

By The Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and Stop the Wars

Forty concerned citizens created a blockade this morning of Hancock Air National Guard Base outside Syracuse, NY. MQ-9 Reaper drones are operated by remote control from the base, and are used to carry out attacks in Afghanistan and possibly other countries. The activists say this use of drones violates International and domestic law, and amounts to war crimes.

The blockade began shortly after 8 AM this morning, when the activists gathered outside three gates of the military airfield, which are located on East Malloy, Thompson, and Townline Roads in the Town of DeWitt, near Syracuse.

They set up traffic cones, unfurled banners, and held up signs and pictures.

The signs named the war crimes that the activists say are being carried on at the base, and the pictures portrayed children who have been killed by the drones.

They succeeded in blocking gates for two and a half hours before they were arrested and taken to the Town Court of DeWitt.

Those blocking the gates were told by police that they would be arrested for a trespassing violation if they didn't leave, but 17 of them remained in place until they were taken into police custody.

Those arrested ranged in age from their twenties to their seventies, and included veterans as well as followers of various religions including those of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faiths.

The activists presented a document to personnel at the base, which they called a "People's Indictment for War Crimes".

They also read the indictment outside the gates.

The indictment reads, in part: "These drones are being used...for killings far removed from combat zones....to assassinate individuals and groups..."

'Extrajudicial killings such as those the US carries out by drones, are intentional, premeditated, and deliberate use of lethal force to commit murder in violation of US and International law.'

The use of armed drones has become the subject of controversy recently, with a recent study by Stanford and New York Universities showing that civilian casualties are much higher than has been claimed by the Obama administration.

The study also shows that the continual presence of drones over some parts of Pakistan is creating psychological trauma in the civilian population.

A recent poll in Pakistan shows the US drones are sparking outrage in that country, with 75% now viewing the United States as more of an enemy than an ally.

At hearings in DeWitt Township court this afternoon, all were charged with trespass and disorderly conduct and served with protection orders banning them from contacting Earl A. Evans, Mission Support Group Commander of the National Guard.

Four of the protesters were released on their own recognizance pending trial and the rest are being held in jail on bonds ranging from \$250 to \$1000.

Ed Kinane of Syracuse, Mike Perry, Dan Burgevin, Andrea Levine all of Trumansburg NY, were released. Elliot Adams of Sharon Springs New York, Judy Bello of Webster, NY, , Mark Colville of New Haven, CT, Paul Frazier of Syracuse, Clare Grady of Ithaca NY, Mary Anne Grady Flores of Ithaca, Martha Hennessey of Vermont, Brian Hynes of The Bronx, Rae Kramer of Syracuse, Bonnie Mahoney of Buffalo NY, James Ricks of Ithaca NY, Mark Scibilia-Carver of Trumansburg NY, and Paki Wieland of Northhampton, Mass are still in custody as of late this afternoon.

See [Syracuse.com](#) coverage and [Common Dreams](#) coverage.