

# Visiting Minab, site of the worst recent US war crime

Independent American journalist Ahmad Saadaldin of Prop&Co and Canada's Dimitri Lascaris of Reason2Resist join The Grayzone's Max Blumenthal to detail their reporting from the ground in Iran. In this discussion, Ahmad and Dimitri recount their visit to Minab, the town where the US military bombed a girl's school and killed 170 civilians in one of the worst American war crimes in recent history. Through their investigation of the site, they learned that there were no military targets in the area, shattering US propaganda. ||| The Grayzone ||| Find more reporting at <https://thegrayzone.com> Support our original journalism at Patreon: <https://patreon.com/grayzone> Facebook: <https://facebook.com/thegrayzone> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/thegrayzonenews> Instagram: <https://instagram.com/thegrayzonenews> Minds: <https://minds.com/thegrayzone> Mastodon: <https://mastodon.social/@thegrayzone> #TheGrayzone

## #Max

Well, you both went to Minab. The war opened on February 28th with bombing, including some experimental or newly tested weapons produced by Lockheed Martin—standoff cruise missiles in Minab, which was supposedly an IRGC military site. And 170 schoolgirls, along with their teachers and school staff, were massacred in the opening strike. In Lamard, a volleyball team of young girls was slaughtered in these cowardly U.S. standoff strikes. You both got to visit that site in Minab. Let's take a quick look—we'll roll some footage, and you can each narrate and tell us what you saw there and what your impressions were. Did you learn anything new about this bombing experience? I'll start with you, Ahmed, even though this is Dimitri's footage.

## #Ahmad Saadaldin

Yeah. I can't say I learned anything new in terms of information. But when I was there, I realized that, like I mentioned earlier, over 20,000 bombs have been dropped on Iran. There's been so much bombing now that people forget Minab even happened. There have been so many massacres and war crimes committed. But Minab, I think, remains the symbolic war crime of this war, and you see that all over the country. I mean, there are all kinds of posters memorializing the young girls, showing them in paradise in the afterlife with the supreme leader, and it's become a rallying cry. And while we were there, we interviewed a couple of guys who were actually there that day, and they told us what they saw.

It was a double-tap strike—it wasn't just one bombing, it was two. The guys who came to respond, when they were talking to us, couldn't even finish the interview. They were just crying the entire time, describing what they saw, because it was so grotesque. I mean, it was a Tomahawk missile

directly hitting children. You can imagine what that scene looked like. We've seen what that does to children in Gaza, so just imagine that everywhere, all over this location. Even the people who were with us, doing the translations and helping with the interviews, couldn't hold themselves back from crying either.

It's such an emotional story and experience for everyone in Iran right now. And actually, while we were there, there was a woman and her daughter who weren't from Minab. They had traveled across the country—I think they were from Mashhad, on the other side. They came to say a prayer and pay their respects to the people of Minab, to this site. It's just such a tragic story, and it's a war crime that I think symbolizes how unjust the war is, right? Two negotiations interrupted by criminals claiming they want peace, and it manifests in an opening strike that's one of the worst war crimes you can imagine.

## **#Max**

Dimitri, what was it like visiting this school in Minab?

## **#Dimitri Lascaris**

You're muted right now. Sorry. I was standing beside that man when he broke down. His two young sons were standing next to him, and they watched their father melt into tears as he described finding children who were dismembered. It was gut-wrenching to see. But from a sort of legal, intellectual perspective, I did find it quite enlightening, because I had been under the impression that the school was near a military base.

Early in the war, I'd heard commentators I respect—and still do—saying they thought the American military had targeted the school to send a message to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, because these children were mostly the sons and daughters of men serving in the IRGC. But I don't think that's true, based on what I saw. We didn't find any military facility anywhere near the school. We walked all around the area. It had been a military base maybe 18 years ago. There's the man—you can see him with his sons—and he just can't hold back his tears. He leaves. He just couldn't keep talking.

## **#Max**

We were told this was a military site—it was nestled among military bases.

## **#Dimitri Lascaris**

So, no. There's no evidence of that—none that I saw, absolutely none. This was a military base 18 years ago. It's clear from the outside of the complex that it used to be a military base, because there's a 12- or 15-foot-high wall with rusted barbed wire on top. But once you walk inside, what you find

is that the former military camp has been divided into two sections, separated by a concrete wall. On one side of that wall is what is absolutely, unmistakably a schoolyard—there's no question about it. So the question for me, and this was the most enlightening part, was: what's on the other side of that wall? In the second half of the former military complex, there was a hole in the wall that had been created because of destruction on both sides. They made that hole, I guess, to ferry the rubble out to the other side.

And so there was a piece of tape across that hole in the wall—you can see it right there, off in the distance. So we said to them, "Look, we need to go into that other part of the former military camp to see what's there, because otherwise we can't warrant that there's no evidence of a military presence." They just gave us free rein, Max—like, "Okay, go in there, do whatever you want." No one was putting any restrictions on us. We found about three buildings on the other side. They'd been struck—two had been completely destroyed, but some walls were still standing. We were allowed to roam freely in there. One of them, we were told, had basically been converted into a storage facility for pharmaceutical products.

And we found all kinds of pharmaceutical products in the rubble. It was clear that the place had been a warehouse for pharmaceutical goods. The other thing was the bigger building on the other side—you can see it if you look right between those two men. You can see the hole in the wall, and there's that larger building. That seemed to be an overflow space, with a prayer room and another room with a bunch of seats. It looked like they used it as a classroom when they needed to. There was absolutely zero evidence that it had any kind of military function. And that whole area on the other side of the wall, the one you see on the right side of the screen, was just overgrown with weeds.

Very, very, you know, they were mature weeds. It was clear these weeds had been growing for a long time, and there was no indication whatsoever that vehicles had been parked on them. The weeds covered the vast majority of the space on the other side of that wall. So after we saw this, it was crystal clear there was no military facility inside the former military complex. This was obviously a schoolyard—you couldn't possibly come to any other conclusion if you had the surveillance capabilities of the U.S. military. And then we walked around the former military base and saw nothing that could be considered a military facility.

So I think—and the other thing I should add, Max—is that we went to the cemetery where most of the victims were buried, and we spoke to two fathers who lost children in the bombing. They were irate, indignant at any suggestion that they were involved with the military of Iran. They said they had absolutely nothing to do with the military. Any suggestion that these children were the children of soldiers is a bald-faced lie. "We were just ordinary people, simple people living in this village, and they targeted us on purpose. We have no doubt in our minds that they killed our children intentionally." That's what we heard.

**#Max**

Of course, now all the pretense is gone. They're not even claiming to be attacking military targets. Trump has declared today to be "Bridge and Power Day," attacking Iran's sources of life.