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From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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To: H
Subject: w: NATO cannot confirm civilian casualties in Libya (AP)

From: OpsNewsTicker
Sent: Saturday, May 14, 2011 09:15 AM
To: NEWS-Libya; NEWS-Mahogany
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Subject: NATO cannot confirm civilian casualties in Libya (AP)

TRIPOLI (AP) - NATO said Saturday it cannot confirm a Libyan government claim that 11 Muslim clerics were killed in an airstrike in eastern Libya but regrets "any loss of life by innocent civilians" whenever it occurs.

NATO has been intensifying airstrikes against Gadhafi's troops in several areas of Libya in a bid to weaken his brutal crackdown against a rebel uprising. Four explosions _ most likely from NATO strikes _ were heard in Tripoli early Saturday.

On Friday, the government accused the alliance of killing the 11 clerics as they were sleeping in a guesthouse. Government spokesman Moussa Ibrahim said those killed were part of a group that had gathered to pray for peace in the oil town of Brega. He said 50 people also were wounded, including five in critical condition.

In a statement Saturday, NATO said the building struck had been "clearly identified as a command and control center." It said it could not confirm civilian deaths but did not deny them either.

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