

FLY KITES NOT DRONES

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Saturday March 21st sees the second annual world-wide kite flying protest against drones, from Kabul to Sheffield people of all ages will 'fly kites not drones' in solidarity with children who live in fear of drone strikes. The first Global Day of Action on March 21st 2014 was inspired by young people in Afghanistan for whom blue skies mean danger, as clear conditions heighten the likelihood of a drone strike. For this kite- loving nation March 21st is their Nao Roz, the Persian New Year.

Afghan still grieve for lost loved ones endured during 8 years of strikes by British armed Reaper drone, now US drone strikes continue, on February 11th, nine people (1) were killed in a drone strike in Nangahar province.

The British Reaper drone is now operating in Iraq and Syria along with US armed drones. Israel launched a drone attack in Syria in January. Elsewhere there are ongoing US drone strikes in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. In these drone strikes children are being killed, injured, orphaned and traumatised. In the Israeli attack in Gaza last summer which involved drones, over 400 children were killed, 93 were under 5 years old (2).

Penny Walker, from the Drones Campaign Network says: "It is important that the next generation understand that armed drones now make war perpetual. We do not even need to be in a 'declared war' before drones are deployed. These robot killing machines have completely changed the nature of warfare, whereby anyone considered an "imminent threat" can be 'taken out' with a drone, along with anyone else who happens to be nearby. And yet, those responsible are not held accountable." (3)

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of Quakers in Britain, said "Quakers of all ages will be flying kites as a message of solidarity with people living with the terror of drone strikes. Believing that violence begets violence, we are alarmed by the civilian casualties caused by these weapons and oppose Britain's role in their production and use."

In Britain there will be kite flying in Argyle, Axbridge, Bournemouth, Brighton, Dunblane, Edinburgh, Findhorn, Hastings, London, Loughborough, Manchester, Sheffield, Southampton, and Stockport, with news of more events coming in daily (4). At RAF Waddington near Lincoln, from where the British armed Reaper is controlled, there will be kite flying from 1pm -3pm. Everyone welcome.

Reports on the effects of children living under drones in both Pakistan and Yemen describe the effects on communities "Drones hover twenty-four hours a day over communities in north-west Pakistan, striking homes, vehicles, and public spaces

without warning. Their presence terrorizes men, women, and children, giving rise to anxiety and psychological trauma among civilian communities" and in Yemen a father of an 8 year old living next door to a house targeted by a drone said "She has been waking terrified from her sleep. She points to the ceiling and says 'people there want me to suffocate'."(5&6)

The future of this world belongs to the next generation. This Global Day of Action is for them.

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notes

1. <http://www.pakistanherald.com/news/4372/11-02-2015/nine-suspected-militants-killed-in-drone-strike-near-pak-afghan-border>
2. http://www.btselem.org/publications/summaries/201501_black_flag
3. <http://www.livingunderdrones.org/>
4. <http://vcnv.org.uk/fly-kites-not-drones/21-march-2015/>
5. <http://www.channel4.com/news/drone-attacks-traumatising-a-generation-of-children>
6. 6. #flykitesnotdrones @kitesnotdrones

further information about drones see www.dronewars.net

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