

# US Covert Actions and Drone Attacks in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia

September 2013 Update

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

*Multiple drone strikes hit Pakistan, but no confirmed US attacks in Yemen (Senior Airman Larry E. Reid Jr/[US Air Force](#)).*

*CIA drones strike [Pakistan](#) four times in September.*

*Drone attacks pause for a month in [Yemen](#).*

*No strikes in [Somalia](#). Al Shabaab violence grabs the world's attention.*

*Pakistan*

*September 2013 actions*

*Total CIA strikes in September: 4*

*Total killed in strikes in September: 16-24, of whom 0 were reportedly civilians*

*All actions 2004 - September 30 2013*

*Total Obama strikes: 325*

*Total US strikes since 2004: 376*

*Total reported killed: 2,525-3,613*

*Civilians reported killed: 407-926*

*Children reported killed: 168-200*

*Total reported injured: 1,117-1,505*

*[For the Bureau's full Pakistan databases click here.](#)*

*The CIA launched four attacks this month - the second most attacks in one month so far this year. At least 16 people were killed in these attacks - none of them reportedly a civilian. This was the ninth consecutive month without a confirmed civilian casualty.*

*Six killed in the first strike of the month on September 6 were named ([Ob322](#)). Among them was Mullah Sangeen Zadran - an alleged commander in the Haqqani Network and reportedly the Afghan Taliban's 'shadow governor' in Afghanistan's Paktika province.*

*[Analyst Saifullah Mahsud](#) said the US had 'scored really big' by killing Zadran. Though he*

was second-in-command to Haqqani patriarch Sirajuddin Haqqani, he 'was running the show, practically'.

The final two strikes came less than 24 hours apart. The first, on September 29, hit two days after Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif told the UN General Assembly drone strikes violate his country's borders. He added that the civilian casualties from the strikes are 'detrimental to our resolve and efforts to eliminate extremism and terrorism from Pakistan'.

The leading [political parties demonstrated that resolve](#) on September 9 by endorsing Sharif's plan to start peace talks with the Pakistan Taliban, the TTP. But a series of bloody attacks in the following weeks may threaten that unanimity. A week after the announcement Major General Sanaullah Khan, Pakistan Army commander in Swat, was killed by [a roadside bomb](#). The TTP claimed responsibility.

On September 22 an horrific suicide bombing killed more than 80 people. They were worshiping in a church in Peshawar when two bombers detonated [inside the building](#). An armed group, Jundallah, claimed the attack as revenge for US drone strikes. The TTP, an alliance of armed groups, [disowned](#) the attack three days later. It declared Jundallah was not a member group.

The church attack was a significant blow to Sharif's hopes for talks with the Taliban. [According to US news wire McClatchy](#), Sharif said: 'We had proposed peace talks with the Taliban in good faith but . . . because of this attack, the government is unable to move forward with what it planned and envisaged.'

On September 27 an Ansarul Mujahideen attack killed as many as 20 people on a bus in Peshawar. The group emerged earlier this year with the stated aim of avenging civilians killed in drone strikes, [The News reported](#). And Peshawar was hit for a third time on September 29 when a TTP car bomb detonated in one of the city's markets. The blast killed [as many as 42 men women and children](#), 17 reportedly [from one family](#).

## Yemen

### September 2013 actions

Confirmed US drone strikes: 0

Further reported/possible US strike events: 1

Total reported killed in US operations: 0-2

Civilians reported killed in US strikes: 0

All actions 2002 - September 30 2013\*

Confirmed US drone strikes: 54-64

Total reported killed: 268-397

Civilians reported killed: 21-58

Children reported killed: 5

Reported injured: 65-147

Possible extra US drone strikes: 82-101

Total reported killed: 289-467

Civilians reported killed: 23-48

Children reported killed: 6-9  
Reported injured: 83-109

All other US covert operations: 12-77  
Total reported killed: 148-377  
Civilians reported killed: 60-88  
Children reported killed: 25-26  
Reported injured: 22-111  
[Click here for the full Yemen data.](#)

*\* All but one of these actions have taken place during Obama's presidency. Reports of incidents in Yemen often conflate individual strikes. The range in the total strikes and total drone strikes we have recorded reflects this.*

*There were no confirmed US drone strikes reported in September, although [a single source](#) reported an attack on a car as a drone strike on September 7.*

*The pause in attacks came after a barrage of at least [six strikes in August](#). These strikes followed the report of a potential major al Qaeda attack. The strikes reportedly killed more than 22 people, six were claimed to be civilians of whom three were children.*

*Eleven of the dead have been named – two of them children. Two others featured on Yemen's list of top 25 most wanted militants and a third was reportedly a [leading al Qaeda member](#) and a leader of a tribe violently at odds with Sanaa.*

*Al Qaeda has reportedly continued attacking Yemeni security forces this month. On September 21, three [coordinated attacks](#) on military and security positions in southern Yemen left as many as [56 people dead](#). A single attack on an army base, in which 38 soldiers were killed, was the army's biggest loss in one assault since 2012, [Associated Press](#) reported. In the [following week](#) two senior officers were [reportedly assassinated](#). And on September 30 [armed men](#) stormed an army base in southeastern Mukalla.*

Somalia

September 2013 actions

Total reported US operations: 0

All actions 2007 – September 30 2013

US drone strikes: 3-9  
Total reported killed: 7-27  
Civilians reported killed: 0-15  
Children reported killed: 0  
Reported injured: 2-24

All other US covert operations: 7-14  
Total reported killed: 47-143  
Civilians reported killed: 7-42

Children reported killed: 1-3

Reported injured: 12-20

[Click here for the Bureau's full data on Somalia.](#)

Once again there were no reported US strikes in Somalia. However the brutal attack on a Kenyan shopping mall put the militant group al Shabaab into the spotlight.

A team of militants stormed the Westgate shopping complex in Nairobi armed with rifles and grenades. They moved from shop to shop and floor to floor killing some and taking others hostage. The Kenyan [security forces encircled the mall](#) and took control of the area the following day. As many as 61 civilians, six security officers and five militants [were reportedly killed](#).

Also this month, it emerged the US has had to move its African drone base from a sprawling military complex at the international airport in Djibouti's capital. [The Washington Post revealed](#) several drones had crashed during landing and take off from what was reportedly [the busiest drone base](#) outside Afghanistan. It was reported that the Djiboutian government asked the US to move its drones to an isolated airbase away from a civilian population.

### Naming The Dead

The Bureau launched a new initiative this month: Naming the Dead. The aim is to record the names of those killed in nine years of CIA drone strikes in Pakistan. The work revealed that of the minimum 2,500 people reportedly killed in drone strikes in Pakistan, only [one in five](#) have been named. Just two [women](#) have been identified. The Bureau has published those [568 names](#) in a filterable online database.

Of those names 295 are civilians. However little more than the name is known. The Bureau has managed to piece together [biographical information](#) for just a handful of them, including adolescent [Tariq Aziz](#). There is more known about the top tier of militant commanders killed by drones, like Pakistan Taliban commander [Baitullah Mehsud](#). The Bureau will continue to publish names and biographies of the dead in the coming months.

Follow [Alice Ross](#) and [Jack Serle](#) on Twitter.

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