



500 Days of British Drone Attacks in Iraq and Syria, « Against ISIS » or « Against Civilians »?

Par [Chris Cole](#)

Mondialisation.ca, 07 mars 2016

[Drone Wars UK](#) 4 mars 2016

Région : [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Thème: [Military and WMD](#), [Terrorism](#),
[US NATO War Agenda](#)

Analyses: [IRAQ REPORT](#), [SYRIA](#)

Overall this indicates that one-third of British air strikes against ISIS have been carried out by drones, however this masks a very recent change. For the 12 months from November 2014 (when first UK drone strike against ISIS took place) until 31 October 2015, UK Reaper drones carried out 49% of strikes (191) while UK Tornados carried out 51% of strikes (202).

UK drone and air strikes in Iraq and Syria Nov 14-Feb 16

| | Nov 14 – Oct 15 (12 Months) | Nov 15 – Feb 16 (4 Months) | Total (16 months) |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Reaper strikes | 191 | 76 | 267 |
| Reaper monthly average strikes | 16 | 19 | 17 |
| % of British strikes by Reaper | 49% | 19% | 34% |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Tornado strikes | 202 | 197 | 399 |
| Tornado monthly average strikes | 17 | 49 | 25 |
| % of British strikes by Tornado | 51% | 49% | 50% |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----|-----|-----|
| Typhoon strikes | 0 | 130 | 130 |
| Typhoon monthly average strikes | 0 | 32 | 32 |
| % of British strikes by Typhoon | 0% | 32% | 16% |

Figures from MoD updates on UK airstrikes

In the four months since October 2015, when additional British Tornados and Typhoon aircraft were deployed and there was a [surge](#) of strikes in Iraq around Ramadi and Mosul, Reapers have carried out 76 strikes (19%), Tornados 197 (49%) and Typhoons 130 (32%).

So while it may look as though the use of British drones to carry out strikes has declined, in fact the monthly average of British drone strikes has actually increased in that four month period from 16 per month to 19 per month (see table). There are also signs that the 'surge' in strikes by Tornados and Typhoons in Dec 15/Jan 16 has diminished.

Strikes in Syria

| British air strikes since Parliamentary vote on 2 Dec 2015 | |
|--|-----|
| Reaper strikes in Syria | 17 |
| Tornado/Typhoon strikes in Syria | 37 |
| Total strikes in Syria | 54 |
| Total UK strikes (since vote) | 338 |
| % of UK strikes in Syria | 16% |

Figures from MoD updates on UK airstrikes

According to the MoD updates (up 1 March 2016) there have been 54 British air strikes in Syria out of a total of 338 UK strikes since the December 2nd vote to extend military action into Syria. Despite David Cameron's insistence that the UK had to ["crush the head of the snake"](#) by bombing in Syria and Michael Fallon's argument that it was ["morally indefensible"](#) not to bomb in Syria, just 16% of British air strikes have taken place there in the three months since the vote.

This is likely due to the fact that finding targets for strikes – when the US and others have already been bombing for more than a year – would be very difficult, as [was clear for some time](#) before the vote. About half of the 50 or so British strikes in Syria have been against oil infrastructure – or engineering vehicles to fix damaged oil infrastructure – with the rest against ISIL positions, checkpoints and fighters.

Civilian Casualties

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) continues to insist that there is [no evidence that any civilian has been killed or even injured](#) in the 500 days of UK drone operations – or indeed in the 800 air strikes in which more than 1,000 weapons have been fired by British drones and aircraft.

Airwars, the independent group which monitors air strikes in Iraq and Syria argues there is [fair evidence of between 918 and 1,278 civilian non-combatants killed](#) in 144 separate incidents. The organisation recently wrote to the MoD about 8 British strikes that took place in December 2015 after [cross-referencing of reported civilian casualty incidents with UK airstrikes had indicated possible concerns](#). The MoD responded that [no British aircraft were involved in the strikes](#) in which civilians were reportedly killed.

Despite the British insistence of zero civilian casualties, and US statements that only around 20 civilians are ["likely to have been killed"](#), hundreds of civilian on the ground have been killed and injured in Coalition air strikes. A browse through [the names, photographs, videos and details](#) of civilian casualty reports compiled by Airwars during 2015 should give serious pause for thought to those all too ready to accept official claims.

Drones and Perpetual War

While today marks 500 days of British drone operations in Iraq and Syria, the UK's drones were deployed [directly](#) from operation in Afghanistan. In fact Britain's Reaper drones have been engaged in permanent military operations now [since October 2007](#), almost eight-and-a-half years. And there appears to be little sign of British drone operations coming to an end any time soon, in fact just the opposite.

Last autumn David Cameron announced his intention to [double](#) the UK's drone fleet again

(renaming the Predators as 'Protectors') as well as purchasing the extremely long endurance [Zephyr drones](#). And yesterday David Cameron announced [£750m of further funding for the Future Combat Air System](#), a joint UK-French combat drone demonstrator programme.

It has long been argued that the remote, so-called 'risk-free' nature of drone warfare will lead to a [permanent state of war](#). Today's milestone seems to be just another step on that long journey.

La source originale de cet article est [Drone Wars UK](#)
Copyright © [Chris Cole](#), [Drone Wars UK](#), 2016

Articles Par : [Chris Cole](#)

Avis de non-responsabilité : Les opinions exprimées dans cet article n'engagent que le ou les auteurs. Le Centre de recherche sur la mondialisation se dégage de toute responsabilité concernant le contenu de cet article et ne sera pas tenu responsable pour des erreurs ou informations incorrectes ou inexacts.

Le Centre de recherche sur la mondialisation (CRM) accorde la permission de reproduire la version intégrale ou des extraits d'articles du site [Mondialisation.ca](#) sur des sites de médias alternatifs. La source de l'article, l'adresse url ainsi qu'un hyperlien vers l'article original du CRM doivent être indiqués. Une note de droit d'auteur (copyright) doit également être indiquée.

Pour publier des articles de [Mondialisation.ca](#) en format papier ou autre, y compris les sites Internet commerciaux, contactez: media@globalresearch.ca

[Mondialisation.ca](#) contient du matériel protégé par le droit d'auteur, dont le détenteur n'a pas toujours autorisé l'utilisation. Nous mettons ce matériel à la disposition de nos lecteurs en vertu du principe "d'utilisation équitable", dans le but d'améliorer la compréhension des enjeux politiques, économiques et sociaux. Tout le matériel mis en ligne sur ce site est à but non lucratif. Il est mis à la disposition de tous ceux qui s'y intéressent dans le but de faire de la recherche ainsi qu'à des fins éducatives. Si vous désirez utiliser du matériel protégé par le droit d'auteur pour des raisons autres que "l'utilisation équitable", vous devez demander la permission au détenteur du droit d'auteur.

Contact média: media@globalresearch.ca