

Beat: Miscellaneous

U.S. drone strike kills at least 8 in Pakistan's tribal region

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USPA News - At least eight people were killed Wednesday when a U.S. drone destroyed a suspected militant compound in Pakistan's volatile tribal region, intelligence officials said, prompting a condemnation from the Pakistani government which continues to demand a stop to U.S. drone strikes. The latest attack happened in the early morning hours of Wednesday when an unmanned U.S. drone fired two missiles at a residential compound in Kund Sar, about 60 kilometers (37 miles) south of the main town Miranshah in Pakistan's volatile North Waziristan tribal area, which is near the border with Pakistan.

Pakistani intelligence officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said at least eight suspected militants were believed to have killed in the strike, while several others were rescued as American drones continued to fly over the area. It was not immediately clear which group the casualties were allegedly affiliated with, but the official said those killed included foreigners. There were no immediate claims of civilian casualties. Foreign ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam Khan condemned Wednesday's airstrike. "Pakistan regards such strikes as a violation of its sovereignty and territorial integrity and demands their immediate cessation," she said. "The Government of Pakistan is itself taking decisive action against terrorist elements in North Waziristan Agency, thus rendering such strikes completely unnecessary." U.S. drone strikes have become relatively common during President Barack Obama's tenure with unmanned aircraft targeting suspected militants, their hideouts and training facilities. Wednesday's airstrike adds to a flurry of attacks in recent weeks, with now 11 U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan since October, killing at least 62 people. At least 123 people have been killed in 18 American drone strikes in Pakistan so far this year, according to the Washington-based think tank New America Foundation, which has documented at least 2,174 deaths as a result of U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan since 2004. It includes at least 258 civilians, but the actual figure is thought to be higher. Pakistan's government has previously been public in its stance against American drone strikes as local residents and officials have blamed them for killing innocent civilians and motivating young men to join the Taliban. Details about alleged militants who are killed are almost never provided, and the U.S. government does not comment on the strikes. Despite the criticism, the United States has used drones as an important tool in their fight against terrorism. Al-Qaeda deputy leader Abu Yahya al-Libi was killed in a U.S. drone strike near Miranshah in June 2012 and Pakistani Taliban leader Hakimullah Mehsud was killed in the same region in November 2013.

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