

NATO Bombing of Kosovo – 1999

According to the figures compiled by *Human Rights Watch*, NATO aircraft flew **10,484 attack sorties**, dropping **23,614 bombs** during the **2½ -month** bombing campaign.

As a result of these attacks, about **500 civilians** were killed in 90 incidents, with about 300 of these killed in ten incidents.

NATO targets focused on Yugoslavia's **military-industrial infrastructure**, and included **oil refineries, bridges, the Belgrade TV and Radio Station** (killing 15 civilians), one of the **residences of Slobodan Milosovic** (causing no casualties), and **the Nis Tobacco Factory** (causing no reported civilian casualties).

A NATO bomb also accidentally hit the **Chinese Embassy in Belgrade**, killing three civilians and wounding 15 others.

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Concerns:

(a) that *NATO's use of force* without explicit Security Council authorization was illegal under international law,

(b) that NATO planes illegally, deliberately, and recklessly *attacked civilian targets and the civilian population*,

(c) that NATO's bombing violated the *principle of proportionality* by trying to fight a *war of "zero casualty," i.e.*, by bombing from heights that enabled NATO's planes to avoid attack by Yugoslav defenses but which also prevented the planes from distinguishing between military targets on the ground, and

(d) that NATO's bombing campaign constituted a *crime against humanity* and *genocide*.

The NATO Bombing Campaign in Kosovo

Was NATO authorized to bomb Yugoslav military targets in 1999, in response to Yugoslavia's campaign of "ethnic cleansing" in Kosovo?

Did the Security Council authorize the bombing?

Did the Security Council "acquiesce" with regard to the bombing?

[12-3 vote against Russia's resolution calling for an immediate end to the bombing.]

Do regional organizations have authority to engage in collective humanitarian intervention in situations where unilateral intervention would be inappropriate?

Is NATO a "regional organization"?

[Article 53 of the UN Charter.]