

U.S. Punishes 16 Soldiers for Attack on Afghan Hospital, Daily Reports

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The official report of the investigation into the incident, ordered by the Pentagon and to which the California daily gained access, says that none of the troops is facing criminal charges, the newspaper reported.

Among those being sanctioned, besides the general, are the crew of an AC-130 gunship that participated in the operation and U.S. Army Special Forces troops.

One of the officers has been suspended from his command and withdrawn from Afghanistan, while the rest of the accused have received minor sanctions, including letters of reprimand and requirements to undergo further training.

It is expected that Gen. Joseph L. Votel, who heads the U.S. Central Command, which conducts military operations in the Middle East, will officially announce the measures on Friday morning.

The identities of the people affected will not be revealed since they are currently on active duty and many of them are stationed abroad.

The investigation focused on the motives behind aerial attack carried out by the AC-130 on the hospital despite telephone calls placed by Doctors Without Borders to U.S. officials in Kabul and Washington to stop the bombardment.

The operation lasted 29 minutes and killed 24 patients, 14 members of the organization and 4 guards at the hospital in Kunduz, in northern Afghanistan.

The attack came within the context of the counteroffensive by Afghan troops to retake Kunduz from the Taliban and, according to the report, began at 2:08 a.m. on Oct. 3, 2015.

Doctors Without Borders has labeled the attack a war crime and has called for an independent investigation.

Both U.S. President Barack Obama and Defense Secretary Ashton Carter expressed their regret over the attack and promised a comprehensive investigation once the apparent error became known.