

Beat: Miscellaneous

U.S. drone kills 3 suspected al-Qaeda supporters in Yemen

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USPA News - A U.S. drone fired at a house in northwest Yemen on Sunday morning, killing at least three suspected al-Qaeda supporters who brought money to finance militant operations, Yemeni officials said on Monday. A local al-Qaeda leader was injured in the strike.

Yemeni security officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the incident, said the attack happened at around 10 a.m. local time on Sunday when an unmanned U.S. drone fired several missiles at a house in the Wadi Abu Jabara area of Saada Governorate. The country's defense ministry confirmed three al-Qaeda supporters were killed while a fourth was injured. The Yemeni government acknowledged they were killed in an airstrike but did not say who was behind it, though only the United States is known to operate drones in the region. The officials said the airstrike targeted the house of local al-Qaeda commander Omar Saleh al-Tais, who was himself injured in the attack. One of the fatalities was identified as a Yemeni citizen while the other two were Saudi nationals who allegedly brought money to finance al-Qaeda operations in Yemen. Yemen is currently undergoing a transition process after a popular uprising erupted in the country last year, similar to protests seen in other countries across the Middle East and North Africa. Yemen held presidential elections in February, resulting in a victory for the country's new leader Abd Rabbuh Mansur Al-Hadi. The United States regularly carries out drone strikes in Yemen, and documents released by the whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks in November 2010 revealed that the Yemeni government has covered up such strikes in the past. "We'll continue saying the bombs are ours, not yours," then Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh told a U.S. official, according to a classified U.S. document. On October 18, local al-Qaeda leader Nadir Haider Nasser al-Shaddadi and eight other suspected militants were killed when a U.S. drone fired several missiles at a farm and vehicles near the town of Jaar in southern Yemen's Abyan province. While the government claimed Yemeni security forces carried out the operation, it is believed to have been a U.S. drone strike.

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