

Only US, UK and France Vote Against the UNHCR Resolution to Probe Legality of Drone Strikes

By [Global Research News](#)

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[In the Miami Herald](#), John Zarocostas reports from Geneva that the U.N. Human Rights Council agreed on Friday, despite strong objections from the United States, to study whether American drone strikes comply with international law. Several NATO allies abstained.

The resolution, drafted by Pakistan and co-sponsored by Yemen, both countries where the U.S. has undertaken multiple drone strikes, was adopted on a 27-6 vote, with 14 abstentions.

The resolution urges that all “states” using drones should ensure that they are complying “with their obligations under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, international human rights law and international humanitarian law, in particular, the principles of precaution, distinction and proportionality.”

U.S., Great Britain and Israel

Human Rights Watch, in a letter circulated to the 47-members of the council on Thursday, argued that while currently only the U.S., Great Britain and Israel use armed drones in operations against alleged terrorists, “other states, and non-state actors, may acquire them in the future.”



BAJAUR: Looking for victims' bodies, tribesmen rummage through the debris of the seminary destroyed in the attack.

A report by Ben Emmerson, the U.N. independent expert on the promotion and protection for human rights and fundamental freedoms, found that a U.S. drone strike (initially denied) in October 2006 at a religious seminary in Chenagai in the Bajaur tribal region of Pakistan killed up to 80 people instantly, 69 of whom were children. The report also said that in December, a U.S. drone strike on a convoy of vehicles making their way to a wedding celebration outside the city of Rada in Yemen killed as many

as 15, the majority of whom may have been civilians.

Zamir Akram, Pakistan's ambassador, said Pakistan's purpose in calling for human rights council involvement was "not to name and shame anyone." But Paula G. Schrieffer, head of the U.S. delegation to the council session, told delegates: "We do not believe that the examination of specific weapons systems is a task for which the Human Rights Council is well suited, and we do not support efforts to take this body in that direction." Ambassador Karen Pierce of Great Britain made a similar point.

The EU does not have a common position on the use of armed drones, but there is growing political opposition to them. In February, the European Parliament, voted 534 to 49 to declare drone strikes "outside a declared war" to be "a violation of international law and of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of that country."

Neutral European Union member Ireland and neutral Switzerland voted in support of the motion, along with China, Russia, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, and Saudi Arabia, among others.

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