



# Germany and Europe at a Crossroads

## Armed drones and digital weapons systems

*Three online discussion events with representatives of victimized populations, drone whistleblowers and other experts from different parts of the world*

Criticism from civil society and from scholars, scientists and political representatives has so far kept the Bundestag from agreeing to arm the Bundeswehr's five leased „Heron TP“ drones on the grounds that the „detailed assessment“ of ethical and legal concerns mandated under the 2018 government coalition-agreement of the CDU/CSU and the SPD provisionally refused to arm „Heron TP“ drones for the German armed forces on the grounds that the „detailed assessment“ of ethical and legal concerns required by the coalition agreement has not been completed. In any case, the „Heron TP“ drones are only a „temporary solution“ while the German government pushes ahead with European armed drone projects.

► On March 24, 2021 the Bundestag is to vote on whether to appropriate financing for the further development of the weaponizable Eurodrone, a joint project of Germany, France, Italy, and Spain. In February, the SPD leadership promised its coalition partners that it would approve the

next development phase of the Eurodrone but reserved the right to decide at a later date whether or not to arm it..

► Later this spring, the Bundestag will likely decide whether to appropriate financing for the „Future Combat Air System“ (FCAS), which France, Germany and Spain plan to deploy beginning in 2040. The FCAS consists of new types of combat aircraft that can carry nuclear weapons and can also be networked with armed Eurodrones as well as with armed autonomous drones flying in swarms. Industry experts expect FCAS to cost a total of 500 billion euros.

► the provisional refusal by the Bundestag to agree to arm the „Heron TP“ drones appears to offer some hope that there may be a way to bring digital warfare under control and to ban armed drones internationally. In these discussions we will speak with drone whistleblowers, experts on artificial intelligence and international law, and guests from Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Iraq.

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### March 14 at 19:00 (CET)

**Warzone Afghanistan: Are armed drones needed to protect soldiers?** *Consequences of arming drones from the point of view of those affected*

The people of Afghanistan have suffered from drone strikes by the U.S. government since 2001 and by the British government since 2007. The German armed forces have been using unarmed „Heron 1“ drones in Afghanistan since 2010. The German military wants to arm the weapons-capable „Heron TP“ drones leased in 2018, allegedly in order to protect their soldiers, despite the fact that no German soldier has been killed by attacks in any foreign mission since 2014.

The German Ministry of Defense asserts that the well-known ethical and legal consequences of drone warfare can be avoided through stricter rules of engagement for its own armed drones. The voices of witnesses and experts who have immediate experience with this weapons

system reveal limitations to such rules of engagement.

**Introduction: Elsa Rassbach**, German American filmmaker; co-founder of German Drone Campaign

**A Conversation** between an Afghan anti-drone war organizer and U.S. drone whistleblowers:

**Emran Feroz**, Austrian Afghan journalist, and author of the book „Death at the push of a button: The true extent of the U.S. drone terror, or How murder could become a daily occurrence“; founder of the drone memorial ([twitter.com/dronememorial](https://twitter.com/dronememorial))

**Lisa Ling**, military communications technician and drone whistleblower who appeared in the 2016 documentary „National Bird“

**Cian Westmoreland**, former U.S. Air Force RF/SATCOM technician; in the 73rd EACS established signal relay at Kandahar base for manned/unmanned aircraft over Afghanistan

*Language: German & English (simultaneous interpretation)*

**March 18 at 19:00 (CET)**

## Stopping armed drones in Germany – a chance for an international ban and stopping FCAS?

*Perspectives from the worlds of artificial intelligence and international law*

Armed drones are not prohibited under international law, but they are used as attack weapons worldwide in violation of human rights and international law. Due to their often-permanent deployment and remote control from distant ground, armed drones – which are controlled by algorithms – are also questionable with regards to international law. With the „Future Combat Air System“ (FCAS), Germany is involved in the development of a European fighter aircraft that is to be guided by largely autonomous unarmed and armed drones.

**streaming only**

**March 11 at 19:00 (CET)**

*Greetings from the co-organizers of the three-part discussion event: Laura von Wimmersperg of the German Drone Campaign, and Joachim Schramm, Education Center DFG-VK NRW*

## The Turkish drone war on Nagorno-Karabakh: a game-changer for more unmanned weaponry?

The war between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the autumn of 2020 is considered to be the first intergovernmental conflict won by the use of armed drones. Turkey supported Azerbaijan by providing its „Bayraktar TB2“ drones. Compared to the drones of the current market leaders, USA and Israel, these drones are smaller and significantly less expensive. Germany supplied technology for the production of munitions. The operations were preceded by attacks in Syria, Kurdistan and Libya. Following the

Do combat drones pose a danger of a creeping automation of war? How should their use be assessed under international law? Can prospects for their international control, disarmament or ban be identified?

**Carolyn Horn**, Senior Legal Advisor to Dr. Agnes Callamard, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions

**Prof. Dr. Norman Paech**, international law expert and peace scholar

**Dr. Jakob Foerster**, researcher in the field of artificial intelligence

**Moderator: Peter Foerster**, peace activist

*Languages: German & English (simultaneous interpretation)*

USA, Israel and China, Turkey now wants to become a leading armed drone power. This race to arms serves as an argument for many nations to themselves procure armed unmanned systems. In the military, however, their to themselves procure new efforts to modernize air defenses. We will investigate the question whether, and in what way, armed drones have already changed contemporary warfare.

**Chris Cole**, co-founder of Dronewars UK

**Bahruz Samadov**, PhD student and author from Azerbaijan

**Gevorg Mnatsakanyan**, journalist and military recruit from Armenia

**Kamran Othman**, human rights observer for the Christian Peacemaker Team in Iraqi Kurdistan

**Moderator: Matthias Monroy**

*Language: English*

## ZOOM & LIVE STREAM!

Links for registration & streaming of the events can be found on the website: [DROHNEN-KAMPAGNE.DE](https://drohnen-kampagne.de)

**Zoom:** Simultaneous German-English “live” interpretation

**Streaming:** in the original language of the event

**Videos:** Video recordings of the events will be released under a Creative Commons License in two versions:

- 1) the original language (German or English)
- 2) the original language with corrected interpretation track.

The organizing groups, can be contacted at [seminar@drohnen-kampagne.org](mailto:seminar@drohnen-kampagne.org)

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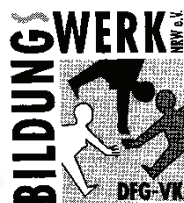
Reference: [drohnen-kampagne](https://drohnen-kampagne.de)

*A series of discussions presented by the German Drone Campaign (Drohnen-Kampagne), a network founded in 2013 with 150 support groups, in cooperation with the Alois-Stoff-Education-Center of the DFG-VK NRW (German Peace Society & United War Resisters (WRI))*

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