



Women in Black
London

BAN KILLER DRONES

Campaigners are demonstrating at sites across the UK at which military drones (UAVs, unmanned aerial vehicles) are manufactured or deployed. Women in Black join their call on the government to prohibit any use of UK military facilities to enable drone surveillance and trigger drone killings, and to work towards a worldwide ban. Military drones must go the way of chemical weapons, landmines and cluster bombs: outlawed, and dumped in history's waste-bin.

Remote-controlled death. Some drones are used for military surveillance, while others are designed to carry bombs and missiles. Operated from command centres far distant from the site of conflict, drones are a weapon of choice for politicians wishing to avoid the bad publicity of "boots on the ground" and casualties in their own armed forces. They have already been used with devastating effect by the USA, UK and Israel in seven countries. They were a key weapon in Israel's recent onslaught on Gaza.

Execution without trial. In Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia, countries with which the USA has not declared war, its drone strikes are nonetheless estimated to have killed 4,700 people. They have effectively been executed without trial. We can and must ban such unlawful targeted killing in line with the European Parliament's Resolution of 27 February 2014. Besides, despite the claim of surgically-precise targeting, the possibility of error is great. Reports suggest that of those 4,700 dead, more than 3,000 may have been civilian casualties, among them more than 200 children.

'Sanitizing' war? Making war safer and easier for the aggressor, drone warfare literally distances soldiers from the blood they shed. When the killer sees the enemy not as a human being, but as a mere 'blip' on a screen, the horror of killing loses any deterrent effect it may have.

UK partnership with Israel. Between 2001-2011, 41 per cent of the world's drones were manufactured in Israel, the world's top exporter. Britain's fleet of military surveillance UAVs are the product of a partnership between Israel's Elbit Systems and Thales UK, Leicestershire. Their engines are supplied from a factory at Shenstone, near Birmingham. For military strikes in Afghanistan, Britain has to date been using US-made weapon-bearing Reaper drones, controlled from RAF Waddington in Lincolnshire. They are shortly to be redeployed to the Middle East and Africa.

Sources: <<http://www.dronecampaignnetwork.org.uk/>> <<http://dronewars.net/aboutdrone/>>
<<http://www.waronwant.org/campaigns/corporations-and-conflict/killer-drones/>>

To: The Prime Minister, Rt.Hon David Cameron, MP, 10 Downing Street, London SW1.

With Women in Black and the UK Drone Campaign Network, I call on the British government to:

- cease the production and acquisition of military drones;
- prohibit use of British facilities to enable or trigger drone killings;
- and work towards a worldwide ban on these weapons.

Signature.....Name.....Date.....

Address.....

Women in Black, C/o The Maypole Fund, PO Box 14072, London N16 5WB
Donations for leaflets etc most welcome. www.womeninblack.org.uk

Women in Black holds vigils every Wednesday between 6-7 pm at the Edith Cavell Statue, opposite the door of the National Portrait Gallery, St.Martin's Place, London WC2. The vigils are silent, women-only and if possible we wear black.