

16 killed in suspected US air strike

BOMB HITS KUNDUZ HOSPITAL

Kabul

A suspected US air strike on a hospital killed 16 people yesterday in the Afghan city of Kunduz, medical charity MSF said, a bombardment that the UN condemned as "inexcusable, and possibly even criminal".

Dozens more were seriously wounded at the facility, a key lifeline that has been running "beyond capacity" during fighting that saw the Taliban seize control of the northern provincial capital for several days.

The strike left the building engulfed in flames, with photos posted by Doctors Without Borders showing their staff shocked and dazed.

"At 2:10am (2040 GMT) local time... the MSF trauma centre in Kunduz was hit several times during sustained bombing and was very badly damaged," the organisation, known by its French initials, said.

MSF spokeswoman Kate Stegeman said 16 people were killed in the bombardment, among them three children,

and 37 were wounded. The charity said the bombing continued for more than 30 minutes after American and Afghan military officials were

forces may have been behind the strike but has not so far commented on the specific claims of MSF, which has long treated the war-wounded from

deeply contentious issue in the 14-year campaign against Taliban insurgents.

UN rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called for a full and

Secretary Ashton Carter promised a "full investigation" into the bombing.

It came after Taliban insurgents overran the

hospital building as a position to target Afghan forces and civilians".

MSF said some 105 patients and their caregivers, as well as more than 80 international and local MSF staff, were in the hospital at the time of the bombing.

The MSF trauma centre in Kunduz is the only medical facility in the whole northeastern region of Afghanistan that can deal with major injuries.

"We are deeply shocked by the attack, the killing of our staff... and the heavy toll it has inflicted on healthcare in Kunduz," MSF director of operations Bart Janssens said. "We urge all parties to respect the safety of health facilities and staff."

The International Committee of the Red Cross said the strike was "an appalling tragedy". "Such attacks against health workers and facilities undermine the capacity of humanitarian organisations to assist the Afghan people at a time when they most urgently need it."



Fires burn in part of the MSF hospital in the Afghan city of Kunduz after it was hit by an air strike



Afghan MSF staff react in the MSF hospital in Kunduz after it was hit by an air strike

first alerted they were being hit.

"All parties to the conflict, including in Kabul and Washington, were clearly informed of the precise location (GPS coordinates) of the MSF facilities," the statement added. NATO conceded US

all sides of the conflict. "The strike may have resulted in collateral damage to a nearby medical facility. This incident is under investigation."

The incident has renewed concerns about the use of US air strikes in Afghanistan, a

transparent probe, noting that, "if established as deliberate in a court of law, an air strike on a hospital may amount to a war crime."

"This event is utterly tragic, inexcusable and possibly even criminal," he said. US Defence

northern Afghan city on Monday. It was the first major city to be captured by militants since 2001. The Afghan defence ministry expressed sadness but in a statement said "a group of terrorists armed with light and heavy weapon... were using the

First Iran Hajj dead flown home 9 days after stampede

Tehran

The first bodies of Iranians killed in a stampede at the Hajj arrived home from Saudi Arabia yesterday.

President Hassan Rouhani and other top officials laid white flowers on coffins at a somber ceremony in Tehran for the 104 pilgrims - among 464 Iranians declared dead in the September 24 crush.

The president was accompanied by the heads of Iran's judiciary and parliament as well as the chief of staff of supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's office.

Syria air strikes sow panic: Moscow

Moscow

Russian air strikes yesterday targeting the Islamic State group in Syria have sown "panic", forcing some 600 "militants" to abandon their positions and head to Europe, Moscow claimed.

Summing up the results of Russia's first three days of strikes, a senior official with the General Staff said Russian jets had made more than 60 sorties over 50 IS targets and added that Russia would ramp up its aerial campaign.

"Our intelligence shows that militants are leaving areas under their control. Panic and desertion have started in



Syrians look at the damage following air strikes on the rebel-held area of Douma, east of the capital Damascus

their ranks," Colonel General Andrei Kartapolov, a senior Russian General Staff official,

said in a statement. "Some 600 mercenaries have abandoned their positions and are trying

to find their way into Europe," Kartapolov said.

"Over the past three days we have managed to undermine material and technical resources of the terrorists and significantly reduce their combat potential," he added. "We will not only continue the strikes by our air force but also will increase their intensity."

He said Russia had managed to destroy IS command posts, warehouses storing ammunition and explosives, communication hubs, training camps as well as "mini-factories that made weapons for suicide bombers".

Saudi national with suspected MERS dies in PH

Manila

A Saudi national suspected of carrying the MERS virus has died while visiting the Philippines, the health department announced yesterday.

The patient, who had a cough, fever and occasional chills, died in an undisclosed hospital last Tuesday after a two-day confinement, Health Secretary Janette Garin said in a statement.

The patient's X-ray results also "suggested" MERS infection, Garin said, without providing additional details.

First-class lunch

New York

An original menu from the last first-class lunch served aboard the ill-fated Titanic has sold for \$88,000 to a private collector at an online auction.

The luncheon menu had been saved by a first-class passenger, Abraham Lincoln Salomon, one of only a handful of people who climbed aboard a lifeboat called the "Money Boat" or "Millionaires' Boat" when the main ship started sinking into the icy waters

of the Atlantic. The lifeboat gained its moniker because the wealthy passengers it saved purportedly bribed the crew to row away from the disaster rather than rescue more people.

Signed on the back in pencil by another first-class passenger, Isaac Gerald Frauenthal, the menu provides a fascinating insight into both the opulence on board the ship and food fashions of the day.

Diners had the option of



The luncheon menu had been saved by a first-class passenger

starting with fillets of brill, a type of fish, or cockie leekie (also known as cock-a-leekie), a Scottish soup of leeks and chicken stock. They could also indulge in options from the buffet, including potted shrimps, soused herrings, brawn - a type of jellied meat - and corned ox tongue.

An elaborate platter of eight different types of cheese was served to finish the midday meal.

New York-based autograph dealer, LionHeartAutographs,

An elaborate platter of eight different types of cheese was served to finish the midday meal

offered the menu for sale from an unidentified person who it said was a descendent of one of the survivors of the boat.

It is one of only three or four menus from the last first-class lunch still in existence and fetched a healthy premium over its estimated \$50,000 - \$70,000 price tag.

The Titanic sank on its maiden voyage in the Atlantic Ocean on April 15, 1912 after hitting an iceberg the previous evening.

It was carrying just over 2,200 passengers and crew, of whom 1,517 died. None of the survivors of the tragedy are alive today.