

Why We Protest against Drone Killings. The Obligation of Citizens to Expose the War Crimes of their Government.

Ed Kinane Tells Judge Why He Protests Drone Killing

By [Global Research News](#)

Global Research, February 02, 2014

[War is a Crime](#)

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [Law and Justice](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

By Ed Kinane

Ed Kinane's CLOSING STATEMENT,

Charges: trespass & disorderly conduct, Trial of the "Hancock 17," Judge David S. Gideon presiding, De Witt, NY Town Court, 31 January 2014

Good evening Judge Gideon, prosecutor Mc Namara, court staff, our many supporters here, and my fellow defendants.

I want to thank you, Judge, for your attentiveness throughout this trial and for assuring that each *pro se* defendant has had ample opportunity to speak and adequate time to do so.

I would also like to thank both you and Mr. McNamara for your patience with our frequently fumbling ways as we amateurs seek to navigate court protocol.

Likewise I must acknowledge your patience as, over several days, we've sought to mesh the efforts of the 15 or 16 of us who, coming from all over the map, often couldn't consult together much before coming to court.

As *pro se* defendants, we are probably naive about how the U.S. "justice" system works.

We understood from our charges that any alleged trespass must occur on *private* property.

We further understood that any alleged annoyance, any alleged disturbance, any alleged recklessness, construed as disorderly conduct, must occur on *public* property.

Squaring that circle, we've been thinking, would surely result in at least one of those charges being dropped.

But that has yet to happen.

In my opening remarks on December 3, eight weeks ago, I noted that our defense would take two paths: that of conscience and that of legalism.

Our hope remains that this court will move along those two paths, paths bound for justice.

For as Clare Grady in her January 3rd Opening suggested, the law is meant to serve humans and not humans sacrificed to law.

Each of our testifiers spoke out of their consciences, some suggesting that their consciences were shaped by their own personal faith tradition.

Others cited personal experience as impelling them to gather outside the Hancock drone base on October 25, 2012.

I myself in my Opening alluded to having survived the murderous 2003 bombardment of Baghdad, Iraq — an ancient city of several million non-combatants widely viewed as a cradle of civilization.

It was that bombardment which the Pentagon boastfully and terrifyingly called “shock and awe.”

It would be impossible to count the number of “shock and awe” casualties - the Pentagon expressing supreme indifference to such numbers.

So I speak from analogous firsthand experience when I say that airborne killing and destruction typified by the weaponized drone - whether in Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan or Afghanistan — are terrifying.

And I speak first hand when I say that the Trespass and Disordered Conduct of those drones are not a defense against terrorism, but rather *embody* terrorism and may well generate retaliatory terrorism - an endless cycle of violence.

Others defendants - James Ricks, Patricia Weiland and Judith Bello — spoke of participating in a risky October 2012 human rights fact-finding delegation to Pakistan - a nation, supposedly a U.S. ally, terrorized by the robotic, lethal drones.

On this delegation they met drone survivors, non-combatant human beings who were maimed or had neighbors and close relatives killed.

Judith Bello shared with the court a short video interview with one of those survivors she met - a young man named Raz Mohammed.

Hopefully that video helped personalize the horror of those cowardly drone attacks.

James, Patricia and Judith testified that such encounters helped shape their state of mind on October 25, 2012 as they stood outside the gates of the Hancock drone base.

Their vivid reports on their Pakistan experience also helped shape the state of mind of other Hancock co-defendants on October 25th.

Many of my co-defendants who testified spoke to the layers of law we sought to uphold that morning.

These included the Nuremburg mandate for citizens of all nations to expose the war crime of her or his government.

Those layers also included aspects of international and U.S. Constitutional law, with the latter's First Amendment right to assemble, to speak out, and to petition our government for a redress of grievance.

That Constitutional law cited also included Article Six, the Supremacy clause, specifying that treaties the U.S. Government enters into become the highest law of the land.

Such law governs the judiciary at all levels — national, state *and* local.

Sadly, it appears that some U.S. courts unilaterally pick and choose the international treaties they'll recognize.

For example, as we stand here on stolen Onondaga Nation land, it's clear that New York State courts fail to honor the U.S./Onondaga Nation treaty.

By contrast international trade treaties like NAFTA – i.e. commercial international law so kind to corporations – tend to be treated as legitimate in U.S. courts.

It's a curious inconsistency.

Several of our testifiers referred to the grievance about which we were petitioning and for which we sought redress – that grievance being the protracted war crime committed or being prepared for 24/7 at Hancock by those piloting weaponized Reapers in Afghanistan and who knows where else.

Our petition at Hancock on October 25th against such war crime took the form of a people's indictment co-authored with us by former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark.

As you ponder a just outcome for this trial, Judge Gideon, we urge you to carefully weigh that indictment.

That document, entered into evidence here, specified the layers of law we sought to uphold on that October 25th.

On that date we were not defying law, *we were seeking to uphold law.*

Some testifiers noted that no one from the base inquired as to what our business was there and none spoke to us claiming we were trespassing.

Certainly no base personnel ordered us to leave.

Nor did any base personnel, including military police, tell us that the area near the base entrance from which we were petitioning the government was somehow exempt from the First Amendment.

Under questioning, both prosecution and each of our own witnesses noted that there was no NO TRESPASSING signage visible or in place between the Hancock main entrance gate and East Molloy Road in the town of DeWitt.

As each prosecution witness acknowledged, there was no line demarcating any trespass zone.

The prosecution's own witnesses couldn't seem to agree on where base property began.

In fact, the prosecution provided no documentation regarding base boundaries.

Curiously, while the prosecution initially sought to put into evidence a map of the base, when the defense asked for a copy of that map, the prosecution withdrew its request.

It does seem like the base command, for reasons of its own, prefers to keep base boundaries ambiguous.

No testifier for the defense indicated we knew where, besides at that fortified gate or at the barbed-wire fence surrounding the base, base property could properly be said to have begun.

Obviously, not only the authorities, but the defendants were in the dark regarding the whereabouts of the base property line – so much for our *knowingly* trespassing.

Pledge of Nonviolence

As each defense witness testified, all of us read aloud together a Pledge of Nonviolence on the morning of October 25, 2012 before embarking for the Hancock Reaper base.

Each defense witness testified that that Pledge faithfully reflected her or his frame of mind on October 25th.

Each also testified that their own behavior was consistent with that Pledge.

Further, neither our witnesses nor any of the arresting officers testified that they saw any of the defendants engage in behavior inconsistent with the Pledge.

In fact some of the arresting officers told of the congenial interactions between themselves and those they arrested.

Having been entered into evidence, and having referred to the Pledge numerous times while questioning our witnesses, I would like to read aloud the Pledge here.

It consists of seven short sentences. But first let me quickly put the Pledge into context.

Since 2009 appalled citizens have been seeking to educate the public, the media, law enforcement, and base personnel about the ongoing war crimes originating at Hancock. This campaign, coordinated by our grassroots group Upstate Drone Action, involves a range of tactics – including some that have led to arrest, trial and incarceration. Our entire campaign has been scrupulously nonviolent in the spirit and tradition of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. – both victims of assassination.

Thus before each civil resistance action participants commit ourselves to the following Pledge:

We are committed in the campaign to nonviolence in all of our words, symbols and actions. Our purpose is to publicize and hopefully deter the war crimes perpetrated from Hancock AFB by hunter/killer Reaper drones piloted by Hancock personnel over Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Accordingly, at today's event at Hancock our attitude will be one of respect toward all – including police, military personnel, the public, and each other.

We will not resist or evade arrest and if prosecuted, we will use the judicial process to continue our anti-drone campaign. Where possible we will put the Pentagon's and CIA's use of hunter/killer drones itself on trial.

Today's Action is part of an ongoing, protracted campaign. We will return to our communities and continue our work to end Reaper assassination, civilian killing and other such acts of state terrorism.

Thank you.

The original source of this article is [War is a Crime](#)
Copyright © [Global Research News](#), [War is a Crime](#), 2014

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Global Research](#)
[News](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca
www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca