New Fleet of US Drones for Yemen

By Global Research News
Global Research, September 10, 2012
asharq-e.com

Region: Middle East & North Africa
Theme: Militarization and WMD

US dispatching more drones to Yemen – Source

by Hamdan al-Rahbi

Sanaa, Asharq Al-Awsat – Informed Yemeni sources, speaking to Asharq Al-Awsat on the condition of anonymity, revealed that the al-Anad Air Base in southern Yemen's Lajih province had received a new fleet of US drones, accompanied by American soldiers. The source said that "an American military plane entered Yemen over the past few days carrying unmanned drones, accompanied by US soldiers,." He said that this fleet of US drones represented reinforcements for the US forces in Yemen as part of the international efforts to combat terrorism.

For its part, a local Yemeni newspaper claimed that two US drones had crashed during a reconnaissance mission. Yemen's Al-Shara'a newspaper claimed that two US drones, in the process of returning to the al-Anad Air Base, crashed after the American soldiers piloting the drones failed to land them correctly.

Following the defeat of the Al Qaeda affiliated Ansar al-Sharia group in Abyan and Shabwa last May, Yemeni fighter planes – as well as presumed US drones – have carried out an intense bombardment campaign targeting Al Qaeda sites and elements, resulting in dozens of deaths, particularly in the Hadramout and al-Bayda provinces. However the popular outcry against the use of US unmanned drones in Yemen escalated last week after a US drone strike targeting Al Qaeda suspects in al-Bayda province killed 13 civilians, including two women and a child.

A US drone reportedly fired two missiles at known Al Qaeda affiliate Abdelrauf al-Dahab, who was traveling in a car near the town of Rada in al-Bayda province. However the first missile missed the target, whilst the second missile hit a minibus behind him, killing all those inside. Local officials reported that Abdelrauf al-Dahab escaped unharmed. He is the brother of Tareq al-Dahab, a senior Al Qaeda figure who led fighters in a January raid which ultimately saw the militants take control of the town of Rada. They later abandoned the town, bowing to tribal pressure. Tareq al-Dahab was killed in February.

Yemeni President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi has launched an investigation into the deaths of the civilians. For his part, a senior Yemeni Defense Ministry official told CNN "This was one of the very few times when our target was completely missed. It was a mistake, but we hope it will not hurt our anti-terror efforts in the region."

Hundreds of angry Yemeni gunmen joined the families of the victims in closing major roads

and demanding the Yemeni government explain the killings. They also tried to carry the corpses of the victims to Sanaa to lay them in front of the residence of President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi but were prevented from doing so by local security forces.

The United States government typically does not comment on reports that it is utilizing unmanned drones to target and kill terror suspects, but reports indicate that 29 people were killed by drone attack in Yemen last year, with nearly 200 being killed since the beginning of the year. Radical American-born cleric Anwar al-Awlaki was killed by a drone strike in September 2011; he remains the highest-profile target to be killed by an American drone attack in Yemen. Al-Awlaki had been linked to several terror plots, including the 2009 Ford Hood shooting.

The original source of this article is asharq-e.com
Copyright © Global Research News, asharq-e.com, 2012

Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page

Become a Member of Global Research

Articles by: Global Research
News