

Human Remains Found in Landing Gear of US Plane Leaving Kabul

Human remains were reportedly found in the landing gear of a U.S. military plane shortly after it took off from Kabul, Afghanistan, earlier this week, several media outlets are reporting.

The U.S. Air Force said Tuesday it was investigating the circumstances surrounding the grim discovery found in the wheel well of one of its C-17s that flew out of Kabul amidst the chaos of the Taliban taking over the Afghan capital.

As thousands fled Kabul Monday, reportedly a large number of Christian missionaries and aid workers remain in Afghanistan and efforts are being made to get them out.

The New York Times reported that Air Force officials have not said how many people died in the pandemonium Monday but said it was also investigating the “loss of civilian lives” as Afghan natives, trying to escape after the collapse of their government, “climbed on to the plane’s wings and fell from the sky after it took off” during the mass exodus from Afghanistan’s Hamid Karzai International Airport.

TRT World, a Turkish public broadcast service, reported videos on social media showing terrifying scenes at the airport. Pilots reportedly “struggled to close the aircraft’s landing gear and declared an emergency landing in a ‘nearby third country.’”

TRT reported that “after an inspection, human remains were found in the wheel well” and that a “U.S. official commenting on the videos of the two people falling to their deaths from a transport plane said it ‘absolutely happened.’”

A White House official said U.S. military flights evacuated about 1,100 people on Tuesday, bringing the total so far to more than 3,200.

The New York Times reported that pilots were mindful of people hanging onto the plane, and that the “pilots taxied slowly at first. Military Humvees rushed alongside to try to chase people away and off the plane. ... Minutes later, however, the pilot and co-pilot realized they had a serious problem: the landing gear would not fully retract. ... It was then the crew saw the remains of an undetermined number of Afghans who had stowed away in the wheel well—apparently crushed by the landing gear.”

Charisma Washington correspondent Amir George reported this question asked of national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, on Tuesday during a press conference at the White House: “There’s a large number of Christian missionaries and aid workers that are particularly vulnerable because they’re known to be Christians. Is there any plan to get them to the airport and get them out?”

“We are working with a variety of different types of groups—journalists, aid workers, NGO workers and so forth—to help facilitate their departure from the country,” Sullivan said. {eo}

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