

AFTER THE DUST SETTLES: SEEKING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND JUSTICE



ANALYSING SOCIAL MEDIA INTERPRETATIONS
OF THE DUTCH AIRSTRIKE ON HAWIJA IN 2015



Authors

Guusje Bloemen

Klara Funke

Luca Neijts

Isa Zoetbrood

If you have questions, remarks or comments on this report they can be send to Lauren Gould at l.m.gould@uu.nl.

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Graphic Design

Isa Zoetbrood

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The aftermath of the Dutch airstrike on Hawija. Via Airwars. 'CI070 – June 3, 2015'.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores how social media users that closely identify with Iraq and Hawija interpreted the Dutch F16 bombing on an Islamic State ammunition factory in Hawija on June 3, 2015. This mission was carried out as part of the US-led anti-IS Coalition, under the name of Operation Inherent Resolve, that carried out over 35.000 airstrikes, dropping over 100.000 bombs across Syria and Iraq. The attack in Hawija led to a secondary explosion that killed over 70 people and destroyed over 400 buildings. It was not until investigative journalists discovered that the Dutch military carried out the attack in 2019 that the Dutch government took responsibility for the attack, after more than four years of denial and secrecy about its involvement and the number of casualties. The case of Hawija fits into the pattern of how advanced militaries engage in remote warfare in urban contexts but cover up the civilian harm resulting from this form of war. Hawija is one of the rare cases where this curtain of denial and secrecy was lifted, revealing the reality behind the pretences of "precision warfare" to a general public.

Directly after the attack occurred, as well as after the Netherlands took responsibility for it, people tried to make sense of this disruptive

and harmful event by sharing their different ideas about the identity of the perpetrator, the victims, and the reason for the bombing on social media. Central themes in this effort to make sense of the event are grief, anger, sorrow, and cynicism, especially in light of the Dutch government's lack of acknowledgement, transparency, and accountability.

This research was conducted through a qualitative analysis of posts regarding the Hawija bombing on different social media platforms, namely Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Youtube. The concept civilian harm is used to identify the different forms of damage the bombing inflicted on people in Hawija, and how online social media users discuss the nature and extent of this harm.

We found that many posts interpret the Dutch government's lack of acknowledgement and accountability to indicate that Iraqi lives are deemed less valuable than Western lives. This interpretation links the Hawija bombing to the broader political and cultural history of relations between the West and Middle East, and the frequent lack of consequences for Western parties harming Middle Eastern civilians.

INTRODUCTION

“We mourn the deaths and injuries of our fellow compatriots who until this day remain without receiving any disclosure, acknowledgment nor compensation for the damage and suffer that was inflicted upon them.”

On June 3, 2015, Dutch F-16s bombed an IS ammunition factory in Hawija, Iraq, as part of the fight against IS by the International Coalition for Operation Inherent Resolve. The airstrike had immense consequences: over 18.000 kilograms of munition detonated, causing an estimated minimum of 70 civilian deaths, hundreds more injured, and the destruction of 400 to 500 buildings.¹

Although the attack and the aftermath were lived through and widely known by the local population, the responsible Coalition partner remained a secret to NGOs, Western populations, and other actors for over four years. In 2019, thanks to the investigative work of Dutch NOS-NRC reporters, it came to light that the Netherlands carried out the attack. This was subsequently acknowledged by the Dutch Minister of Defence Ank Bijleveld.

With that came the realization that Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Minister of Defence between 2012 and 2017, had misinformed the parliament when she stated on June 28, 2015 that “as far as we know at the moment, there is no question of Dutch involvement with civilian

casualties consequential to airstrikes in Iraq”.² Moreover, she emphasized the ability of the Dutch “precision weapons” to prevent civilian casualties.³ Based on these statements, a misinformed parliament prolonged the Dutch support to the mission against IS in July 2015. The successive Minister of Defence, Ank Bijleveld, also withheld the details about the large number of civilian casualties resulting from this airstrike under the guise of protecting “operational, personal and national security”.⁴ When in 2019, she did finally admit to the Netherlands carrying out the attack, she created ambiguity about the civilian identity of the people killed claiming that it was difficult to “distinguish retrospectively between IS fighters and civilians”.

This case, therefore, illustrates the denial, secrecy and ambiguity created by the Ministry of Defence regarding civilian harm in its remote interventions. The airstrike on Hawija was not an anomaly. In the four years that the Netherlands fought IS, the Dutch air force flew over 3.000 missions.⁵ First solely in Iraq and from 2016 onwards also in East-Syria. In total, 2.100 times ‘precision’ weapons were deployed.⁶ Whether

these weapons were bombs, rockets, or bullets remains unclear. The Dutch share makes up a rough 15% of the 34.464 airstrikes conducted by the anti-ISIS Coalition between October 2014 and March 2019.⁷ Within the Coalition, the question of when and how to handle possible cases of civilian harm was left up to the individual coalition members themselves. This, as Human Rights Watch stated, gave the members an excuse for secrecy and silence surrounding suspected civilian cases.⁸ This statement is supported by the fact that official sources claim that 3.000 strikes have caused 1.417 civilian casualties, while independent organisation Airwars rebuts this number. They have identified five to nine times as many casualties with a minimum of 8.317 civilian casualties and numbers reaching as high as 13.190 deaths.⁹

The remote intervention of the Coalition in Iraq is illustrative of a broader pattern in which advanced militaries engage in airstrikes and other remote tactics of war in conflicts around the globe. It is a shift from a strategy signified by “boots on the ground” to a focus on airstrikes on targets in urban areas by drones or jets and covert operations. This strategy of remote warfare is characterized by a lack of transparency and civilian oversight, under the guise of national security and promises of “surgical strikes with precision weapons” to limit civilian casualties. The case of Hawija shows how this phenomenon unfolds in real life, with all consequences that remote warfare entails for people in conflict areas.

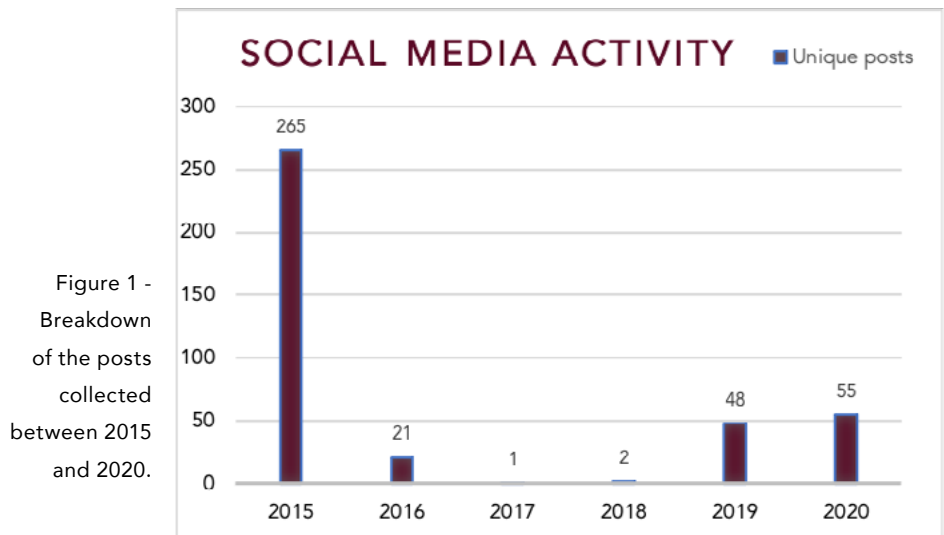
Hence, this report contributes to laying bare the complex, diverging consequences of contemporary aerial warfare. Instead of reducing war to short-term gains and losses or considering

civilian harm as mere collateral damage or civilian casualties, this research emphasizes the civilian realities of war. The people behind the social media posts are actively engaged in discovering what happened during the Hawija bombing and why. The online posts referenced in this paper can seem contradictory and conflicting. The Hawija incident provides us with a rare opportunity to study how the impact of these bombardments and the accompanying lack of transparency and acknowledgement of civilian harm is given meaning by citizens.

Methodology: Social media and meaning-making

The Facebook user from the quote above demands attention for the victims of this airstrike on Hawija in 2015. This post is not merely anecdotal. It is one of the 392 social media posts describing the impact of this specific airstrike collected as primary sources. These digital interpretations of the bombing were then analysed to broaden the understanding of how those affected by the airstrike construct meaning of it. In our day and age, the digital sphere of social media is a crucial environment to study this sense-making effort. The process of posting on social media is by nature dynamic and action-oriented. People attempt to reach specific audiences with their interpretations, raise their voices, express emotions, share information, and participate in debates and arguments.

This research was conducted as a Community Engagement Learning project run by four interdisciplinary conflict studies students at Utrecht University, in collaboration with the Intimacies of Remote Warfare programme (IRW), PAX, and the Centre for Global Challenges.



An initial pilot research indicated that most posts regarding Hawija were in Arabic and English and posted by people who closely identified themselves with Iraq and this particular case. Based on this observation, we identified a list of descriptive keywords in both Arabic and Latin script, such as “Dutch Airstrike” and “precision bombing”, in combination with geographical keywords, such as “Hawija” and “Iraq”.

The leading social media platforms under research, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and Instagram, offered various textual stories, images, and videos regarding the Hawija bombardment. The 392 posts, published between June 2015 and December 2020, were collected, anonymized, and translated. Figure 1 shows the timeframe of the year these posts appeared online.

Consequently, the posts were transcribed and stored in NVivo, a qualitative analysis programme. To analyze these posts, we developed a coding framework based on the analytic frame of Robert Benford and David Snow (2000). In short, this framing theory describes how social actors identify issues, propose solutions to these issues, and motivate others to support these solutions. The concepts of this framework were used for the overarching analytical categories of our coding framework, such as “diagnostic framing” et cetera. These categories were then

filled with more descriptive codes such as “perpetrator identification”, “acknowledgement”, and “blame assignment” to describe the function of the posts.¹⁰ We elaborated on this coding tree with more substantive and descriptive codes based on our empirical observation of the posts, such as specifically mentioned perpetrators as the Netherlands or the Coalition. We then divided the posts among the research group for individual systematic coding with this framework, after which we triangulated our analytic findings with each other.

While this research includes an expansive scope of relevant social media samples, it is also limited in multiple ways. First, except for one or two posts, most online users posting about the bombing did not experience the bombing themselves. Even though this research does not claim or aim to be representing the Iraqi population, it is crucial to realize the exclusion of voices (physically) nearest to the actual event. This research, however, was designed to complement the field research conducted by PAX and IRW in Hawija. Herein 119 interviews were conducted with victims of the attack. The report will come out early 2022. Second, our focus on social media precludes critical voices that are no longer available on online platforms. Due to the attempt of social media platforms to block terrorist content, all data possibly shared by IS and their sympathizers is no longer available

on the platforms. Third, our Dutch non-Arabic perspective could have led us to be oblivious to specific linguistic and cultural nuances. However, thanks to two affiliated Iraqi researchers, we had the opportunity to confirm translations and gain contextual information on the Hawija case.

Interpretations of the Hawija airstrike

Four clear interpretations are discernible throughout the data, which are discussed separately in the following chapters. The first interpretation considers the Western intervention generally and the airstrike on Hawija specifically as the solution to the IS occupation. The second interpretation emphasises the widespread civilian harm effects caused by the airstrike. The third interpretation describes the management of the Dutch government of the attack and its aftermath. The fourth interpretation embeds the airstrike into a larger narrative and thereby identifies historical and social dynamics at play.

INTERPRETATION 1: NECESSITY OF THE AIRSTRIKE

One prominent interpretation focuses on the IS occupation in Iraq and Syria. It recognizes the necessity of the airstrike to end this occupation. In 26 posts, the casualties are identified as IS fighters. Their deaths are celebrated since they are deemed necessary to defeat IS. Seven more posts explicitly describe the IS occupation as a pressing problem, given the violence against and repression of civilians by IS members. One post that refers to Hawija as a “victim of the injustice of IS” illustrates the grievances of people living under IS rule. Moreover, IS is portrayed through negative labels, such as “enemies of religion and the enemies of humanity”. Recognizing the trauma for civilians under IS occupation helps to situate the posts that comment and applaud the airstrike better. One post claims that many IS members have been killed in the strike and consequently portrays the bombing as a successful event:

“Blessed missile targets an IS warehouse in the industrial district of Hawija containing tons of high-explosive sefor explosives, which led to a massive explosion that killed dozens, wounded more IS, and wiped the neighbourhood off the map”.

However, animosity and joy over these casualties are not limited to IS members. Hawija played a particular role in the Iraqi social-political context as a source of support for IS when the group

initially grew. Therefore, the population is not considered a victim of IS but rather part of its support base. For example, Hawija’s position in Iraq is described as following in one post: “The most despised areas and people in Iraq are Hawija, Fallujah and Afar [as they are] the source of terrorism, bigotry and criminality” and “May Allah curse them and remove them from the land of Mesopotamia”. Consequently, some people do not mourn over their deaths but instead think “[the] treacherous population of Hawija deserves any harm it suffers”. These posts form a radically different interpretation from the subsequent interpretation, which portrays the citizens of Hawija as the victims of the event.

INTERPRETATION 2: UNJUST CIVILIAN HARM

This second interpretation focuses on the civilian harm caused by the attack and resulting explosion. The discussed civilian harm effects are limited to direct damage to people and the built environment. In terms of material damage, 62 posts emphasize the scale of the devastation. Moreover, to strike the severity of the explosion, 17 users draw comparisons with damage consequential to a natural disaster such as an earthquake. The names of four neighbourhoods circulate on social media that suffered the most damage besides the industrial area. These areas, Shabbat 8, Yarmuk, Awan and Bakara, border the industrial area as is visible in figure 2.

Especially on YouTube and Instagram, photos and videos of the rubble are shared. Supporting

the adage that an image is worth a thousand words, these visuals function as proof for people's statements of the destructive effect of the airstrike. For instance, the statement that the airstrike "wiped the industrial district from the map" is supported by figure 3. This image is, with 11 counts, the most shared one in our dataset and was first posted on the day of the strike.

The number of casualties is the second discussed aspect of civilian harm. This topic is cause for wide contestation and discussion. Before 2019, the estimated number of casualties varied greatly – between dozens to over 700 deaths. Posts stressing the high death toll amongst civilians emphasize the injustice of the attack. Interestingly, more than half of the 19



Figure 2 - Map of the city of Hawija (2021). Satellite imagery: GoogleEarth image 2021 CNES/Airbus. Data from REACH. 2018. "Hawija City Area-Based Assessment".

posts mentioning numbers of casualties before the 2019 NOS-NRC publication exceed the number of 70 casualties. Afterward, the posts maintain the general line stating that ‘at least 70 civilians died’.

The identity of the victims is another topic of discussion. The interpretation regarding unjust civilian harm focuses on identifying the victims as Iraqis in general and on 28 occasions as women and children specifically. The only casualties shown in imagery are children, like in figure 4. This image is the most widespread portrayal of a specific person, shown on five out of the six images of victims.

The interpretation furthermore comprises the discussion on the perpetrator’s identity. Before it became widely known in 2019 that the Dutch air force as part of the Coalition carried out the

attack, four parties were assigned responsibility: the Iraqi government, France, Iran, and the Coalition. A final group of users claimed it was an accident. The Iraqi air force was mentioned ten times as the one who performed the airstrike without further indicating why this is assumed. France was mentioned in seven posts, all in the days after the attack, after which that assumption was apparently rebutted. The nine stories about Iran’s involvement contain strong condemnations, as is visible in the following quote: “Hawija was bombed by Iraqi planes [...] and those who supported him were among the sadistic turbans of Tehran!? [...] These fingerprints indicate that the pilots are Safavid Persians because the army is devoid of Iraqi pilots!?”. These references indicate that the identification of the perpetrator is understood in the light of the historical tensions between Iraq and Iran. Furthermore, 27 posts refer to the Coalition



Figure 3 - The aftermath of the Dutch airstrike on Hawija on June 3, 2015.

as the perpetrator, without specifying which member country carried out the attack. Lastly, eight posts claim the explosion was in fact an accident, as the following post describes:

“As for the Iraqi Air Force, no statement came out regarding its implementation of this operation. This denial confirms the testimony of dozens of Hawija residents that the bombing did not happen as a result of military air operations. Rather, what happened was that the factory exploded from the inside for unknown reasons, perhaps it was an experiment with a new mixture or an unaccounted mistake.”

The painful irony of the civilian harm was not lost on the users. As one asks: “But can we do anything to prevent these forces from harming our people under the pretext of targeting terrorism!?”. Furthermore, on the day of the attack, one user wonders: “W[ith] every ‘successful’ airstrike (IS car bomb factory #Hawija), there’s unintended consequences of collateral damage. 1 step forward, 3 back?”.



Figure 4 - A man standing in the rubble holding a baby covered in dirt and blood.

INTERPRETATION 3: DUTCH MANAGEMENT OF THE AIRSTRIKE AND ITS AFTERMATH

Two years after the bombardment, the strike appears to have fallen into digital oblivion. Then, in October 2019, the story reappears on the platforms, after the release of the joint NRC-NOS investigation, revealing the Dutch responsibility for the attack to the world. Feelings of grief, pain, and anger are writ large in the online posts that focus on the management of the incident by the Netherlands. The posts indicate a discrepancy between the expectation of how such an incident should be handled and the reality. In 59 posts, social media users speak out against the management of the incident. Three main themes can be distinguished. First, criticism and counter-acts towards the Dutch secrecy surrounding the strike. Second, a similar but more personal criticism directed at former Defence minister Hennis-Plasschaert. Third, the lack of justice and the subsequent call for acknowledgement and accountability from the Dutch government.

In 103 posts, the “Dutch government” or “the Netherlands” are assigned liability for the attack because of being the perpetrator. The first sore point is the Dutch mishandling of the case in the five years of secrecy from the Dutch government, revealed in 2019 by the research journalists. Fifty-nine posts actively aim to criticize or counter the Dutch government’s silence and denial of responsibility for the Hawija-incident. For example, one post calls attention to “5 years of denial and misinformation”. Another example of a post contesting the Dutch silence is from a user who reacts to a post of the Iraqi ambassador to the Netherlands. In the video attached, bed sheet after bed sheet is lifted up to reveal each time a deceased child with serious injuries is lying underneath it. With this post, the author aims to uncover the casualties denied by the Netherlands. The

supporting text reads: “[M]ost of victims [were] kids killed by Netherlands Airstrike on Hawija area and you say [there were] no civilians killed by that at[t]ack!! [N]ow should we believe your words or videos backed with many reports!!!”. In line with the quest for recognition are calls for remembrance, as 11 posts explicitly do. The refusal to forget is prominent, as made clear in the hashtag: ‘#NotToForget’, but also comments like: “we did not forget it and we will not forget it”. These posts show the users’ aim to counter the Netherlands’ secrecy through revealing proof and ensuring that the incident is not forgotten. Often, these commemorations include references to how little changed or progressed for the personal situations of victims and the city of Hawija since the bombing.

Second, six posts request that the Netherlands acknowledges and compensates the victims in Hawija. One post contains the header ‘Justice for Hawija’ and states:

“This week we commemorate the attack on the Northern Iraqi city of Hawija. We mourn the deaths and injuries of our fellow compatriots who until this day remain without receiving any disclosure, acknowledgement nor compensation for the damage and suffering that was inflicted upon them.”

It appears that recognizing and taking responsibility for the inflicted harm is essential to help the affected people come to terms with the past event. Besides acknowledgement, 13 posts stress the need for financial compensation as a way for the Dutch to take responsibility. Two posts highlight that money is being spent but does not benefit the people who need it: “Unfortunately, billions are spent on something that does not contain bread for the hungry, and no cover for the naked”. On a single occasion a user requests material reparation: “Hawija needs paving, a sewage network, a clean street, and a hospital with treatment and work for the unemployed people. [...]”¹¹

Third, 60 posts specifically blame former Minister Hennis-Plasschaert for the mismanagement of the incident. In five different posts, users blame her for the execution of the attack, talking about “her pilots” or that “she ordered” the attack. In 10 posts, she is accused of providing false information to the Dutch parliament since she is the one who should have informed the parliament: “She [...] hid this incident from the Dutch parliament. I mean its professional history lacks credibility”.

An additional sign of inadequate management appears to be the lack of accountability Hennis-Plasschaert faced for her actions. Seven users expressed anger that she did not resign over 70 Iraqi deaths but did step down over the death of two Dutch soldiers on a mission in Mali in 2016. Another eight users expressed anger that Hennis-Plasschaert got promoted to Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). Although the news of Hawija did not break until after she took on the position, the incomprehension that she did not resign or get fired becomes apparent in figure 5 and 6.



Figure 5



Figure 6

A proposed solution for the feelings of injustice, as proposed in 3 posts, is legal action against Hennis-Plasschaert for war crimes or firing her from her position at the UN.

INTERPRETATION 4: ACT OF DEHUMANIZATION

In this fourth interpretation, the bombing is understood in the context of the relations between the West and the Middle East. The core of the interpretation is that the attack on Hawija is not a standalone incident. Instead, it is a continuation of a dehumanizing attitude from the Netherlands – and the ‘West’ more broadly – towards Iraqis specifically and people from the Middle East generally. This interpretation is not as coherent as the previous ones but rather is a collection of references and comparisons surrounding the story of dehumanization and racism. All in all, the concept of the ‘other’ is implicitly present. In this sense, ‘Othering’ refers to the process in which people from one social group are not perceived as conforming to the same standards or values as another social group.

Several aspects appear to trigger this interpretation. First, the fact that innocent local people were killed during the attack at the hands of a western and European country. The attack on Hawija was carried out in the name of protecting the civilian population in the Middle East from the terrorist organisation IS. However, the large-scale civilian harm that did occur, without acknowledgment by or consequences for the perpetrator, is an example of the perception that Iraqi life is valued less than European life. One person remarked: “They were killed in silence, you did not hear their pain, because the killer is simply a Western European,” and later on in the same message: “our blood has become cheaper than tomato juice”.

Second, what features mainly in this interpretation is the indignation with how the Netherlands dealt with the civilian harm it caused. As illustrated in the previous interpretation, social media users criticize the lack of

acknowledgement and accountability. To the users, it appears that the death of two Dutch soldiers weighs heavier than the killed civilians in Hawija. This idea supports the feeling of inferiority and the idea that Western actors disregard Iraqi human life. Figure 7, as an example of this narrative, claims a “total disregard for human lives”.

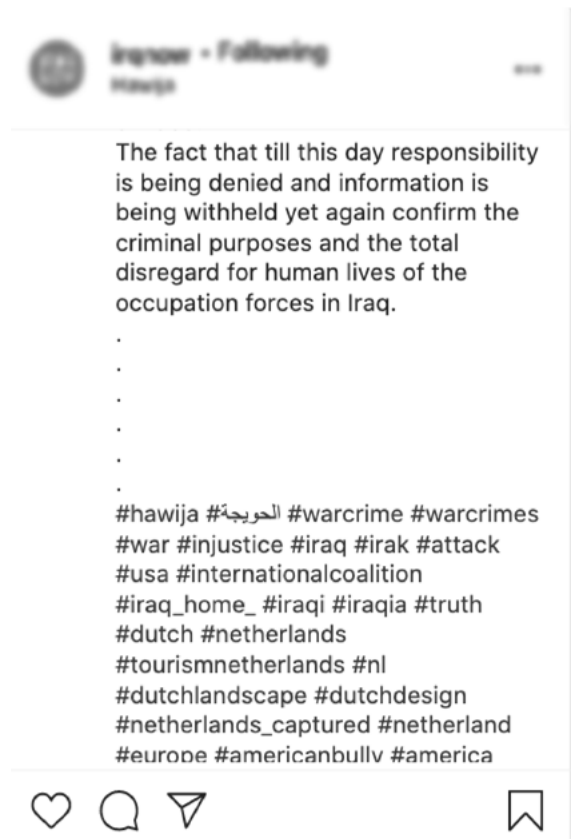


Figure 7

These feelings are connected to prominent societal themes and historical events by the users. The latter helps understand the present-day event in connection to the history of relations between the West and Middle-East. The six historical references included in the data cover events like the 2003 invasion of Iraq by Western forces or Dutch

colonial and racist aggression in South Africa. Figure 8 and 9, posts from June and September 2020, are illustrations of these references.

Moreover, the bombardment is related to more prominent themes present in society. In 11 posts, the theme of racism becomes apparent. These stories indicate that the problem of disregard for life is not restricted to the people living in Iraq but that the racist attitude is something all 'Others', meaning non-Westerners, experience. To illustrate, in reaction to a post about the lack of acknowledgement, one user says:

"Yeah what else is new? We are just expendables. In our country we get killed, raped and robbed and what does the UN do? Jack shit. When we emigrate and immigrate to other countries, we get called sexist backward thinking terrorists, we get spat on, we get beaten by racists and police, media writes about us as lazy unwilling to work and all our young men are portrayed as either murderers, robbers, drugdealers, thieves or hooligans. [...]."

For the people posting, the complete neglect of acknowledging harm and assisting those maltreated illustrates a broader problematic attitude by Western actors towards Muslims, Iraqis, or Middle-Eastern people generally.



Figure 8

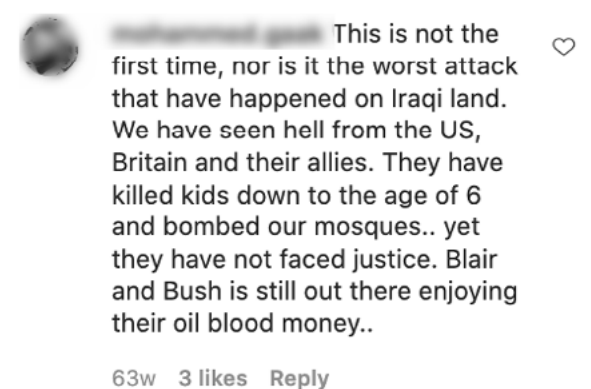


Figure 9

CONCLUSION

On June 3, 2015, Dutch F16 aircrafts bombarded the city of Hawija and left a central part of the city in rubble. As the examples of this research demonstrate, the incident is still discussed in late 2020; well over five years later. Through social media, the incident and its effects reverberated through time and space. It touched upon people who did not experience the incident themselves but – as their statements indicate – feel affected nonetheless.

Although stories and topics of discussion are diverse, patterns are discernible. We have seen people advocate in favour of the strike - especially in the days and months after the attack – either by emphasizing the necessity of aerial bombardments to defeat IS or by claiming that Hawijans collaborate with IS. Opposed to this view is the interpretation considering the unjust civilian harm. Descriptions of the magnitude of the material damage, images of deceased children, and expressions of grief and sorrow complement the interpretation that this attack was not proportional but unjust. As our case further shows, the Dutch management of the airstrike and its aftermath generates grievances and anger amongst the social media users. Caused by a lack of acknowledgement and accountability, these emotions are mostly channelled in demands towards the former Dutch minister of Defence, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. Her acts in the capacity of defence minister are related to her work in the current position as UN Special Representative to Iraq. She is regarded as the highest responsible actor for the lack of transparency, both to the Dutch parliament and public and Iraqi citizens, and should therefore face the consequences accordingly. Lastly, the bombing is interpreted in a larger context,

combining historical with contemporary experiences. The attack on Hawija is related to Western interference in the Middle East in the past decades and the ensuing indiscriminate use of violence and racism. This interpretation paints the picture that Western governments consider Middle-Eastern life less valuable than Western lives.

The central question of this research was how people in online environments interpret the airstrike on Hawija. As our analysis indicates, social media is saturated with stories of grief and anger about the harm inflicted on civilians and how the Netherlands handled the aftermath of the attack. The frustration about the secrecy and lack of acknowledgement and justice reveals the paradox of opaque remote warfare: countries that try to wage wars hidden from political and public scrutiny – through claims of operational security and aiming to diminish the political cost of the mission – end up reaching the opposite effect. Secrecy and denial have an expiry date. When the truth comes out, it can lead to long-term grievances and frustration, leaving a bitter aftertaste of a Western-style liberation that can feed into new cycles of violence.

This conclusion is discernible from the analysis of just one bombardment out of tens of thousands of airstrikes conducted during Operation Inherent Resolve, that to this day still remain shrouded in secrecy. They too should be scrutinized to broaden our understanding of how remote violence is understood by the people affected by it.

ENDNOTES

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- 2 Ministry of Defence's answer to parliamentary questions (June 23 2015: question 56), available at: <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-27925-540.html>.
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- 4 Gould, L., & Stel, N. (2021). Strategic Ignorance and the Legitimation of Remote Warfare: The Hawija Bombardments. *Security Dialogue*.
- 5 Ministry of Defence, Gevechtsvliegers onderscheiden voor strijd tegen ISIS (4 June 2021), available at: <https://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2021/06/04/gevechtsvliegers-onderscheiden-voor-strijd-tegen-isis>.
- 6 Ministry of Defence, F-16-missie Midden-Oosten beëindigd (31 December 2018), available at: <https://www.defensie.nl/actueel/nieuws/2018/12/31/f-16-missie-midden-oosten-beeindigd>.
- 7 CJTFOIR. Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve Monthly Civilian Casualty Report. U.S. Central Command (April 25 2019), available at: <https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/1824000/combined-joint-task-force-operation-inherent-resolve-monthly-civilian-casualty/>.
- 8 Human Rights Watch, New Revelations on Dutch Role in Deadly Iraq Attack (November 13 2019), available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/11/13/new-revelations-dutch-role-deadly-iraq-attack>.
- 9 Airwars, US-Led Coalition in Iraq & Syria (August 8 2014), available at: <https://airwars.org/conflict/coalition-in-iraq-and-syria/>.
- 10 The coding tree can be found in Annex 1.
- 11 Dutch journalist Judith Neurink noted in late 2021 that the 4 million euros reserved for Hawija by the Dutch government in 2020 have yet to be spent on rebuilding the city and supporting the victims. Article available at: <https://www.trouw.nl/buitenland/zes-jaar-na-het-bombardement-op-hawija-wachten-de-slachtoffers-nog-altijd-op-nederlands-geld-b04f7f11/>.

ANNEX I

1. Diagnostic Framing

- a. Blame assignment
 - i. Accident
 - ii. Coalition
 - iii. Iraqi Government
 - iv. ISIS
 - v. The Netherlands
 - 1. Minister of Defence
- b. Community-wide harm
 - i. Direct harm
 - 1. Casualties
 - 2. Injuries
 - 3. Material damage
 - ii. Indirect harm
 - 1. Displacement
 - 2. Economic harm
 - 3. Education
 - 4. Infrastructure
 - 5. Malnourishment
 - 6. Medical
 - 7. Mobility
 - 8. Psychological harm
- c. Personal harm
 - i. Direct harm
 - 1. Casualties
 - 2. Injuries
 - 3. Material damage
 - ii. Indirect harm
 - 1. Displacement
 - 2. Economic harm
 - 3. Education
 - 4. Infrastructure
 - 5. Malnourishment
 - 6. Medical
 - 7. Mobility
 - 8. Psychological harm
- d. Problem
 - i. Bombardment
 - ii. IS-occupation
 - iii. Lack of acknowledgment
 - iv. Lack of assistance

- v. Lack of accountability
- e. Sense of security
- f. Perpetrator
 - i. Accident
 - ii. Coalition
 - iii. Iraqi Government
 - iv. ISIS
 - v. The Netherlands
 - 1. Minister of Defence
- g. Victim
 - i. Affected group
 - ii. Children
 - iii. Family
 - iv. General
 - v. Iraqis
 - vi. IS
 - vii. Population from Hawija
 - viii. Refugees
 - ix. Women
- h. Sources
 - i. Internet and social media
 - ii. Newspapers
 - iii. Personal experience
 - iv. Television
 - v. Testimonies

2. Prognostic Framing

- a. Accountable actors (for solution)
 - i. Accident
 - ii. Coalition
 - iii. Iraqi Government
 - iv. ISIS
 - v. The Netherlands
 - 1. Minister of Defence
- b. Solution
 - i. Admitting responsibility
 - ii. Apology
 - iii. Financial assistance
 - iv. Humanitarian assistance
 - v. Individual stepping down
 - vi. Legal action

- vii . Legal assistance
- viii . Material reparation
- ix . Medical assistance
- x . Psychological assistance
- xi . Restorations (community-wide)

3 . Coping Framing

- a . Acceptance
 - i . Forgiveness
 - ii . Necessity
- b . Commemoration
 - i . Memorials (physical)
 - ii . Refusal to forget
 - iii . Rituals (performance)
- c . Indifference
- d . Larger narrative
 - i . Contemporary context
 - ii . Historical context
 - iii . Religion
- e . Nostalgia
- f . Taking action

