

December 19, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

President Biden,

We are organizations focused variously on human rights; civil rights and civil liberties; racial, social, and environmental justice; humanitarian approaches to foreign policy; faith-based initiatives; peacebuilding; government accountability; veterans' issues; and the protection of civilians.

We write to express our deep concern about the lack of transparency surrounding your new policy on the use of lethal force outside recognized armed conflict. The Presidential Policy Memorandum (PPM), [notified](#) to Congress and [reported](#) in the *New York Times*, appears to be the latest iteration of a U.S. extrajudicial killing program targeting individuals suspected of terrorism outside of recognized battlefields. Many of us were among the more than 110 civil society groups that [called](#) last year for an end to this program, citing its appalling toll on Muslim, Brown, and Black communities in multiple parts of the world. Now, we are deeply dismayed by the administration's decision to keep secret this policy and the associated national counterterrorism strategy.

The new [National Security Strategy](#) commits to using force only as the last resort, consistent with U.S. values and laws, with the informed consent of the American people, and while promoting transparency and accountability. Meeting these commitments requires, at a minimum, basic transparency about the rules and policies governing the use of force. In line with your commitments, we strongly urge you to publicly release the PPM and the accompanying national counterterrorism strategy. Previous administrations' lethal force policies have been made public with redactions, demonstrating that it is possible to provide much-needed transparency regarding U.S. legal and policy justifications and processes for the use of force.

We believe these disclosures are vital for the American people and global community to understand the wide-reaching implications of this policy, and for embedding key transparency and accountability principles in U.S. national security policy for administrations to come. We urge you to publicly release the PPM and associated counterterrorism strategy without delay.

Signed,

Airwars  
American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)  
American Friends Service Committee

Amnesty International USA  
Brennan Center for Justice  
Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and Common Security  
Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)  
Center for Constitutional Rights  
Center for International Policy  
Center for Victims of Torture  
Church of the Brethren, Office of Peacebuilding and Policy  
Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW)  
CODEPINK  
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)  
The Columbia Law School Human Rights Institute  
CommonDefense.us  
Democracy for the Arab World Now (DAWN)  
Defending Rights & Dissent  
Demand Progress Education Fund  
Digital Democracy Project  
The Episcopal Church  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Global Justice Clinic, NYU School of Law  
Government Accountability Project  
Government Information Watch  
Human Rights First  
Human Rights Watch  
International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)  
Institute for Policy Studies New Internationalism Project  
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Massachusetts Peace Action  
MPower Change  
Mwatana for Human Rights  
National Religious Campaign Against Torture  
PAX  
Peace Action  
Peace Action New York State  
Peace Education Center  
Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Public Witness  
Public Citizen  
Reprieve US  
ReThinking Foreign Policy  
Saferworld (USA)  
September 11th Families for Peaceful Tomorrows  
United for Peace and Justice  
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society

United Church of Christ, Justice and Local Church Ministries  
University Network for Human Rights  
Veterans for American Ideals (VFAI)  
Win Without War  
Witness Somalia  
Women for Weapons Trade Transparency  
The Zomia Center

cc:

William J. Burns  
Director, Central Intelligence Agency

Avril Haines  
Director of National Intelligence