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On June 7th Amnesty International (AI) released a [report and pictures](#) of a US-manufactured cruise missile that carried cluster munitions.

The remnants of the cruise missile pictured in the AI report are what was on the ground after a savage December 17, 2009 strike on an alleged “terrorist” training camp in Yemen. The attack killed 55 people, including 14 women and 21 children.

The Yemeni government claimed that it carried out the assault on al-Ma'jalah, in al-Mahfad district, Abyan Governorate. But shortly after the massacre, U.S. media reports indicated that unidentified U.S. government sources claimed that cruise missiles were launched on President Obama's presidential orders at two alleged al-Qa'eda sites in Yemen. This is consistent with previous attacks launched by the Obama administration. Obama claims he has the right to kill “terrorists” anywhere in the world without any due process. These attacks have resulted in countless civilians becoming “collateral damage.”

It is well-known that the U.S. government has enlisted the Yemeni government in its global war of terror. The U.S. has provided tens of millions of dollars to the Yemen government in military aid to fight in this war. U.S. special operations forces are also on the ground in Yemen as a result of orders issued by CentCom Commander General Petraeus in September 2009. While it is not clear at this time which government actually launched the missile attack, it is clear that the U.S. government is behind it and is responsible for the war crime. It was either done directly by the U.S. or by its “employees” in the Yemen government.

According to Philip Luther, Deputy Director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Program, “A military strike of this kind against alleged militants without an attempt to detain them is at the very least unlawful. The fact that so many of the victims were actually women and children indicates that the attack was in fact grossly irresponsible, particularly given the likely use of cluster munitions. Based on the evidence provided by these photographs, the U.S. government must disclose what role it played in the al-Ma'jalah attack, and all governments involved must show what steps they took to prevent unnecessary deaths and injuries.”

According to the amnesty report, the pictures reveal the positive identification of missile parts. The parts appear to be from the payload, mid-body, aft-body and propulsion sections of a BGM-109D Tomahawk land-attack cruise missile. This missile is launched from a warship or

submarine. It carries 166 cluster bomblets which each explode into over 200 sharp steel fragments that can cause injuries up to a distance of 150 meters. An incendiary material inside the bomblet also spreads fragments of burning zirconium designed to set fire to nearby flammable objects. This is hardly a precision weapon and it meant to rain down destruction over a wide area. That is why its use in a civilian area can be a war crime. Neither the U.S. nor Yemen has yet signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions, a treaty designed to comprehensively ban such weapons. The treaty is set to go into effect on August 1, 2010.

Mike Lewis, Amnesty International's arms control researcher stated, "Amnesty International is gravely concerned by evidence that cluster munitions appear to have been used in Yemen, when most states around the world have committed to comprehensively ban these weapons. Cluster munitions have indiscriminate effects and unexploded bomblets threaten lives and livelihoods for years afterwards. All governments responsible for using them must urgently provide assistance to clear unexploded munitions."

One of the Amnesty photos shows an unexploded BLU 97 A/B bomblet. These munitions are known to be possessed only by U.S. military forces. This indicates the U.S. was the nation which launched the attack despite Yemeni claims. This December 2009 massacre is only one of many perpetrated by the U.S. and its allies in the U.S. war of terror. Assassinations and other extra-judicial killings have become routine under the Bush regime and now even more so under the Obama administration. Obama openly proclaims his right to commit such crimes. They are not only committed in nations where the U.S. has openly invaded, but in other countries where the U.S. imperialists can get away with it. These crimes are already illegal when they kill the alleged targets, but in using such weapons as cluster bombs the U.S. virtually guarantees that so-called collateral damage will result.

In this Yemen attack 14 alleged terrorists were killed. Even if we assume this to be true, that means 41 other people were also murdered. The blood of these innocent victims is on the hands of the U.S. commander-in-chief Obama. If such an action had been committed by President Bush most people of conscience would be calling for his prosecution. Why should Obama be given a pass?