

An End to US Drone Attacks in Pakistan

By [Global Research News](#)

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Disowning the Drones by Carol Grayson

Later this month Carol Grayson, [a campaigner and film-maker from Newcastle](#), will travel to Pakistan as part of an international peace delegation. The delegation will meet with survivors of US drone attacks, lawyers representing drone victims and political figures. The delegation will also take part in a peace march in North Waziristan organised by Imran Khan calling for an end to US drone attacks. Here Carol writes about her reasons for joining the delegation and answers questions posed by friends.



Carol Grayson Image: [CAAB](#)

Friends keep asking me the same question...

Why on earth I am choosing to go to Waziristan, considered to be one of the most volatile and dangerous places on earth?

The simple answer is that I refuse to support the US and British state-sanctioned terror of targeted killing by drone, being used in the so-called 'war on terror' which [frequently annihilates civilians in the Tribal Areas of Pakistan](#)

Invited by Imran Khan (the former cricketer turned politician), I will be joining a [peace march to Waziristan with international media, human rights activists and anti-war protestors in solidarity with drone victims](#). I plan to publically disassociate, ditch and disown any

connection to those drones manufactured as remote control killing machines operated out of airbases in the US and soon the UK.

I was brought up to believe in 'innocent until proven guilty' and a fair process of law if someone is alleged to have committed a crime. Pakistan is not officially a war zone. Those that are targeted are regarded as "alleged" insurgents. Drones are invading Pakistan's skies and breaching sovereignty on an almost daily basis now and baby girls are killed as "terrorists"!

No wonder the victims of US "collateral damage" are referred to as "other" by those operating the drone. It would seem they too wish to disassociate themselves from their civilian casualties. How do you go home to your family knowing you have obliterated someone else's child? How do you justify causing terrible burns to the face of four year old Shakira, now undergoing a series of painful operations to reconstruct her face!

I am disturbed at the "official" reporting of deaths by drone. There are discrepancies in the casualty figures as highlighted by the excellent work of [The Bureau of Investigative Journalism](#) and [Gareth Porter](#) who was recently awarded the Martha Gellhorn Prize for Journalism 2012 for his investigation of US 'killing strategy' in Afghanistan, including the targeting of people through their mobile phones.

What is the current situation regarding drones in Pakistan?

[This recent editorial](#) in The News International (Monday, Aug 27th, 2012) entitled, 'Dread of Drones' sums up the current situation eloquently regarding drone strikes:-

The drone issue has reared its ugly head once again. Within the last two days, at least 18 and possibly more people have been killed in strikes in the North Waziristan area. The death toll is likely to rise, with many more people injured. Ostensibly, militants based in various parts of the agency were targeted. Reports in the American press quoting US officials suggest that Badruddin Haqqani, the operational commander of the Haqqani network, was among those killed in the recent drone strikes. But this has not been confirmed by independent sources. The precise truth as to who was killed and where is of course impossible to establish. But the brief lull we had seen in the drone attacks has ended. Things, we can say, are 'back to business' as usual. The claim by the Pakistan government that it had asserted its sovereignty during talks with Washington has quite obviously turned out to be false. Islamabad has no way of stopping the drone strikes, with the recent incursions into its territory by the unmanned aircraft proving this. The summoning of senior US diplomats and the public protestations of complaint are really no different from those we have heard before. They almost inevitably come to naught

Should the peace march go ahead?

Pakistan is once again under pressure to launch an offensive in North Waziristan with a threat of sanctions from America if it doesn't do what it is told. In my opinion this amounts to bribery; we will give you aid and other funding if you comply to our wishes. A peace march is needed more than ever. Outside forces seem intent on fuelling further what is pretty much an unofficial civil war in some areas of Pakistan, with Muslim fighting Muslim and its only set to get worse. [Haven't the civilians of the Tribal Areas suffered enough already?](#)

Will the march be successful?

It will be successful as the march will enable people rarely heard – the victims – to have a voice. It will also hopefully increase international press coverage, which will help educate people and put more pressure on the US to stop drone strikes. Ask yourself, who wishes the drones to continue? And in whose interests would it be to prevent a peace march going ahead?

Isn't Imran's march just a gimmick?

No, I don't believe the march is a gimmick. I covered Imran Khan's previous dharmas (peaceful demonstrations) where he spoke against drones and there were calls to block the NATO supply line. There was a lot less interest from international press then. However Imran attracted good crowds and is consistent and vocal in his quest for dialogue on all sides and exploring peaceful alternatives to on-going conflict.

He has also met and engaged with Tribal Leaders this week that are supportive and keen for the march to go ahead. To me this is more about the issue itself than any one political party. Surely representatives from all parties ought to be joining the march and objecting to the killing of Waziristan's residents. The event is receiving support both within Pakistan and by those of us outside the region that reject western imperialism and foreign policies that target ordinary people.

An [anti-drone event will take place in Bradford in advance of the Waziristan march](#):

Protest Against Drone Strikes, Centenary Square, Friday 14th September 2012, 5:30pm. Speakers to include George Galloway MP, Imran Khan (official) and Yvonne Ridley.

What about the threat to those attending Peace March in Waziristan?

There are of course security concerns in a number of different directions but we must not bow down to intimidation. Regarding the alleged Taliban "threat", that has been reported in press recently, my understanding, from a Tehreek-e-Taliban (TTP) statement shared with me from Tribal Area reporters, is that a decision by the Shura (consultation) is yet to decide how Taliban will respond to the march. There are misquoted claims regarding "death threats". PTI office have released [an official response from Imran Khan to any threat](#). Regarding myself, due to the killing of two of my family members by the state, I have learnt to live with death threats for many years.

Life is a risk, one of the biggest lessons to learn is that there is no such thing as security. Anything can happen. Sometimes the risk comes in the opposite direction to what we expect. Sadly, it is often easier to maintain conflict than fight for peace. We must go where our conscience leads us, in this case it leads me towards Waziristan...

Will you be filming?

It has always been my intention to document drone victims on film. This is a project initiated with my late colleague, [Pakistani investigative journalist Saleem Shahzad, who was kidnapped and the tortured to death in 2011](#). This work will continue, if not by me, then by others working with me who will ensure the documentary goes ahead. I am now working with Yacine Helali and Stephen Lee (Veto films) on our drone documentary 'The Approximate Target'. Our website will be launched shortly and filming begins next week.

Anyone interested can follow us on Twitter @vetofilms. I am very grateful to all those assisting me on this important issue.

Have you contacted anyone in the British government?

I've written two letters to my MP, Nick Brown, informing him of the Waziristan peace march and asserting my right as a British citizen to question the actions of my government and call for an end to drone strikes.

This is certainly not the first time I have confronted the government. My late husband and brother-in-law were another kind of UK/US 'collateral damage'. [I'm a widow that has faced western government cover ups over many years, a mother that has litigated in both the US and UK, attempting to hold state authorities accountable for their alleged crimes, and an award-winning researcher that has investigated unlawful killings.](#) I would not be silenced then and I won't stay silent now!

To quote Martin Luther King Jnr, "I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant."

Carol Anne Grayson is the Executive Producer of the Oscar nominated, [Incident in New Baghdad](#). She has been awarded the ESRC, 2009 Michael Young Prize, and the COTT 'Action = Life' Human Rights Award' for "upholding truth and justice".

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Funding for Carol's documentary 'The Approximate Target' is urgently needed. If you can help please do get in contact. For more information about Veto Films see : <http://vetofilms.com/>

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