

5-Point Plan for Reforming U.S. Drone Strike Policy to Prevent Extrajudicial Executions

Amnesty International is gravely concerned that the U.S. administration's policy on intentional use of lethal force appears to permit violations of the right to life. To prevent extrajudicial executions, Amnesty International calls on the U.S. government to:

1) Release more information

- Disclose further legal and factual details about U.S. policy and practices for so-called "targeted killings," "signature strikes," and "Terrorist Attack Disruption Strikes," including any secret Department of Justice legal memorandums, and specific information about who has been killed.

2) Follow the law

Bring policies and practices relating to the use of lethal force in line with the USA's obligations under international human rights law and, in the exceptional circumstances where it applies, international humanitarian law (the law of armed conflict), particularly by:

- Ensuring that lethal force outside of specific recognized zones of armed conflict is used only when it is strictly unavoidable to prevent a truly imminent threat to life.
- Ensuring that any use of lethal force within a specific recognized zone of armed conflict complies fully with the USA's obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law. If there is doubt as to whether a person is a civilian, the person is to be considered a civilian.
- Ensuring independent and impartial investigations in all cases of alleged extrajudicial executions or other unlawful killings; respect for the rights of family members of those killed; and effective redress and remedy where killings are found to have been unlawful.

3) Reject the "global war" theory

- End claims that the U.S. government is authorized by international law to use lethal force anywhere in the world under the theory that it is involved in a "global war" against al Qa'ida and other armed groups and individuals.
- Repeal the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force.
- Recognize the application of international human rights law to all US counterterrorism operations, wherever they occur.

4) Uphold the rights of all people, not only US citizens

- International human rights law explicitly prohibits discrimination on grounds of national origin when it comes to respect for human rights. The U.S. government is not allowed to treat the right to life of a non-U.S. citizen as less worthy of protection than the right to life of a U.S. citizen, just because the person is a foreign national.

5) Ensure justice and security with human rights

- The U.S. government should ensure that those responsible for the attacks of September 11, 2001 or other crimes under international law are brought to justice in fair and public trials without recourse to the death penalty.

For more information, please refer to the following Amnesty International reports:

- "USA: 'Targeted Killing' Policies Violate the Right to Life" <http://bit.ly/TNwSaS>
- "The Devil in the (Still Undisclosed) Detail: Department of Justice 'White Paper on Use of Lethal Force Against U.S. Citizens Made Public'" <http://bit.ly/Wmbwad>

Take action: Send these recommendations to President Obama and Congress from www.amnestyusa.org/drones