

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Families affected by drone strikes: Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen

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- ❖ Women and children are more likely to be casualties of a drone strike because they are more likely to be engaged in domestic work indoors, and are less likely to be seen by a drone operator. The deaths of women killed in drone strikes are underreported. Purdah makes it inappropriate for men to provide the names of female victims, or to release information about female casualties to non-family members such as reporters.¹
- ❖ CIA drone strikes in Pakistan's tribal region between 2007-2014 killed at least 168-200² children. These children account for 44% of 385 civilians reported killed by U.S. ordered drone strikes.³
- ❖ More than a third of U.S. drone strikes carried out during the Bush presidency (2001-2009) resulted in the deaths of 112 children.⁴
- ❖ Over 61% of all drone strikes in Pakistan target domestic dwellings. At least 132 houses have been destroyed in the more than 380 drone strikes in the country between 2004-2014. The majority of the strikes on domestic dwelling occur in the evening; a time when families are gathered together at home. Homes are twice as likely to be drone targets during the night as compared with the afternoon.⁵
- ❖ Women and children, who are afraid to sleep at night due to drone attacks, suffer from severe trauma. Children are perpetually terrorized and are often too frightened to attend school.⁶
- ❖ On June 6, 2012 a 500 pound bomb was dropped by the U.S. military onto the house in which a wedding celebration was in progress in Afghanistan. The bomb killed all those in attendance, including nine children.⁷
- ❖ In Yemen on December 17, 2009 the U.S. launched a cluster-bomb laden missile that killed 21 children and 12 women, five of whom were pregnant. Attacks in Yemen are carried both by the CIA and the US Joint Special Operations Command. Conservative estimates note that under President Obama, the CIA and the Pentagon have carried out a minimum of 58 drone strikes, killing more than 281 people.⁸
- ❖ A U.N. Human Rights investigation in Pakistan estimated that 2,200 people have been killed by U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan between 2003-2013. Of those at least 400 were civilians and 200 were classified as "probable noncombatants." The U.N. did not indicate in its findings how many of these casualties were women, children or families.⁹

¹ <http://www.livingunderdrones.org/report/>

² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/23/obama-drone-program-anniversary_n_4654825.html

³ <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2011/08/11/more-than-160-children-killed-in-us-strikes/>

⁴ <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2011/08/11/more-than-160-children-killed-in-us-strikes/>

⁵ <http://www.forensic-architecture.org/>

⁶ <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/09/every-person-is-afraid-of-the-drones-the-strikes-effect-on-life-in-pakistan/262814/>

⁷ <http://www.counterpunch.org/2013/12/18/us-drone-strike-targets-yemeni-wedding/>

⁸ <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2014/01/23/more-than-2400-dead-as-obamas-drone-campaign-marks-five-years/>

⁹ http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/drone-strikes-killing-more-civilians-than-us-admits-human-rights-groups-say/2013/10/21/a99cbe78-3a81-11e3-b7ba-503fb5822c3e_story.html