

Review of: "The Necropolitics of Drone Bases and Use in the African Context"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The paper addresses the establishment of drone bases and the use of drones in Africa by external countries as a form of necropolitical technologies of domination. The author contends that drones are being employed by foreign powers to exert domination and control over African populations, reflecting a modern iteration of colonial practices, or what it describes as 'aerial colonialism'. Overall, the paper critically examines the necropolitical dimensions of drone warfare on the African continent, framing it as an extension of colonial logics that devalue African lives.

The paper has the potential to make a thought-provoking and timely contribution to the discourse surrounding the role of drone bases in Africa, the implications of deploying technologies from these facilities, and their impact on power dynamics across the continent. Employing the concepts of 'necropolitics' and 'colonialism,' the author explores how such technologies are utilised as instruments of necropolitical control, building upon Achille Mbembe's influential conceptual framework. The author deftly applies Mbembe's ideas to critically examine the necropolitical dimensions of drone warfare and aerial surveillance in African nations. The central argument posits that the establishment of foreign drone bases and the operation of drones constitute contemporary forms of colonialism, enabling external powers to exert control over populations and territories through the threat of violence from the air. Overall, the paper offers a nuanced postcolonial critique of militarised drone technologies, framing them as tools that render particular lives disposable while preserving the sovereignty of the deploying nations. The author's analysis provides a compelling lens to understand the complex power dynamics and necropolitical implications of drone proliferation in Africa.

To realise its potential, the author needs to make a few revisions.

For instance, the author claims they will consider the 'impact' of foreign military presence 'on African sovereignty and social dynamics'. However, 'impact' suggests a quantitative measure, which the paper needs to include. The author should reconsider this aim or clarify their approach.

The introduction could be more concise by describing current affairs rather than providing an extensive historical narrative. There is no need to refer to authors' titles, as done on page 4.

The concept of 'aerial colonialism' should be developed earlier in the paper to frame the analysis better.

On page 6, the author makes statements about extrajudicial killings in Africa by Western and Arab states but does not provide evidence, such as recent incidents and figures. Similarly, more quantitative evidence is needed regarding drone

attacks in the Horn of Africa.

The paper would benefit from providing more evidence and analysis to support its claims. For example, on page 11, the Tricontinental Institute report is referenced but needs to be meaningfully integrated. On page 13, the discussion on African states' drone usage needs more nuance.

Page 14 states that external countries need more evidence for their oversight. This claim requires substantiation and a broader discussion of implications. The statement that no African country currently has a drone base requires expansion and proof.

Analysis of the implications of Operation Odyssey Dawn is needed.

The paragraphs on British colonial enterprise and the assassination of African leaders (page 18) seem unnecessary for this paper's scope.

The section on drone bases and deployment in Africa could be moved to improve the narrative flow after the introduction.

The manuscript indeed holds the potential for an important contribution to the field. However, to fully realise this potential, it is recommended that the author seriously consider the proposed revisions. It is crucial to bolster the arguments with additional evidence and restructure the conclusion to underscore the key points. This will not only enhance the clarity of the paper but also emphasise its significance in the discourse.