

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<http://www.nrcat.org/about/nrcat-press-releases/1217-national-faith-groups-call-on-congress-to-end-cia-drone-strikes>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 19, 2019

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National Faith Groups Call on Congress to End CIA Drone Strikes

WASHINGTON, DC The National Religious Campaign Against Torture joined twenty five national faith groups to send a letter to the U.S. Congress today calling upon Congress to end the CIA's use of armed drones to carry out lethal attacks. The letter states that CIA drone strikes amount to a secret war over which there has never been a robust public or congressional debate. The letter also notes that drone strikes remove Americans from understanding the true moral and emotional costs of taking life.

The full text of the letter can be found below:

February 19, 2019

Dear Members of Congress:

As members of the American faith community, we believe that all people have human rights given to us by God, and that there must be transparency and accountability regarding the use of lethal force undertaken on our behalf. Therefore we are writing to ask you to end the CIA's use of armed drones to carry out lethal attacks.

The CIA's use of drones to target and kill suspected militants began in 2004 and has continued through three Administrations. Reports indicate that the CIA's program of drone strikes has expanded in the past two years to include strikes in Libya and Afghanistan. This is in addition to the CIA's long term program of carrying out strikes in Pakistan, Yemen, and possibly other countries. These strikes amount to a secret war, one that now spreads across at least four countries. There has never been a robust public or congressional debate over this war. In most cases it isn't even officially acknowledged - despite being common knowledge in the affected countries.

Democracies must debate and take moral responsibility for decisions to use violent force. By refusing to acknowledge most of its strikes, the CIA prevents civilian victims from receiving justice and conveys moral responsibility for killing on to an American people who have never been informed about this secret war, nor had their Members of Congress vote on it.

Drones pose a unique risk for policy-makers in that they lower many of the perceived costs to the use of force and thus lower the threshold for war. By separating American personnel from direct physical risk, drones antisepticise killing, removing both policy-makers and every-day Americans from understanding the true moral and emotional costs of taking life. The CIA program compounds this problem by making secret an already morally fraught decision to kill.

We encourage you to focus on nonviolent solutions to conflict, including diplomacy, institution-building, and humanitarian assistance. Throughout three Administrations, the CIA has been used to carry out a seemingly endless covert war without formal congressional authorization or public debate. Congress should end this secret war by ending the CIA's authority to carry out drone strikes.

Sincerely,

Presbyterian Church (USA)
T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
The United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
National Council of Churches
Franciscan Action Network
Church of the Brethren
Sisters of Charity, BVM
Alliance of Baptists
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (MOGC)
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Center on Conscience & War
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
Interfaith Network on Drone Warfare
Coalition for Peace Action

National Religious Campaign Against Torture
South East Asian Faith Initiatives
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Disciples Center for Public Witness (Disciples of Christ)
Office of Social Justice, Christian Reformed Church in North America
Unitarian Universalist Association, United Nations Office
American Friends Service Committee
Pax Christi USA

[>> DOWNLOAD THE FULL LETTER](#)

***The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT)** is a membership organization committed to ending U.S.-sponsored torture, and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Since its formation in January 2006, more than 300 religious organizations have joined NRCAT, including representatives from the Catholic, evangelical Christian, mainline Protestant, Unitarian Universalist, Quaker, Orthodox Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Bahai, Buddhist, and Sikh communities. Members include national denominations and faith groups, regional organizations and local congregations.*

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