

Beat: Miscellaneous

U.S. drone targets truck in central Yemen, killing 3 people

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USPA News - A U.S. drone fired at a truck in central Yemen on late Saturday evening, killing three people who were identified as al-Qaeda members, Yemeni officials said on Monday. A local news report claimed the fatalities were civilians with no links to militants.

Yemeni security officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the incident, said the attack happened on late Saturday evening when an unmanned U.S. drone fired several missiles at a truck in the village of al-Manaseh, which is located in the central province of Al Bayda. "The aircraft blew up the truck and killed everyone inside. Three bodies were recovered but they were burnt beyond recognition," one official said. The Yemeni government acknowledged the men were killed in an airstrike but did not say who carried it out, although only the United States is known to operate drones in the region. The country's defense ministry said three al-Qaeda militants were killed in Saturday's airstrike, but local residents rejected the claims. Khaled Al-Dahab, a prominent social leader in the region, told the Yemen Times newspaper that the men were civilians who had no links to al-Qaeda or other militant groups. 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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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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