

Banks investigate British Telecom (BT) over Yemen Drone Strike Link

By [Global Research News](#)

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[Reprise](#)

A number of major financial institutions are investigating telecoms firm BT over its alleged involvement in the US' covert drone warfare programme.

The firms considering their investments in BT – after human rights charity Reprise filed a complaint with the UK Government – include Standard Life, Blackrock, ING and Lloyds. Lloyds said in a letter to Reprise that they have “asked our investment arm to investigate this matter in full.”

The concerns centre on BT's role in providing communications infrastructure between a US base in the UK and Camp Lemonier in Djibouti, from which US drones over Yemen are operated. The CIA and US Special Forces carry out covert drone strikes in Yemen and Pakistan which have resulted in hundreds of civilian casualties – and are considered to be illegal under international law as they take place outside of war zones.

In response to questions from journalists over their involvement in the covert drone programme, BT have said that they are “comfortable having the US government as a client,” and that “what they do with it [the service provided by BT] is their concern rather than ours.”

However, a number of BT's investors have confirmed that they are looking into the issue. Lloyds has told Reprise that it “has requested analysis of the issues you raise from the research agencies it uses for human rights issues,” while ING has said it is “keen to understand the outcomes” of the complaints procedure which will be carried out by the UK Government under OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) Guidelines.

Commenting, Reprise CSR Advocate Catherine Gilfedder said:

“BT's response to date has been to refuse to address how the US government uses the company's systems. If the company is playing a key role in the US' illegal drone war, then its investors and its customers deserve to know. Hundreds of civilians have died as a result of covert drone strikes, the latest step in the misguided 'War on Terror' – BT must come clean on whether or not it is involved in this.”

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