



Press statement - 08-10-2015

## Petras Auštrevičius MEP on the fatal air strike in Kunduz: the EU and NATO must stay engaged in Afghanistan

Following the fatal air strike on a hospital in Kunduz, Petras Auštrevičius (ALDE, LT), the Chair of the European Parliament's delegation for relations with Afghanistan expressed his deepest condolences to the families of the victims in his plenary intervention on 7 October. He called NATO and the Afghan authorities for an immediate and impartial investigation.

The Chair emphasised that a further engagement of the EU and NATO in Afghanistan is necessary, along with a coordinated strategy for security and development amongst international, regional and local players.

In his plenary intervention on 7 October, the Chair of the Afghanistan Delegation Mr Petras Auštrevičius condemned the air strike on a hospital of "Doctors without borders" in Kunduz as a fatal error, and probably even a violation of the Geneva Conventions. "I express my deepest condolences to the families of the victims and I ask NATO and the Afghan authorities for an immediate and impartial investigation", he stated. "This kind of errors must not be repeated in the future due to their disastrous consequences. They destroy trust and confidence of the Afghan population and put into question what has been achieved during the last years", he underlined. As a consequence of this tragedy, international aid organisations are leaving the city of Kunduz, at a moment when their presence is needed more than ever".

The Chair made also clear that this terrible accident is a result of the temporary conquest of Kunduz, the Taliban's biggest military advancement since 2001. "We must not ignore that Taliban's strength in personnel has increased drastically over the last years, mainly by conscripts from Arab countries and post-Soviet Central Asia", Mr Auštrevičius said. "Taliban must be defeated to give Afghanistan a new start. Therefore, the EU and NATO must rethink its strategy and stay engaged. We cannot repeat the mistakes of Iraq and Syria operations. Instead, we need a coordinated strategy of both security and development amongst international, regional and local players", he added.

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