Will Obama Be Tried for Civilian Deaths?

It’s a well-known fact that the supreme commander is the highest official of the armed forces in any country. Simultaneously, as a rule, this very individual occupies the position of a head of the state, whether it’s a president or monarch. The fundamental law of any state – the national constitution specifies the rights and duties of the Supreme Commander, that doesn’t simply define the military policy of a country, but also bears responsibility for the fighting capacity of the national army, along with its activities in peacetime and wartime. In other words, this person gets the praise for victories, but is also bound to be questioned for defeats and mistakes.

This fact becomes particularly relevant today, when various ongoing US military operations continue to claim the lives of thousands of civilians as a result of routinely inaccurate aircraft and drone strikes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and a number of other countries.

The crimes of American soldiers in Afghanistan in the period from 2009 to 2013 are well documented in a 84 pages long report drafted by Amnesty International that is titled «Left in the Dark». International experts from AI came to the conclusion that even the most outrageous war crimes are not investigated in the United State, so those who committed them always come out clean in the end. Thousands of Afghans were killed and wounded by the American military after the invasion, yet the US justice system has never held any of the soldiers or commanders responsible for unlawful killings of civilians and other abuses, states Amnesty International, while any evidence of terrible war crimes are simply ignored.

This sort of total impunity invites new crimes, and the recent destruction of a hospital that was run by Doctors Without Borders in the Afghan province of Kunduz proves this statement better than anything. Immediately after the air strikes that were carried out by the US Air Force, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein called for a full investigation of the tragedy, adding that if it is determined that the bombardment of the hospital was deliberate, it must be regarded as a war crime.

It took a month for Doctors Without Borders to present its own report on the circumstances of the attack. And, as it was pointed out by The Huffington Post, the report presented direct evidence that the pilots of the US military aircraft AC-130 deliberately shot people who ran out of the main building of the hospital in an attempt to get to safety. On the night of the attack a total of 100 patients were receiving treatment in the hospital. That evening, the hospital administration placed two white flags with the red Doctors without Borders logo on the roof of the medical facility. Even earlier Doctors without Borders provided the US military with exact coordinates of their facilities, while underlying the neutral status of medical workers. And when the hospital was hit by heavy fire the staff contacted Afghan and American officials 18 times for the attack to be ceased. The report concludes that Doctors Without Borders has named the attack in Kunduz a war crime and demanded a detailed international investigation and a consequent trial.

The US Army involvement in two more air strikes against the hospitals of Doctors Without Borders in Yemen has been reported by Slate. Even though the military operation in Yemen is being carried out by Saudi Arabia, the degree of the US military involvement in this conflict is well-known. The United States have been trying to distance itself from the staggering number of civilian casualties in Yemen, by saying that Washington has no say in the
planning of military operations in Yemen. However, as the source notes, this contradicts earlier statements of the White House about the US role in the conflict, that has been “limited” to consultations, the exchange of intelligence and choice of targets for attacks.

The guilt of the White House and the US President as Commander in Chief of the American armed forces in mass civilian casualties has been recently underlined by Foreign Policy Journal. Analyzing US military actions abroad and various military interventions over recent years, the author inquires: what right did the US have to intervene in sovereign foreign countries? The US and NATO continue using its military capabilities in Syria and Afghanistan to ensure a comfortable political outcome in those states. And they’ve been doing it to all those countries, inhabited by people that have done no evil to the US whatsoever. Was the bombing of the hospital in Kunduz a war crime? – There can be no doubt about it. For more than 10 years that the US has been occupying Afghanistan, it has been routinely oppressing and killing the people of this country. There can be no doubt that President Obama is guilty of war crimes against the Afghan people.

According to the rules of military honor, any officer accused of such crimes, takes off his shoulder straps and entrusts himself to the military court, for the latter to determine his fate. Now, the faults of the United States President have been reported by numerous newspapers and magazines, both in the US and abroad, voicing concerns over a hundred thousands people, yet nothing happens. And we are not speaking about just a president here, but about a Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

As for the US judicial system, which has been actively used in recent years to legalize sanctions and punish certain individuals, it must show the international community that it’s completely objective by calling for the establishment of an international trial for the US military regarding its various war crimes and the faults of its military commanders, including the Commander in Chief – Barack Obama. The UK parliament has been calling for a trial for Tony Blair on charges of war crimes. And there will be a tribunal should Chilcot’s commission confirm that Blair disregarded international law by launching an illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003. Why can't the US “lead by example” in this domain too?

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