

ACLU Sues CIA Over Drone Program Details



New York, October 20 (RHC)-- The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has lodged a lawsuit compelling the CIA to turn over basic details about U.S. drone strikes.

The lawsuit was filed Monday a week after shocking contours of the program were revealed by an anonymous intelligence source. The ACLU called on the CIA to release a summary of drone strikes, including the locations and dates of strikes, the number of casualties and their identities or status.

The organization is also seeking memos that describe the legal reasoning underpinning the drone program.

So far, no information on the drone strikes has been made available to the public and the only available information is data gathered by analysts and journalists based on reports on the ground.

"The case is really about the public's right to know, the right of access to information about this very controversial set of policies," said Jameel Jaffer, deputy legal director of the ACLU.

"At this point the enemies of the United States already know that the CIA is carrying out drone strikes. The only effect of the kind of secrecy we're seeing now is to keep Americans in the dark about their own government's policies," he added.

The ACLU lawsuit is related to both the CIA drone program and any information it might possess on a parallel program operated by the U.S. Defense Department, Jaffer said.

"We think that the public has a right to know both what the government's purported legal justifications are for the drone strikes, and also of any limits that the government recognizes on its authority to carry out these kinds of strikes," he said.

The U.S. drone program has killed thousands of civilians in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and Afghanistan, according to media reports. An unidentified whistleblower provided classified documents to the Intercept, which published them last week, revealing that the US military labels unknown people killed in drone strikes as "enemies killed in action."

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