

Civilians Killed by US Largely Ignored as Endless “Global War on Terrorism” Continues

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Contradicting a version of events presented by the U.S. military and [reported widely](#) by the corporate press, a human rights group and a journalist in Yemen are citing witnesses who said a raid by U.S. Navy SEALs on Monday night killed multiple innocent civilians and not just “Al Qaeda militants” as the Pentagon claimed.

Reprieve, a UK-based human rights group, [cited witnesses](#) from the village of Al-Jubah in Marib province, where the raid took place, and offered the names of five civilians killed as **Nasser Ali Mahdi Al-Adhal; Al-Ghader Saleh Salem Al-Adhal; Saleh Al-Taffaf; Yasser Al-Taffaf Al-Adhel;** and **Shebreen Saeed Salem Al-Adhal.**

The witnesses said that none of those five were fighting for al-Qaeda and that Nasser al-Adhal, identified as being approximately 70-years-old and partially blind, was the first one shot by the U.S. soldiers when he mistook them for arriving guests and came out to greet them. According to Reprieve:

The four other villagers were killed when they started to argue with the Navy Seals after the shooting of Nasser al-Adhal. Six villagers were seriously injured, including another elderly man who was around 69-years-old.

Al-Qaeda fighters gathering nearby, who are thought to have been the original target of the raid, were alerted by the gunshots in the village and firefight ensued in which at least two of them were killed. The Navy SEALs then left with the help of air support from a helicopter.

Independent journalist **Iona Craig**, who has reported from the ground in Yemen for years, helped corroborate the version of events provided to Reprieve.

“Five tribesmen amongst killed in US raid last night were not AQ,” Craig [tweeted](#) on Tuesday. “They were tribesmen of young activists who drove me from Mareb into Yakla.”

Part of the wider “global war on terror” that the U.S. began in the wake of the September 11th attacks in 2001, Yemen has been a target of drone strikes and clandestine operations for years. But as foreign policy experts and the people of Yemen have [repeatedly stated](#), the use of drones and clandestine raids have only hardened Al-Qaeda’s position in the country and the killing of innocent civilians as provided a nearly [perfect recruiting tool for the militant group](#).

In addition to backing the ongoing Saudi-led war against Yemen, the military under **President Donald Trump** has continued to target Al-Qaeda aligned forces in the country. In January, just days after his inauguration, Trump was [roundly criticized](#) for a [botched raid](#) that led to the death of one U.S. soldier and [as many as thirty civilians](#), including children.

Kate Higham, head of the Assassinations Programme at Reprieve, said this week's killing of more innocent Yemenis proves that Trump is no better than his predecessors when it comes to protecting civilian lives.

"This new flawed raid by President Trump shows the US is not capable of distinguishing a terrorist from an innocent civilian," Higham said in a statement. "When even a 70-year-old is shot dead, it is clear these attacks are not targeted or precise. President Trump must order an immediate investigation into what went wrong and halt all raids and drone strikes before more innocent Yemenis are killed."



Graffiti at a Yemeni village (Source: The National)

Yemen, of course, is not the only place where the U.S. military is claiming innocent lives. On Tuesday, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which tracks casualties amid Syria's ongoing civil war, reported the number of civilians killed by U.S. bombings over the last month has been the highest ever recorded over a 30-day time period. According to the group, 235 civilians were killed in U.S. airstrikes from April 23 to May 23. That number includes 44 children and 36 women.

"The past month of operations is the highest civilian toll since the coalition began bombing Syria," Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman [told](#) Agence-France Presse in an interview. "There has been a very big escalation."

According to Rahman's group, which is also based in the U.K., the U.S.-led coalition has now killed 1,481 civilians since operations against the Islamic State (ISIS) began in 2014. Of that total number, the groups says, 319 were children.

And as people mourned the horrific loss of life in Manchester this week, where innocent children and other concert-goers were targeted by a suicide bomber, it was difficult not to notice the difference between the attention various killings—all of them horrific and none of them possible to justify—received in the dominant western press.

As journalist and columnist **Glenn Greenwald**, citing the killings of those civilians in Yemen on Monday, [asked](#),

"More reporting that US killed 5 more innocent Yemenis yesterday. Will the media tell their stories, hear from their grieving relatives, etc?"

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