

Obama Admits US Drone Strikes Kill Civilians

By [Steven MacMillan](#)

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The US President has acknowledged that American drone strikes have killed innocent civilians and that there has been “legitimate criticism” about the practice in the past. Speaking at the Nuclear Security Summit on the 1st of April, Barack Obama responded to a question by David Nakamura of the Washington Post by saying:

“In terms of the broader debate that’s taking place David; I think there has been in the past legitimate criticism that the legal architecture around the use of drone strikes or other kinetic strikes wasn’t as precise as it should have been, and there’s no doubt that civilians were killed that shouldn’t have been. I think that over the last several years we have worked very hard to avoid and prevent those kinds of tragedies from taking place” ([16:55](#) into the press conference).

Drone strikes have been a key feature of Obama’s tenure, with the Obama administration carrying out [ten times](#) the amount of strikes than the administration of George W. Bush. Operating across the globe, US drone strikes are frequently conducted in such countries as Yemen, Pakistan and Somalia. The strikes have often killed civilians, such as the strike in Yemen at the end of 2013, which killed at least [13 people](#) who were travelling to a wedding party.



US drone strikes have repeatedly shown to be criminally inaccurate and have claimed the lives of numerous innocent men, women and children. According to a report by the human rights group Reprieve, US drone strikes which were aimed at assassinating fewer than 50 men, resulted in the deaths of over 1,000 people. The report analysed US drone strikes in Yemen and Pakistan and [found that](#):

“In total, as many as 1,147 people may have been killed during attempts to kill 41 men, accounting for a quarter of all possible drone strike casualties in Pakistan and Yemen. In Yemen, strikes against just 17 targets accounted for almost half of all confirmed civilian casualties.

Yet evidence suggests that at least four of these 17 men are still alive. Similarly, in Pakistan, 221 people, including 103 children, have been killed in attempts to kill four men, three of whom are still alive and a fourth of whom died from natural causes."In 2013, the Peshawar High Court in Pakistan ruled that US drone strikes are [illegal](#) and should be considered a war crime as they kill civilians. According to casualty estimates compiled by The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, [CIA drone strikes](#) in Pakistan since 2004 have killed between 423 and 965 civilians, including between 172 and 207 children (with 372 out of the total 423 strikes taking place under Obama).

[Brandon Bryant](#), a former US drone sensor operator, revealed during an interview with RT's 'In The Now' show, that strikes are often launched without any real concrete knowledge or intelligence of who the target is:"As far as I can tell, the shots that I took, we didn't really know who we were firing at."Bryant adds that one of the reasons he decided to leave his position was because the "leadership lacked quality," and also that he "couldn't stand" himself for what he was involved in.Despite the ineffectiveness, inaccuracy and the amount of innocent lives that have been lost due to drone strikes, some in the US are pushing for an expansion of the program. As Sputnik reported at the end of 2015 in an article titled, [US Air Force Seeks \\$3 Billion Drone Program Expansion](#):

"According to Gen. Herbert Carlisle, head of US Air Combat Command at Langley Air Force Base, the US Air Force is about to double its number of drone squadrons, adding roughly 3,000 personnel to pilot and maintain new UAVs which would be stationed across the globe. The plan calls for an expansion over the next five years, and while it still has to be approved by Congressional lawmakers, the proposal would cost taxpayers \$3 billion."

The US drone program is just another nefarious aspect of the faux 'war on terror.' Pain, tragedy, war, death and total surveillance are the fruits of this perennial war, and unless the people of the world hold the criminals in Washington (and elsewhere) to account in the coming years, this will unfortunately only continue

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