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NEWS RELEASE

Anti-Drone Protest in the German Parliament

Three women and one man from the Berlin Peace Coordination intervened yesterday during the parliamentary debate in Berlin regarding possible German acquisition of weaponized drones. The anti-drone activists, who are co-founders of the campaign "No Combat Drones!," sought to call attention the gravity of the upcoming decision by the German government, either for or against weaponized drones, in light of the growing international struggle to ban such weapons.

In solidarity with actions of U.S. peace organizations such as Code Pink, the German activists raised their hands -- which were painted blood-red -- and called out "Ban Combat Drones, sir!" when the speaker of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) came to the microphone. The Berlin activists were aware that they were violating regulations of the German Parliament. Their personal information was taken, and they were told that charges would be brought against them.

During the parliamentary debate that followed, Bernd Siebert of the CDU stated cynically that his parliamentary group planned to move to acquire combat drones as soon as the "political furore" in the lead-up to the upcoming election in September had died down. In contrast, both the Green and the Left parliamentary groups stated that they are firmly against Germany acquiring weaponized drone systems. Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) also rejected the acquisition of weaponized drones for the German military. She criticized the ambiguous tactics of her own SPD parliamentary group on the drone question and spoke clearly against a European weaponized drone project. The Left Party showed the strongest opposition with a motion that the German government work towards an international ban of combat drones.

Tomorrow British peace activists from several organizations will gather at the Royal Air Force base at Waddington for a demonstration called "Ground the Drones." At Waddington the British government is establishing what will likely be the first control centre in Europe for drone warfare.

Laura v. Wimmersperg (Moderator of Berlin Peace Coordination)

Contact:

Elsa Rassbach, +49 (0) 30 326 015 40 / +49 (0) 170 738 1450

Laura v. Wimmersperg, +49 (0) 30 782 33 82 / +49 (0) 160 998 55 77 5

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