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Former CIA Chief in Pakistan Faces Murder Charges for Drone Killings

By Jason Ditz

April 7, 2015

Former CIA station chief for Islamabad Jonathan Bank is to face charges of murder and waging war against Pakistan, according to a ruling by the high court.

The charges are related to a December 2009 drone strike against North Waziristan in which three civilians were killed. Banks is no longer in the country, and will be tried in absentia.

The CIA has launched scores of drone strikes against Pakistan's tribal areas, killing countless civilians, of course, but the Pakistani government has shown only vague opposition to the strikes and little interest in identifying the slain.

In this case, however, journalist Karim Khan has launched a multi-year legal battle trying to force government action for the strike, which destroyed his home and killed his brother and his son.

Khan's push for action led to the naming of Bank as the station chief responsible for the attack, at which point he was withdrawn from the country.

After being pulled from Islamabad, Bank was appointed head of Iran operations, though in 2014 he was placed on administrative leave by the agency for abusive behavior.