

Afghan govt says 'around 400' killed in Pakistani strike on Kabul rehab clinic

Hundreds more were said to have been wounded at the facility

● Interior ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani gave a toll of "408 killed and 265 wounded"

● Crowds gathered outside as family members sought news of their loved ones

● The United Nations mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on Tuesday called for an "immediate ceasefire" **AFP** | Kabul, Afghanistan

The Afghan government said yesterday that about 400 people were killed in a Pakistani air strike on a drug rehabilitation centre in the capital, Kabul, in the deadliest attack in the recent violence between the two neighbours.

Hundreds more were said to have been wounded at the facility, which was hit on Monday night, flattening buildings used to treat people from across the country for addictions to marijuana, amphetamines and other narcotics.

There was no immediate independent verification of the toll but AFP reporters saw at least 30 bodies taken from the site in the chaotic and smouldering aftermath of the attack on Monday night.

They then saw more than 65 removed on Tuesday as rescuers picked through the rubble in the search for victims and survivors.

"The toll is not final as the rescue operation is still going on but we have around 400 martyrs and more than 200 wounded," said health ministry spokesman Sharafat Zaman, calling the strike "against the Geneva Convention and all international laws".

Interior ministry spokesman Abdul Mateen Qani gave a toll of "408 killed and 265 wounded" at the same briefing.

The Italian NGO Emergency said soon after the strike that it received three bodies at its hospital in Kabul and was treating



Afghan firefighters douse flames at the site after Pakistani airstrikes hit the Secondary Rehabilitation Services Centre in Kabul



Taliban security personnel inspect the site after Pakistani airstrikes hit the Secondary Rehabilitation Services Centre in Kabul

27 wounded but expected the toll to be much higher.

In Geneva, UN rights office spokesman Thameen Al-Kheetan called for a swift, independent and transparent investigation into the strike, with those responsible "held to account in line with international standards".

But Pakistan's Information

Minister Attaullah Tarar said Taliban government claims that Pakistan deliberately targeted the clinic were "entirely baseless".

"No hospital, no drug rehabilitation centre, and no civilian facility was targeted," he wrote on X.

"The targets were military and terrorist infrastructure, includ-

ing ammunition and technical equipment storage sites and other installations linked to hostile activity against Pakistan."

The two sides have been in conflict for months, with Islamabad accusing its neighbour of harbouring Islamist extremists who have mounted deadly cross-border attacks on its territory.



Coffins carrying the victims' bodies arrive in ambulances as Afghans wait for their deceased relatives at the site after Pakistani airstrikes hit the Omid Addiction Treatment Hospital in Kabul,

Search for survivors

Chairs, blankets, pieces of hospital beds and human remains could be seen in the blackened ruins of the rehabilitation centre as dawn broke.

Crowds gathered outside as family members sought news of their loved ones, as rescuers picked through the rubble nearby.

Habibullah Kabulbai, 55, arrived at the centre on Monday night, hoping to find his brother, Nawroz, who was admitted five days ago.

"I can't find him," he said, weeping. "What should we do? I have no words... We are helpless. This has not only happened to me but the whole of Afghanistan."

Monday evening's attack triggered panic in Kabul, sending people running for cover as anti-aircraft guns fired back not long after they had broken their daily Ramadan fast.

"I heard the sound of the jet patrolling," Omid Stanikzai, 31, a security guard at the drug treatment centre, told AFP.

"There were military units all around us. When these military units fired on the jet, the jet dropped bombs and a fire broke out."

All of the dead and injured were civilians, he added.

Pakistan's Tarar said the six strikes conducted on Monday also hit the eastern border province of Nangarhar, calling them "precise, deliberate, and professional".

'De-escalate'

The UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, said he was "dismayed" by reports of the air strikes and civilian casualties, and called on both sides to "de-escalate".

The United Nations mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) on Tuesday called for an "immediate ceasefire". Between February 26 and Monday before the strike, at least 76 civilians had been killed in Afghanistan due to the hostilities, it added.

India called Monday's strike "a cowardly and unconscionable act of violence" that threatened regional peace and stability.

China said on Monday that its special envoy has spent a week mediating between the two sides and urged an immediate ceasefire.

But South Asia expert Michael Kugelman, from the Atlantic Council international affairs think-tank, said the fighting showed little sign of ending soon, particularly with Gulf states who have previously mediated "bogged down by their own war".

"Pakistan appears intent to keep hitting targets in Afghanistan, and the Taliban determined to retaliate with operations on Pakistani border posts and potentially with asymmetric tactics -- from launching drones to sponsoring militant attacks in wider Pakistan," he told AFP.

"There are no off-ramps in sight."

Tens of millions more in acute hunger if Mideast war drags on: UN

AFP | Geneva, Switzerland

An extra 45 million people could face acute hunger if the Mideast war carried on through June, swelling the number worldwide to a "terrible" high, the United Nations warned yesterday.

The war, now in its third week, has killed hundreds and seen Iran launch retaliatory strikes against Israel and Gulf nations, as well as a front opening in Lebanon with Israel battling Hezbollah.

"If the Middle East conflict continues through June, an additional 45 million people could be pushed into acute hunger by



Volunteers prepare sweets for displaced people from southern Lebanon sheltering at a school in the southern coastal city of Sidon

price rises," Carl Skau, the deputy executive director of the UN's World Food Programme, told a press conference in Geneva.

"This would take global hunger levels to an all-time record, and it's a terrible, terrible prospect," he said, with 319 million people -- already an historic high -- currently acutely food insecure.

"Really it is again taking this to a whole other level."

Skau said the WFP was already facing a "perfect storm" before the war erupted on February 28.

"Hunger has never been as severe as now," he said, driven by extreme weather events, con-

flict and pockets of famine being declared.

"At the same time, the resources fell sharply from 2023 and 2024 levels."

Having had to cut staff and streamline operations, "we are basically stretched to the limit", said Skau.

He said the Middle East war was making WFP's operations "much, much more expensive".

Skau said the agency was trying to deal with supply chain disruptions but its operating costs had shot up, notably through soaring fuel prices and longer routes.



The war began on 28 February 2026, when the United States and Israel launched hundreds of coordinated airstrikes on Iran, targeting military sites and leaders