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Three arrested delivering 'citizens' Order of Protection' to New York drone base

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

NCR Today

Two Yale divinity students and a Catholic Worker were arrested at Hancock Field Air Base in Syracuse, N.Y., on Monday while attempting to deliver what they described as a "citizens' Order of Protection."

The three activists said they were issuing the order, typically used in circumstances of domestic abuse, on behalf of Afghan civilians terrorized by drones remotely launched from the military air base.

Hancock is home of the 174th Attack Wing of the Air National Guard and a hub for the remote piloting of Reaper drones used in air strikes in Afghanistan. The base has been the scene of multiple protests since 2010, many of them coordinated by the Upstate New York Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars.

A statement from the activists said:

"Advent's austere themes of Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell challenge us to see, to mourn and to resist the forces of death that hold our age in their power, forces that murder children overseas and on our own streets for the sake of corporate profit and the military-industrial complex. We are engaged in this action because we believe we can only see Christian hope when we confront the reality of bombs being dropped on children by remote-controlled killing machines."

Since Oct. 25, 2012, more than 50 people have been arrested at Hancock and issued Orders of Protection prohibiting them from being in the environs of particular military officers as well as the military base, according to members of the anti-drone campaign. In their press release about Monday's protest, they report:

The local DeWitt Town Court has issued these Orders at the request of the Hancock colonels. Such Orders suppress the First Amendment right of all those arrested to petition their government for redress of grievances at Hancock.

The grievance is that Hancock's 174th weaponized Reaper drones over Afghanistan, engage in the targeted killing of innocent victims including hundreds of children.

The three people arrested were Creighton Chandler and Gregory Williams of Yale Divinity School and Mark Colville of the Amistad Catholic Worker in New Haven, Conn.

All three are charged with obstruction of governmental administration, trespass and disorderly conduct. Colville faces an additional charge of criminal contempt for violating an Order of Protection issued against him after his participation in an Oct. 25, 2012, protest at Hancock. All three were released on personal recognizance and are scheduled to return to the DeWitt town court next week.

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