

# [***US Drone Strike Killed Middle-Aged Shepherd Instead Of Al-Qaeda Terrorist Leader, Probe Finds***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BY1-FBB1-DXXD-735J-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Daily Caller

May 2, 2024 Thursday 07:32 PM EST

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**Section:** DAILY-CALLER-NEWS-FOUNDATION; national-security; national-security

**Length:** 465 words

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**Body**

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2010-06-12T110000Z_1087548872_GM1E66D1U4I01_RTRMADP_3_AFGHANISTAN-e1593113877649.jpg)

A 2023 drone strike originally believed to have killed a top leader of the radical Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda instead killed a Syrian shepherd, a U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) assessment revealed Thursday.

CENTCOM [*announced*](https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/1653730332393324546?s=20) in May 2023 that the strike in Syria targeted “a senior Al Qaeda leader,” however military officials later walked back the claims that the figure was killed after the family of Lofti Hassan Misto, a 56-year-old former bricklayer and shepherd, claimed he was the victim, [*according*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/05/18/pentagon-drone-strike-syria-civilian-al-qaeda/) to The Washington Post. An investigation “determined U.S. forces misidentified the intended Al Qaeda target and that a civilian” had been killed, CENTCOM [*announced*](https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/3763291/may-3-2023-investigation-findings/). [***(RELATED: 'What Are You Covering Up?': Gold Star Parent Hints At Biden Admin Scrubbing Footage Of Kabul Bombing)***](https://dailycaller.com/2023/08/08/what-are-you-covering-up-gold-star-parent-hints-at-biden-admin-scrubbing-footage-of-kabul-bombing/)

“Many of the facts and other findings of the investigation involve classified information and cannot be shared publicly,” the press release reads. “What we can share is the investigation concluded the strike was conducted in compliance with the law of armed conflict as well as Department of Defense and CENTCOM policies.”

US Central Command targets Senior Al Qaeda Leader in strike in Northwest Syria [*pic.twitter.com/xrSespGOMq*](https://t.co/xrSespGOMq)

- U.S. Central Command (@CENTCOM) [*May 3, 2023*](https://twitter.com/CENTCOM/status/1653730332393324546?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“The investigation revealed several issues that could be improved,” it continues. “We are committed to learning from this incident and improving our targeting processes to mitigate potential civilian harm.”

General Michael Erik Kurilla, CENTCOM commander, ordered Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve to conduct the investigation in June 2023, and it was completed in November, according to the press release. The investigation involved 10 senior service members and civilian employees who were not directly involved with the strike.

“U.S. Central Command acknowledges and regrets the civilian harm that resulted from the airstrike,” the press release reads. “We take all reports of civilian harm caused by U.S. military operations seriously and continue to employ thorough and deliberate targeting and strike processes to minimize civilian harm. This process includes a thorough review and vetting of lawful targets prior to a strike and another review after each strike.”

The Department of Defense referred the Daily Caller News Foundation to CENTCOM, who deferred to the press release.

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**Graphic**

A U.S. Predator unmanned drone armed with a missile stands on the tarmac of Kandahar military airport June 13, 2010. REUTERS/Massoud Hossaini/Pool (AFGHANISTAN - Tags: ***POLITICS*** MILITARY)

**Load-Date:** May 2, 2024

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