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Afghan fury after Nato troops open fire on bus full of civilians, killing four people

By [Mail Foreign Service](#)

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International troops opened fire on a bus carrying Afghan civilians today, killing four people and setting off anti-American protests by furious locals.

Witnesses said the bus, which was travelling in Kandahar province's Zhari district, had pulled over to allow an American convoy to pass when gunfire broke out.

The shooting left another 18 people wounded, 12 of whom were taken to a military hospital.



Aftermath: Afghan policemen and protesters surround a bus after it was fired upon by international troops, killing four people and wounding 18 others

Nato said it was investigating the incident and would not reveal the nationality of the troops involved.

Passenger Rozi Mohammad, who was interviewed at hospital, said the bus had just left the Kandahar terminal when it pulled over to allow the convoy to take over.

Shooting broke out as the third or fourth American vehicle went by, he said, with gunfire coming from the direction of the convoy.

'They just suddenly opened fire, I don't know why. We had been stopped and after that I don't know what happened,' he said.

Within hours, scores of Afghans had blocked the main highway out of Kandahar city with burning tires, chanting 'Death to America,' and calling for the downfall of Afghan President Hamid Karzai, himself a Kandahar native.

Karzai issued a statement condemning the attack and expressing condolences to the victims.

'This shooting involving a civilian bus violates Nato's commitment to safeguard civilian life,' Karzai said.

'The Americans are constantly killing our civilians and the government is not demanding an explanation,' said resident Mohammad Razaq.



Afghan protesters burn tires near the scene of today's shooting in Kandahar



Afghan locals shout anti-American slogans during a protest rally in Kandahar

'We demand justice from the Karzai government and the punishment of those soldiers responsible.'

The shooting came as two suicide bombers attacked an Afghan intelligence services compound in Kandahar, which is the largest city in southern Afghanistan.

Afghan forces shot and wounded one of the attackers, who then detonated his explosives belt.

The second bomber was also killed, although it wasn't clear if he too had blown himself up.

Two intelligence agents and a teacher at a nearby school were injured in the attack, according to Ahmed Wali Karzai, the head of Kandahar's provincial council.

Kandahar was the seat of the Taliban regime ousted in 2001 and insurgents remain active there despite a heavy presence of foreign forces.

Nato is gearing up for long-anticipated allied operation to push the Taliban out of Kandahar, from which the hardline Islamic movement emerged as a political and military force in the 1990s.

Securing it is key to the U.S. military and Nato's aim of turning around the war, but anger stirred by civilian deaths could undercut local support.

The top Nato commander in Afghanistan, U.S. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, has issued strict orders to his troops to try to reduce civilian casualties.

Kandahar spokesman Ayubi said the provincial government strongly condemned the shooting.

Nato spokesman Mst. Sgt. Jeff Loftin said the alliance had dispatched a team to the scene to investigate, but didn't say whether its troops were responsible for the civilian deaths.

At least 2,412 Afghan civilians were killed in fighting last year, an increase of 14 percent from 2008, according to the United Nations.

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It was Afghan rebels who shot at the bus and then blamed American troops to stir up hatred. It happens all the time, wake up

- STEVE, ESSEX, 13/4/2010 09:16

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British out of Afghanistan and Afghans out of Britain.

Simples.

- Asif Anyone-Cares, Sussex, UK, 13/4/2010 09:10

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NATO and US are the same, the forerunners of the One World Army - coming soon to a planet near you. Globalisation cannot respect the rights of individuals.

- peace rebel, frome, uk, 13/4/2010 08:12

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The usual ill informed anti-US at all costs, putting tongue into top gear while brain is still in neutral.

None of us were there, so wait until all the info is in. Until then best to keep your opinions to yourselves.

We have all heard it before, "Innocent civilians killed, when NATO troops open fire".

Was that the ones carrying the AK-47's or the RPG 7's then? Sitting at home pouring vitriol on the US, without knowing the facts.

The Afghans have never used children as suicide bombers, etc? How do we know that no one on the bus pointed a weapon at the convoy as it passed? The permutations are endless. A gun toting Afghan in a fire fight is killed. His weapon and ammo disappear, he becomes just another innocent civilian.

As for Karzai, he is threatening to go over to the Taleban. All is not as simple as it appears. It could have been a negligent discharge, a car backfiring etc.Wait and see.

- Dragonhead, Dalian,China, 13/4/2010 07:43

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Just as well they did not swing wellington boots at them a s well.They could lose their jobs and their pensions for that.

- John C., Sale , Cheshire, 13/4/2010 03:05

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They probably saw someone on the bus aiming a gun at them.

Take no chances - shoot first ask questions later.

This is a war not a tea party.

Otherwise bring all the troops home NOW.

- GNH, Sheffield, 12/4/2010 23:52

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