Beat: News

U.S. drone attack kills at least 4 in Pakistan

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USPA News - At least four people were killed in the latest United States drone attack in Pakistan`s tribal region, local authorities said Thursday. The unmanned aircraft fired two missiles against a vehicle in the town of Datta Khel, located around 35 kilometers (22 miles) west of Miranshah, the main town of North Waziristan, which is not far from the Afghan border.

According to a local security official, as reported by the News International, four drones were flying around the area at midnight and targeted the vehicle. Earlier in the year, Ben Emmerson, the United Nations (UN) special rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights, said the UN is opening an investigation into the deaths caused by U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Somalia, as well as Palestinian regions. The probe will also investigate the deaths and injuries of civilians as a result of U.S. drone strikes. U.S. drone strikes have become relatively common during President Barack Obama`s tenure in which the unmanned aircraft have targeted suspected militants, their hideouts, and training facilities. However, the number of civilians also killed during such attacks has remained uncertain. The total number of deaths caused by drone strikes in 2012 stood well over 300, according to the Washington-based think tank New America Foundation, and as many as 3,239 individuals have been killed as a result of U.S. drone strikes in Pakistan alone between 2004 and January 2013. About a year ago, in January 2012, President Obama, for the first time during his presidency, publicly acknowledged that U.S. drones regularly strike suspected militants along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. He confirmed that many of these strikes are carried out in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan, targeting al-Qaeda and Taliban suspects in tough terrain. Pakistan`s government has been public in its stance against the drone strikes, as local residents and officials have blamed them for killing innocent civilians and motivating young men to join the Taliban. Details about the alleged militants are usually not provided, and the U.S. government does not comment publicly on the strikes. However, the U.S. has used them as an important tool in their fight against terrorism. In June 2012, al-Qaeda deputy leader Abu Yahya al-Libi was killed when an unmanned U.S. drone fired at least two missiles at a compound and a nearby pickup truck in the village of Hesokhel, located in the Mir Ali district just east of Miranshah. It was the most serious blow to al-Qaeda since U.S. Navy SEALs killed Osama bin Laden during a secret military operation in the Pakistani city of Abbotabad in May 2011.

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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