

LESSONS FROM AFGHANISTAN:

Drones are Merely Bombs Rebranded

For two decades, the United States has conducted drone strikes in Afghanistan and beyond. These strikes have needlessly killed thousands of civilians, including children, with little transparency or accountability. Drones are lethal and imprecise, just like bombs – but with better branding.

The U.S. drone strike on August 29 in Kabul, Afghanistan that killed an unknowing aid worker and his family is just the latest tragedy in a pattern of cruel, destructive U.S. drone warfare. Most of these strikes have not been properly investigated by the U.S. military or media – meaning that thousands of destroyed lives and families will never see justice.

This brief provides an overview of the human costs of drone warfare in Afghanistan, showing the August 29th Kabul strike was a feature, not a bug, of this remote warfare that makes us all less safe.

These are just a handful of stories of harm we must never forget.



U.S. drone strike [kills 30 pine nut workers](#) in Afghanistan, injures 40+ more workers



[U.S. drone kills](#) a cab driver and 4 passengers, including a woman who had just given birth



U.S. drone strike [mistakenly kills](#) U.S. Marine & Navy medic



U.S. strike targeting Taliban commander kills or wounds [60+ regular civilians](#)



U.S. strike in Kabul kills Zemari Ahmadi and [9 family members](#), including children



U.S. servicemembers [traumatized](#) by drone warfare

Drone warfare causes immediate destruction and long-term harm.

Untold impacts beyond civilian harm

- We still do not know the true impact or humanitarian cost of drones. There is [vast evidence](#) showing that the U.S. government has grossly undercounted the number of civilians it has killed. We cannot allow the secrecy around drone warfare to obscure the real harm caused by these cruel weapons.
- In addition to killing and injuring civilians, drone strikes cause other kinds of harm to civilians and local communities – such as destroying vital infrastructure like wells, or the traumatic mental health impacts of [living under the constant threat](#) of drone warfare.

WIN WITHOUT WAR



We must admit the deadly failures of drone warfare.

We don't know who we're killing.



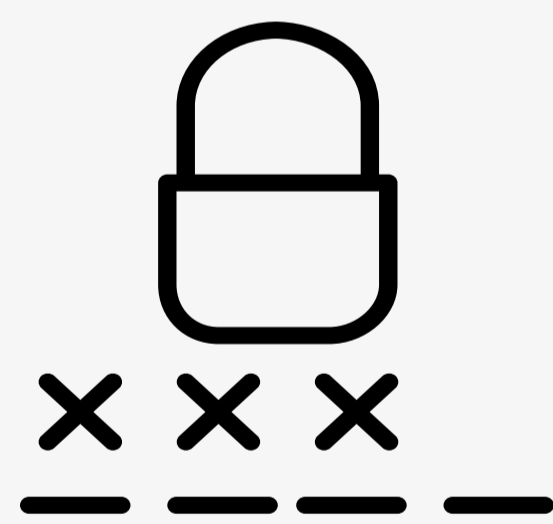
- [Leaked documents](#) detailing “Operation Haymaker,” a special operations campaign in northeastern Afghanistan, show U.S. airstrikes killed more than 200 people. Only 35 were the intended targets.
- We don't know the [number of civilians](#) that our drone wars have killed or maimed. The U.S. government resists publicly reporting the number of civilians it has killed or even the number or location of drone operations.

We can kill anyone who's in the wrong place, at the wrong time.



- Our military's rules that say who can and can't be killed in our drone wars basically make “[a]nyone caught in the vicinity ... [guilty by association](#),” according to a U.S. whistleblower. When “a drone strike kills more than one person, there is no guarantee that those persons deserved their fate. ... So it's a phenomenal gamble.”
- The U.S. hides the true number of innocent civilians it kills by claiming, without evidence, that [any military-age man](#) is a fighter if he happens to be within the area where drone strikes are occurring. This includes teenagers as young as 16.

“Precision” drone strikes = secretive, illegal government killings.



- “There is [nothing precise](#) about intelligence that results in the deaths of 28 unknown people, including women and children, for every ‘bad guy’ the US goes after,” said Jennifer Gibson, who spearheaded a study on drone strikes by the human rights group Reprieve.
- Just like dropping bombs, drone strikes kill anyone nearby. Even when drone operators target specific individuals – what's become known as “targeted killing” – they kill vastly more people than their targets.
- A Columbia Law study found U.S. attempts to kill 41 men resulted in the deaths of an estimated [1,147 people](#), as of 24 November 2014.



ACT NOW!



Tell Congress to ban drone warfare in Afghanistan – and everywhere.

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