



An Afghan boy places dirt over the grave of one of his family members after air strikes in Ganj Abad of Bala Buluk district, in Farah province, May 5, 2009. (Photo: Reuters)

The *Associated Press* dutifully reported that the U.S. military was "investigating claims" of civilian deaths, failing to mention that once again this is a case of the criminal perpetrator investigating himself. On Thursday, a desperate U.S. military floated disinformation claiming that the Taliban had herded the civilians into compounds and then threw grenades inside. Naturally, the fable was picked up by the likes of Laura King of the *Los Angeles Times* (<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-afghan-protests8-2009may08,0,2896478.story>) who has a long record going back to 2001 of minimizing Afghan civilian casualties (see my report at <http://cursor.org/stories/noncounters.htm> ).

The *Times*, meanwhile, interviewed local people who contradict the unnamed U.S Defense officials' version of events. Villagers reached by telephone said many were killed by aerial bombing. Muhammad Jan, a farmer, said fighting had broken out in his village, Shiwan, and another, Granai, in the Bala Baluk district. An hour after it stopped, the planes came, he said. In Granai, he said, women and children had sought shelter in orchards and houses. "Six houses were bombed and destroyed completely, and people in the houses still remain under the rubble," he said, "and now I am working with other villagers trying to excavate the dead bodies." He said that villagers, crazed with grief, were collecting mangled bodies in blankets and shawls and piling them on three tractors. People were still missing, he said. Mr. Agha, who lives in Granai, said the bombing started at 5 p.m. on Monday and lasted until late into the night. "People were rushing to go to their relatives' houses, where they believed they would be safe, but they were hit on the way," he said.

*Reuters'* reporter, Sharafuddin Sharafyar, titled a report, "Truckloads of dead civilians after Afghan battle" (5/9/2009, 18:37 GMT). Locals told him that aerial attack had destroyed 17 homes which were full of people who had fled the ground fighting. A video of the bodies loaded in trucks may be viewed at [http://www.rawa.org/temp/truck\\_load\\_victims\\_VCD.mpg](http://www.rawa.org/temp/truck_load_victims_VCD.mpg) .

A couple days after the U.S. floated its disinformation, Patrick Coburn of *The Independent*, summarized

I did not meet survivors but I did talk to a reliable witness, a radio reporter called Farooq Faizy, who had gone to Bala Baluk

soon after the attack happened. He said that police and soldiers nearby were frightened of the Taliban and told him it was too dangerous to go on, but he spoke to some village elders, telling them: "Talk to us and we will tell the world." He says he was none too sure who was in control of the three villages – Gerani, Gangabad and Khoujaha – that had been hit and he was careful about what he said. But he did take some 70 or 80 photographs and they bore out the villagers' story: there were craters everywhere; the villages had been plastered with bombs; bodies had been torn to shreds by the blasts; there were mass graves; there were no signs of damage from bullets, rockets or grenades. I suspected that the US military's claim that the Taliban had run through the village hurling grenades, supposedly because they had not been paid their cut of profits from the opium poppy crop, was just a delaying tactic. Usually the US military delays admission of guilt until a story has gone cold and the media is no longer interested. "First say 'no story'," runs an old PR adage, "and then say 'old story'." ***By the end of the week the US was admitting that the grenade-throwing Taliban story was "thinly sourced"***.

On Wednesday, furious demonstrators gathered at the main mosque in Farah, chanting "Death to America," "Death to the Invaders," and "Death to the Government" (<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/afghans-riot-over-airstrike-atrocity-1681070.html> ). Western-trained Afghan police arrived to disperse the protesters. They injured one protester with gunfire. Haji Nangyalai, 42, said he was demonstrating

"To show our anger at the crimes committed by American forces. We ask the Afghan government to force the American forces to leave Afghanistan. They kill more civilians than Taliban."



Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/08/world/asia/08afghan.html?hpw>

Slaughtered in a U.S aerial attack called-in by U.S Marine Special Operations Forces (MSOC-I) embedded with Afghan troops  
Public silence in the U.S., but Kabul looked different:



See also <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5TnS710W9w>