

Pakistani Families of Slaughtered Children to Sue the CIA Over Drone Deaths

By [Global Research](#)

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President Barack Obama condoned America's drone program last month, dismissing allegations that it's caused more harm than good. In Pakistan, the families of civilians killed in these strikes are pleading with the UN to tell America otherwise.

Reprieve, a legal action charity based out of London, UK, has delivered a [complaint](#) to the United Nations on behalf of the families of slain Pakistani civilians. More than a dozen families in Pakistan have appealed to Reprieve for assistance after their own pleas for the abandonment of drone use in their country have been ignored by the US. Now with the aid of the British-based organization, they hope that the UN will intervene and put an end to American drone attacks.

Drone strikes have taken the lives of as many as 775 civilians so far, the authors of a Bureau of Investigative Journalism warned in a report made last year. American officials insist, however, that the strikes are necessary to continue fighting the War on Terror.

Last month, the topic of drones was addressed to President Obama during a [virtual town hall meeting](#) that was broadcast live over the Internet on YouTube. Defending the program, Obama said that unmanned aircraft strikes were imperative if the US wanted to continue tackling insurgency without sending any more troops on the ground.

"For us to be able to get them in another way would involve probably a lot more intrusive military action than the ones we're already engaging in," insisted Obama.

The president would also use the engagement to dispute claims that the death toll of the innocent was not substantial enough to stop the US from continuing its drone program. Drones had "not caused a huge number of civilian casualties," said the president, who added that it's "important for everybody to understand that this thing is kept on a very tight leash."

Pakistanis, on the other hand, say that the regular air raids that have leveled their land and killed their families are too intrusive as it is, and disagree that Americans are controlling those craft to the best of their ability. In the statement sent to the UN by Reprieve this week, the group demands for intervention, saying that the strikes violate an established treaty that guarantees the protection of their rights.

What's more, says Reprieve, is that the US penned and ratified that treaty themselves. It's the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Pakistanis say that the US has violated it by killing their loved ones.

Reprieve charges that under the ICCPR, civilians should be protected from these strikes that continue to take the lives of innocents. The group cites six provisions in particular that they say the US has violated with drone attacks, which includes items such as “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life,” “No one shall be subjected to torture” and “Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person.”

“If the US is not prepared to face up to the reality of the suffering the strikes are causing, then the UN must step in,” insists Shahzad Akbar to Reprieve. “The international community can no longer afford to ignore the human rights catastrophe which is taking place in North West Pakistan in the name of the ‘War on Terror’.”

“If President Obama really believes the drone strikes have ‘pinpoint’ accuracy, it has to be asked where the deaths of kids like Maezol Khan’s eight-year-old son fit into the CIA’s plan,” continues Akbar, who is a human rights lawyer for the Foundation for Fundamental Rights, which is also representing the families backed by Reprieve.

Khan’s son was indeed only eight when he was killed by a missile fragment while sleeping in Pakistan. The father of the deceased boy is among those appealing to Reprieve, along with the families of an eight-grade student rendered blind and deaf by a drone strike and the son of a man executed while attending a peaceful town hall meeting.

In all, 18 Pakistanis have signed their name to the complaint, which was this week sent to the United Nation’s Human Rights Council.

“There is no plausible legal basis for the attacks,” reads the complaint, “There is no declared war between the United States and Pakistan. Pakistan has not – and, indeed, could not – given legally effective ‘consent’ for the killing of its own innocent civilians by American drones. The US has taken no steps to claim self-defense, and the facts would anyway not fit such an argument.”

Reprieve adds that the drone casualties are not isolated, “but are a part of a consistent pattern of strikes by the United States.”

“Because innocent citizens of Pakistan continue to be killed in the illegal CIA drone war in Pakistan, it is respectfully suggested that this application be considered with the utmost urgency,” adds the group.

The UN has not publically responded to Reprieve’s complaint yet. In recent weeks, however, the United States has acknowledged that, under its new Department of Defense budget, the US is looking to spend \$23 billion over the next few years on expanding its drone program.

Separately, Reprieve also represented 15 prisoners held at the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay. If you had any doubt, there are indeed a few provisions in the ICCPR that only begin to touch on violations there.

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