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Report: CIA Drones Killed Over 2,000, Mostly Civilians in Pakistan Since 2006

By Jason Ditz

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A new report from the Conflict Monitoring Centre (CMC) has reported that 2,043 Pakistanis have been slain in CIA drone strikes in the past 5 years, with the vast majority of them innocent civilians.

The report notes that the attacks target Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas where "people usually carry guns and ammunition as a tradition. US drones will identify anyone carrying a gun as a militant and subsequently he will be killed." Pakistan's government, which has only a nominal presence in the region, traditionally brands anyone killed by the US a "suspect."

And while 2,043 is a lot of people to kill in the past five years, over 75% of them were actually killed in the past two years since President Obama took office. 2009 saw over 700 people killed in the CIA drone strikes, and the report shows 929 more killed in 2010.

Drone strikes were a comparative rarity when President Bush was in office, but have been dramatically and repeatedly escalated by President Obama, usually in retaliation for attacks by militant groups. This has led CMC to term the program an "assassination campaign turning out to be a revenge campaign."

The enormous number of civilian deaths goes largely ignored by officials, who insist, on those rare occasions when they will even cop to the programs at all, that they are "very accurate." The identities of the victims is rarely apparent at the time of the attacks, of course, and it seems there is very little interest in following up with them after the fact,

except on the occasions when NGOs point out how many of the victims are [just random tribesmen](#).