

New Zealand involved in US 'dirty wars'

John Key has formally acknowledged that the Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) provides information that is used in the US assassination programme called the 'drone wars'. These targeted assassinations are carried out by unmanned aerial vehicles – 'drones' – and are being conducted by the US Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and the CIA in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen and possibly dozens of other countries.

John Key has said that he is perfectly comfortable with what the GCSB is doing, and he has reiterated that he believes everything the agency is doing is legal.

At the core of this issue is that the New Zealand prime minister has now confirmed it provided information in order to assist the US in murdering people. Journalist Jeremy Scahill's research shows that the agencies responsible for the drone war—the US Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and the CIA—are waging war in some 80 countries.

The US has carried out at least 400 drone strikes since Obama took office, reportedly killing upwards of 2,600 people, according to independent research groups. Obama has referred to claims of significant unlawful civilian casualties as "outlandish". But his administration will not confirm any casualty figures, much less individual strikes or the number of its targeted killing operations.

In the United States, the dominant narrative about the use of killer drones is of a surgically precise and effective tool that makes the US safer by enabling 'targeted killing' of terrorists, with minimal downsides or collateral impacts.

This narrative is false. The reality is that drones are extrajudicial assassinations that breach any notion of civilized human decency and are responsible for the deaths of innocent civilians. Peace Action Wellington condemns the cruel and cowardly use of lethal drones and calls for their destruction.



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