

TARGETED KILLING: US and Israeli Drone Strikes in Pakistan, Yemen and Gaza: Legal Action in UK

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It was announced yesterday that a <u>legal proceedings will be initiated in the High Court in</u> London to challenge British complicity in US drone strikes in Pakistan.

Reprieve together with Leigh Day & Co, acting on behalf of the family of Malik Daud Khan, one of 40 people killed in <u>a CIA drone strike on a tribal gathering in North Waziristan in</u> March 2011, are suing Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, William Hague over British intelligence agency support for the strikes. Richard Stein, Head of Human Rights at law firm Leigh Day & Co said:

"We believe that there is credible, unchallenged evidence that the Secretary of State is operating a policy of passing intelligence to officials or agents of the US Government; and that he considers such a policy to be "in 'strict accordance' with the law". If this is the case the Secretary of State has misunderstood one or more of the principles of international law governing immunity for those involved in armed attacks on behalf of a state and/or the lawfulness of such attacks; and his policy, if implemented, involves the commission of serious criminal offences by employees of GCHQ or by other officials or agents of the UK Government in the UK."

So far the Foreign Office has yet to respond. Meanwhile drone strikes have continued in Pakistan and elsewhere over the past weekend.

On March 9th between 8 and 12 people (reports vary) were killed in <u>a US drone strike in</u> <u>South Waziristan</u>. Yemeni officials and local witnesses also reported <u>US drone strikes on</u> <u>Friday in Baydar</u>, in the South of Yemen and again <u>on Sunday in Jabal Khanfar</u>. US military sources however <u>refused to comment on these drone strikes</u>.

At least 20 Palestinians, including a 12-year old boy have also been killed in Israeli airstrikes on Gaza over the weekend. On Friday Israel carried out the 'targeted killing' of Zuhair Al-Qaissi, the leader of the Popular Resistance Committee (PRC). Two other people were also killed in what witnesses said was a drone strike although this has not been possible to confirm. Responding to the Israeli targeted killing, rockets were fired at Israel which led to further Israeli airstrikes, which are continuing. Israeli drones are reported to be carrying out some of the airstrikes.

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