



Press Release

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Abbey Gate Supplemental Review Findings

TAMPA, Fla. – In August 2023, the commander of U.S. Central Command directed U.S. Army Central (ARCENT) to conduct supplemental interviews to examine new information made available during public testimony and other public statements in 2023 related to the Aug. 26, 2021, terrorist attack at Abbey Gate outside Hamid Karzai International Airport (HKIA) in Kabul, Afghanistan.

This supplemental review included interviews with more than 50 service members who were directly involved in evacuation operations at Abbey Gate, including 12 service members who were previously unavailable due to medical evacuation or treatment. The review sought to determine whether the new information would affect the findings of the original Abbey Gate 15-6 investigation completed in November 2021.

The supplemental review specifically sought to determine the following: 1) whether an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) test run occurred near Abbey Gate on August 21, 2021; 2) whether, before the attack occurred, service members identified in the crowd the suicide bomber who committed the attack; and 3) whether service members posted at or around Abbey Gate had an opportunity to engage the bomber prior to the attack. The review also focused on the Taliban's use of excessive force and the decision to consolidate the defensive perimeter around Abbey Gate before the attack.

Over five months, a team of 13 service members from both the Marine Corps and the Army travelled to 24 locations, conducted more than 50 interviews, and compiled more than 1,200 additional pages of documents, information, and imagery.

The supplemental review was completed on January 16, 2024. Senior departmental leadership were informed of the supplemental review's findings and recommendations in February 2024. We are in the process of briefing Gold Star Families of the 13 service members on the review's findings.

After a thorough review, the following findings were made or otherwise confirmed:

- The terrorist attack at Abbey Gate was not preventable at the tactical level without degrading the mission to maximize the number of evacuees.
- Leaders at Abbey Gate were present, engaged, and made sound tactical decisions.
- The suicide bomber was not previously identified in the crowd, nor was there an opportunity for service members to engage him prior to the attack on August 26, 2021.
- Though unable to be ruled out completely, it is unlikely that an IED test run occurred outside Abbey Gate on August 21, 2021.
- Taliban forces outside Abbey Gate used excessive force that resulted in civilian deaths.
- The new information obtained during the review did not materially impact the findings in the November 2021 Abbey Gate 15-6 investigation and the supplemental review team did not recommend any modifications to those findings.

For additional information on the Abbey Gate supplemental review, please contact U.S. Central Command Public Affairs.