

Beat: Miscellaneous

Latest U.S. drone strike in Pakistan kills at least 3

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USPA News - The latest United States drone strike on Monday killed at least three people in northwestern Pakistan, local authorities said. A vehicle in the Khaider Khel area in the district of Mir Ali, located just east of Miranshah, the capital of volatile tribal region of North Waziristan, was targeted and hit by a U.S. drone.

According to reports, the unmanned aircraft launched a series of missile strikes against the vehicle, killing three suspected militants. Meanwhile, peace activist and former U.S. Army colonel Mary Ann Wright on Sunday spoke in Islamabad, the country's capital, saying the U.S. has been violating the sovereignty of Pakistan with its drone strikes. Participating in the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) peace march to Waziristan, Wright, who stepped down from her post as Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. embassies in Afghanistan in 2003 after the Iraq invasion, called for an end to the drone strikes. A letter petition signed by thousands of U.S. nationals is to be presented to Charge d'affaires Ambassador Richard Hoagland at the U.S. Embassy. According to Conflict Monitoring Center, nearly 3,000 people have been killed in U.S. drone strikes since 2004 in Pakistan, including more than 300 in 38 drone attacks this year alone. Last year, 609 people were killed in 75 drone attacks in Pakistan, according to the agency. Pakistani officials have repeatedly described the U.S. drone attacks as illegal. Pakistani President Asif Zardari has expressed the need to establish alternative security operations to the drone strikes, but U.S. officials have indicated that they will continue to carry out drone strikes to take out militants. Few details about casualties from the strikes are usually available, but allegations of civilian casualties regularly spark protests in Pakistan. According to the Washington-based think tank New America Foundation, as many as 2,680 individuals were killed as a result of U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan between 2004 and early 2012. In January, U.S. President Barack Obama, for the first time during his presidency, publicly acknowledged that U.S. drones regularly strike suspected militants along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. He confirmed that many of these strikes are carried out in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan, targeting al-Qaeda and Taliban suspects in tough terrain. The U.S. considers the Pakistan-Afghan border to be the most dangerous place on Earth. The area is known to be a stronghold of the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani Network, which is one of the top terrorist organizations and threats to U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan. But controversy has surrounded the drone strikes as local residents and officials have blamed them for killing innocent civilians and motivating young men to join the Taliban. Details about the alleged militants are usually not provided, and the U.S. government does not comment on the strikes.

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