

# “Shelling Out”: Britain Spends £2 Billion on Drones

By [Drone Wars UK](#)

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Drone Wars UK is today publishing a report that shows the UK Government has already spent over £2 billion purchasing, developing and researching drones and unmanned systems since 2007.

The report, [Shelling Out: UK Government Spending on Unmanned drones](#), finds that the UK has spent £872m on five different drones that are currently in service with British forces, including £506m on the armed MQ-9 Reaper drone. The UK has committed a further £1,031m to developing new drones such as the Watchkeeper UAV and BAE Systems Taranis drone. Finally the UK has funded £120m of research within UK universities and British defence companies looking at unmanned systems. This included £30m funding for the ASTRAEA programme to open up UK civil airspace to autonomous drones.

In addition to the £2bn already spent, in 2013 the UK is likely to begin committing funds to the Scavenger programme to develop a new armed medium altitude, long endurance (MALE) drone. The UK MoD estimates the Scavenger programme will cost £2bn over its lifetime.

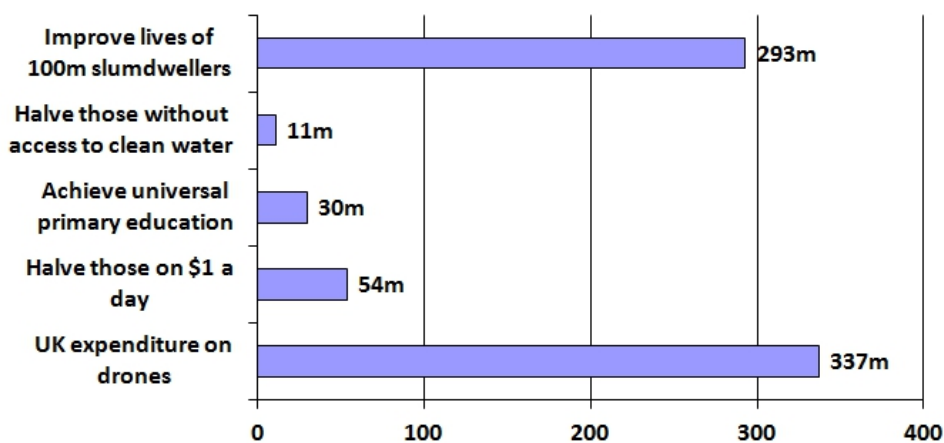
UK Spending on Unmanned Drones since 2007	£
<b>Funding of military drones currently in-service</b>	<b>872m</b>
<b>Funding for development and testing of new military drones</b>	<b>1, 031m</b>
<b>Funding for research into unmanned systems</b>	<b>120m</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£2,023m</b>

Chris Cole, co-ordinator of Drone Wars UK and author of the new report said

“UN experts, legal scholars and civil liberties campaigners are all expressing serious concerns about the rising use of unmanned drones. At a time of tough spending cuts it cannot be right that the UK is continuing to pour billions of pounds into developing new drones without proper parliamentary scrutiny or debate of the serious legal and ethical issues surrounding the use of this technology.

Drones do not create security – just the opposite in fact. We have seen plenty of evidence of this over the past few years, but the lesson has been brought home yet again this week in the remarkable report [Living under Drones](#), which shows that in Pakistan drones are creating fear, instability and many, many civilian casualties.

Rather than spending further billions on more drones what’s needed is investment in tackling the underlying causes of insecurity. That means devoting resources to measures designed to seriously tackle inequality and injustice in the world – such as the Millennium Development Goals. Today, in the midst of a global economic and environmental crisis, we need to jettison ever-increasing military spending and technological security fixes in favour of a sustainable security strategy that puts people – and especially the poor – at its centre.”



Average yearly UK spending on drones compared to annual amount of global spending needed to achieve four key Millennium Development Goals

[Click here to download 'Shelling Out: UK Government Spending on Drones'](#)

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