

SOLIDARITY WITH THE WADDINGTON 6

On 3rd June, 2013, 6 protesters carried out an act of non-violent protest against the UK military's use of drones at RAF Waddington, in Lincolnshire. They are: Revd Keith Hebden, Chris Cole, Fr Martin Newell, Penny Walker, Susan Clarkson and Henrietta Cullinan. Their protest had 3 aims:

1. to symbolically breach the secrecy and silence surrounding the British use of armed drones.
2. to bring information about the impact of airstrikes on Afghan civilians .
3. to symbolically begin conversion of the air base to peaceful purposes.

To do this, they planted a peace garden, put up information about the Afghan victims of drone strikes on buildings and hangars and tried to gather more information about the use of drones at Waddington.

After being detained and held overnight, having their homes searched and various devices and documents confiscated, the 6 were initially charged with aggravated trespass and conspiracy to commit criminal damage, serious charges which were withdrawn the following day and replaced with 'simple' criminal damage to a fence. All 6 pleaded 'not guilty', holding that their actions were justified given the circumstances and the controversy surrounding UK drone use.

One of the protestors, Chris Cole, has said:

"The extreme reaction to our presence at RAF Waddington with the laying of very serious charges only for a complete and sudden reversal within hours betrays, I believe, the nervousness felt by those in charge of UK drone operations.

Behind the scenes it appears that the powers that be now appear to be questioning whether or not to maintain the 'just say nothing' tactic as it is perceived as no longer working, with a growing chorus of MPs, Peers, journalists, lawyers and activists demanding answers and information about the use of armed drones. Those maintaining the secrecy around the use of drone are coming under increasing pressure – and the message from us all is that it will only increase."

Help to increase this pressure by contacting your MP and questioning them about the UK's use of drones.

The Waddington 6 are to be tried in Lincoln Magistrates Court on Monday 7th October.



For more info:

www.dronewars.net

www.dronecampaignnetwork.wordpress.com

glw@catholicworker.org.uk