

30 September 2017

Operation OKRA – Credible civilian casualty report

The ADF takes all allegations of civilian casualties seriously.

As a member of the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR), all reports of civilian casualties resulting from Australian operations are investigated as thoroughly as possible, including legal review. The Coalition interviews personnel involved in the targeting process, reviews strike and surveillance video if available, and analyses information provided by government agencies, non-governmental reports, partner forces, and traditional and social media. In addition, Australia and the Coalition will consider new information when it becomes available in order to ensure a thorough and continuous review process.

In targeting Daesh and other enemy forces, the ADF is always discriminate and proportionate. All ADF personnel operate under strict rules of engagement designed to protect our forces, minimise the risk of injury to civilians and strictly comply with Australia's obligations under domestic and international law.

To ensure ADF personnel meet the high standards expected of them, Defence continually reviews training and procedures, and adjusts when necessary, in order to further reduce the risk to civilians.

On 7 June 2017, one Australian aircraft conducted an airstrike in support of Iraqi Security Forces who were under direct fire from enemy fighters in Mosul. Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel were also involved in the Coalition approval process.

A single precision guided munition was released, striking the target and destroying a section of a building used by Daesh as a defensive fighting position.

During the post-airstrike review process, ADF personnel reported it was possible that a civilian may have been present in the strike location.

The personnel involved, using the information available to them, acted in compliance with the laws of armed conflict and Australian rules of engagement.

On 30 March 2017, Coalition forces conducted airstrikes in support of Iraqi ground forces against suspected Daesh military forces in Mosul. No Australian aircraft were involved in the incident. ADF personnel were involved in the Coalition approval process.

Based on the information available, an airstrike was authorised and tragically seven civilians were unintentionally killed or injured.

ADF personnel self-reported the incident in accordance with ADF policy.

The personnel involved, using the information available to them, acted in compliance with the laws of armed conflict and Australian rules of engagement.