

CAMPAIGN FOR A GLOBAL BAN ON WEAPONIZED DRONES

CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL ENDORSERS

The following statement sets forth the demand by organizations in many countries, including international organizations and organizations of faith and conscience, for the United Nations to adopt a Treaty on the Prohibition of Weaponized Drones. It is inspired by the Biological Weapons Convention (1972), the Chemical Weapons Convention (1997), the Mine Ban Treaty (1999), the Cluster Munitions Convention (2010), the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (2017), and in solidarity with the ongoing campaign for a United Nations treaty to Ban Killer Robots. It upholds the values of human rights, internationalism, representation from and protection of the Global South from neocolonial exploitation and proxy wars, the power of grassroots communities, and the voices of women, youth, and the marginalized. We are mindful of the looming threat that weaponized drones could become autonomous, further extending the potential for death and destruction.

Whereas the use of weaponized aerial drones over the past 21 years has led to killing, maiming, terrorization and/or displacement of millions of people in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen, Somalia, Libya, Mali, Niger, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan, Armenian regions in Azerbaijan, Western Sahara, Kurdish regions in Turkey and elsewhere, Ukraine, Russia and other places;

Whereas numerous detailed studies and reports regarding casualties resulting from the deployment of weaponized aerial drones indicate that the majority of people killed, maimed, and displaced, or otherwise harmed, have been non-combatants, including women and children;

Whereas entire communities and wider populations are terrorized, intimidated and psychologically damaged by the constant flight of weaponized aerial drones over their heads, even when they are not struck by the weapons;

Whereas the United States, China, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Iran, Israel, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, South Africa, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine are manufacturing and/or developing weaponized aerial drones, and a growing number of countries are producing smaller, inexpensive single-use loitering munitions, known as "suicide" or "kamikaze" drones;

Whereas some of these countries, including the United States, Israel, China, Turkey and Iran are exporting weaponized aerial drones to an ever-increasing number of countries, while manufacturers in additional countries are exporting parts for weaponized aerial drone production;

Whereas the use of weaponized aerial drones has included numerous violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law by states and non-state armed groups around the world, including violations of international boundaries, national sovereignty rights and UN agreements;

Whereas the materials necessary to build and arm rudimentary weaponized aerial drones are neither technologically advanced nor expensive so that their use is proliferating at an alarming rate among militias, mercenaries, insurgencies and individuals;

Whereas a growing number of non-state actors have conducted armed attacks and assassinations using weaponized aerial drones, including but not limited to: Constellis Group (formerly Blackwater), Wagner Group, Al-Shabab, the Taliban, the Islamic State, Al-Qaeda, Libyan rebels, Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis, Boko Haram, Mexican drug cartels, as well as militias and mercenaries in Venezuela, Colombia, Sudan, Mali, Myanmar, and other countries in the Global South;

Whereas weaponized aerial drones are often used to prosecute undeclared and illegal wars;

Whereas weaponized aerial drones lower the threshold to armed conflict and can expand and prolong wars, because they enable attack without physical risk to ground and air force personnel of the weaponized drone user;

Whereas, apart from the Russian-Ukrainian war, most weaponized aerial drone strikes so far have targeted non-Christian people of color in the Global South;

Whereas both technologically advanced and rudimentary aerial drones can be weaponized with missiles or bombs carrying chemical weapons or depleted uranium;

Whereas advanced and rudimentary weaponized aerial drones pose an existential threat to humanity and the planet because they could be used to target nuclear power plants, of which there are hundreds in 32 countries, primarily in the Global North;

Whereas due to the reasons stated above, weaponized aerial drones constitute a tool for violating the integrity of national and international law, thus creating an expanding circle of enmity and increasing the likelihood of internecine conflict, proxy wars, larger wars and escalation to nuclear threats;

Whereas the use of weaponized aerial drones violates basic human rights as guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976), particularly with respect to the rights to life, privacy and fair trial; and the Geneva Conventions and their Protocols (1949, 1977), particularly with respect to its protection of civilians against indiscriminate, unacceptable levels of harm;

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We urge the UN General Assembly, UN Human Rights Council, and relevant United Nations committees to immediately investigate violations of International Law and human rights by state and non-state actors perpetrating aerial drone attacks.

We urge the International Criminal Court to investigate the most egregious instances of aerial drone attacks on civilian targets as war crimes and crimes against humanity, including attacks on aid workers, weddings, funerals and any strikes that occur in countries where there is no declared war between the perpetrator country and the country where the attacks occurred.

We urge the United Nations General Assembly to investigate the actual casualty counts from drone attacks, the contexts in which they occur, and to require reparations for noncombatant victims.

We urge the governments of every country around the world to ban the development, construction, production, testing, storage, stockpiling, sale, export and use of weaponized drones.

AND: We strongly urge the United Nations General Assembly to draft and pass a resolution banning the development, construction, production, testing, storage, sale, export, use and proliferation of weaponized drones throughout the world.

Initiated: *May 1, 2023*

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Initiating Organizations (in alphabetical order)

Ban Killer Drones, USA
Bund fuer Soziale Verteidigung (Germany)
CODEPINK: Women for Peace
Drohnen-Kampagne (German Drone Campaign)
Drone Wars UK
International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR)
International Peace Bureau (IPB)
Veterans for Peace
Women for Peace in Upstate New York
World BEYOND War

Further organizations have already endorsed this call. **On June 8, 2023, an expanded list of organizations from different countries that have by then endorsed this call will be published.** After then, it will still be possible to sign the call as an organization, and later signatures will also be published.

To sign this call as an organization based in a German-speaking country, please send an email to German Drone Campaign Co-Founder Elsa Rassbach at:
elsarassbach@gmail.com with the subject "Campaign".