



INTERFAITH NETWORK ON DRONE WARFARE

PRIORITY MESSAGES ABOUT DRONE WARFARE

Why Many in the Faith Community are Concerned about Drone Warfare

Armed drones do not represent the principles of love, mercy, just peace, solidarity, human dignity, restorative justice and reconciliation America should stand for beyond its borders. Many people of faith share a common commitment to those principles and are working to further them for the common good of all people. Ten denominations and faith groups (<http://bit.ly/dronestatements>) have called for lethal drones to be banned or limited.

Below are some reasons why armed drones should be banned or limited:

1. Armed drones increase the likelihood that the U.S. will conduct warfare, often covert, in more places. Lethal drones can be used without putting American troops at direct physical risk. Policymakers may therefore feel that warfare is relatively low risk and may enter it more freely.
2. Armed drones allow policymakers to bypass the American public in their decisions to lethally target individuals. Transparency is essential to democratic governance, yet the American public knows little about the number of places armed drones are being used, the rationales for using them, nor the civilian harm resulting from them. Despite assurances of precision from the U.S. government, reliable sources say civilian harm is significantly higher than official estimates.
3. Armed drones move risk away from soldiers and increases the risks to civilians. Civilians living under drones have no choice about the dangerous situation in which they find themselves; their agency has been taken away, adding insult to potential death and injury.
4. Armed drones may be making us less – not more – safe. Drones cannot kill an extremist movement no matter how many “targets” they take out. In fact, the opposite is likely. Drone attacks may increase the number of extremists and their determination by generating hatred and mistrust of America.
5. U.S. drone use may not be legal. The U.S. Congress has not approved the areas of operation nor the organizations the military and CIA consider legitimate targets. In addition, the U.S. is targeting individuals outside of armed conflict zones which, according to international human rights law, requires that non-lethal measures be used first. The U.S. is losing its credibility as a rule of law leader by engaging in drone warfare.
6. Though drone operators cannot be killed or wounded, they can be damaged psychologically and many are suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Drone operators are often traumatized by operating armed drones, and there are reports that it is difficult to retain and recruit them.

The Washington-based Interfaith Working Group on Drone Warfare, with which INDW partners, is making three recommendations to the U.S. government

- **End the CIA's authority to carry out drone strikes.** CIA drone strikes are largely carried out in secret with little accountability and without justice for affected civilians. The CIA carries out strikes in at least four countries, and the CIA's program of lethal drone strikes has lasted through three Administrations. It is in effect a secret war - one never specifically authorized by Congress or formally acknowledged to the American public.
- **Maintain meaningful human control over lethal weapons.** The United States must commit to not develop Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), which would be able to autonomously target and kill. The government should also encourage international institutions to ban LAWS, and ensure that there is meaningful human control over and responsibility for all lethal strikes.
- **Study the long-term impacts of drone warfare.** The U.S. should carry out a thorough study of how drone strikes have impacted communities, national stability of affected countries, U.S. national security, and other U.S. interests. Special attention should be paid to how drone strikes have impacted social cohesion, family structures, legitimacy of the various national governments, and communities' perception of the United States and other international actors.

Interfaith Network on Drone Warfare, a project of:

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