

Digest for FOI 0097 17

From: BE, Riyadh

Sent: 04 August 2016 17:59

To: [FCO Gulf Team, MOD, DFID](#) , BE Riyadh, HMA Simon Collis

Subject: Saudi Press Conference: IHL Investigations

All

The Defence Attache and I, accompanied by CASLO have just attended the Coalition Joint Incident Assessment Team's (JIAT) press conference (around 30 minutes long) announcing the conclusions of its first eight investigations into alleged IHL breaches.

All proceedings were therefore in Arabic including a summary handed out at the end. An English language version was promised ("maybe tomorrow"). Media appeared to be mostly Saudi/regional, though also spotted the (Saudi) Wall Street Journal correspondent. There was no Q and A at the end. Below is an amateur summary cobbled together at the end. A fuller translation of the document handed to us will follow idc.

The press conference was delivered by General Mansour, a Bahraini legal adviser to the committee. He explained the committee was comprised of 13 military and civilian personnel of various Gulf nationalities. The committee was divided into two groups, one operational and the second, legal. The process was for the Ops group to investigate incidents before sending the findings to the legal group for review. The two groups then came together to reach a conclusion. The presser covered 8 incidents:

1. Strike on a civilian building, 24 July 2015: Armed Huthis had been in the vicinity of the building and presented an imminent threat. Coalition intel had been poor and the coalition should not have struck the target. The coalition accepted responsibility and recommended compensation be paid to the victims.
2. MSF Medical facility, Saada, 26 October 2015: Investigation established that the building was a medical facility but that Huthis had been using it to hide. As a result it was a legit military target but the Coalition conceded that a warning should have been issued first to MSF.
3. Mobile medical unit, Taizz, 2 December 2015: The Coalition had been targeting Huthis nearby. Damage to the mobile medical unit was a result of collateral damage. No casualties. Investigation showed that proper procedure had been followed and that the mobile unit [should not have been in the area] (the Arabic is not clear).
4. Souq, Naham, Sana'a, 27 February 2016: the UNSG claimed that 32 civilians had been killed and 41 injured. The investigation showed that a Coalition aircraft was providing cover for

Yemeni ground forces but that only 7 people were present in the area, not the 73 claimed. The target was destroyed with a laser guided munition. No mistake was made by the Coalition.

5. Market in Hajaa, 15 March 2016: The UN claimed the Coalition had targeted a market killing 106 civilians. Coalition intel suggested a large gathering of Huthi militia – high value target – and only 34 km from the Saudi border. The location was close to an area used for a weekly market every Thursday. The strike took place on a Tuesday. No evidence of civilian victims. Investigation found there was no mistake by the Coalition and that its action was consistent with IHL.
6. Wedding party, Dhamar, 6 October 2015: The UN Special Rapporteur claimed 47 civilians killed and 58 women and children injured. According to the Coalition there were no strikes in that area on that day. On 7 October, there was a strike on a road in the area targeting a group of vehicles. The investigation concluded that the Coalition had followed IHL.
7. WFP trucks, Maarib Province, 9 November 2015: 4 drivers injured and 2 trucks destroyed. Intel showed that trucks were being used by Huthis to including to move rockets for targeting the Coalition. Investigation showed the trucks did belong to WFP but that the Coalition had no information on the trucks and the trucks had no proper markings. WFP failed to coordinate with the Coalition.
8. MSF hospital, Saada, 23 January 2016: Claim of damage to hospital. Investigation showed there was an ammunition dump c. 1300 metres from the hospital. Coalition was aware of location of hospital. The hospital was not targeted. Coalition not at fault.

The JIAT would continue its work and share the results.

We need to look in more detail at the paperwork and get a fuller translation. Some of the conclusions will be controversial and no doubt disputed.

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From: FCO, Gulf Team
Sent: 02 November 2016 07:47
To: FCO, Gulf Team
Cc: FCO, Gulf Team

Subject: Fw: FCO-Related Top Stories Media Coverage - 2 Nov 2016

[To see the independent article over Col Al-Mansour's appointment to investigate alleged war crimes in Yemen](#)

Saudis appoint Al-Mansour to investigate alleged war crimes in Yemen

The Independent (App Edition), 02 Nov 2016, p21, UK, Keyword: .FCO TOP STORIES, Journalist: BETHAN MCKERNAN

Saudi Arabia has appointed Colonel Mansour Al-Mansour, a Bahraini national accused of overseeing torture and unfairly sentencing Arab Spring protestors to lengthy jail terms, to investigate human rights violations caused by coalition bombing in Yemen.

From: Gorkana
Sent: Wednesday, November 02, 2016 05:21 AM
To: FCO, Press
Subject: FCO-Related Top Stories Media Coverage - 2 Nov 2016

Media Coverage for FCO-Related Top Stories

TOP STORY OF THE DAY

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<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/saudi-arabia-yemen-bahrain-judge-war-crimes-investigation-a7390466.html>
