

Grandma Drone Protester Begins 6 Month Sentence

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hancock Drone Resister Grandma Goes to Jail

DeWitt, NY, Jan 19 Following a 1/2 hour press conference, Mary Anne Grady Flores, a mother, grandmother and daughter, proprietor of a small Latino catering business, was sentenced to 6 months in jail, then handcuffed and taken from the courtroom to Jamesville Correctional Facility in East Syracuse. In December, Judge Miller of the Onondaga County Court of Appeals heard arguments for an appeal of her previous conviction for violating the terms of an Order of Protection issued in 2012 on behalf of the base commander at Hancock National Guard Base to her and other protesters to keep them away from the base property.

A week ago, on January 12, Grady Flores was informed by her attorney, Lance Salisbury, that he had received a letter saying that her conviction had been upheld but her sentence would be reduced from a year in jail to 6 months. The letter also re-affirmed the conviction and sentence of Grady Flores and 11 others in a January 2013 trial on charges of disorderly conduct for the 2012 protest where they had blocked the access road to the base. Since they had completed their sentences, the decision was moot except in so far as it affirmed Grady Flores' Order of Protection issued in conjunction with sentencing.

The system is waiting for a signal. The case of Mary Anne Grady Flores, who was convicted of violating her order of protection by standing in the public highway in front of the Hancock Base taking pictures of a protest, is now being appealed to the New York State Supreme Court. Only after Grady

Flores' arrest, Base personnel informed protesters that the Base property extends to the center of the thoroughfare, more than 100 feet from the 10 foot high chain link fence that surrounds the compound. . Despite ongoing civil resistance at Hancock Base, no other protester has been convicted of violating an order of protection, an instrument designed to protect victims of domestic violence and witnesses subject to intimidation

This is a critical case for civil liberties and freedom of speech. The right to petition the government for redress is guaranteed by the first amendment of the constitution.

The Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars was formed in 2009 when Hancock Air National Guard Base, now home of the 174th Attack Wing and a center for Reaper Drone piloting and training, became one of the first drone support bases in the US. Since 2011, there have been 160 arrests of nonviolent anti-drone protesters at Hancock. Since 2012, the courts handed down orders of protection to every protester until the Grady Flores case was appealed. Grady Flores is the 2nd protester to be sentenced to more than 2 weeks in jail. The first was a 79 year old WWII Vet, a retired school teacher and lifelong advocate for peace and justice.

Since 2002, drone strikes have killed 5,000 people, at least 1/4 of them civilians, in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. There are no good statistics for drone strikes in Afghanistan beyond the fact that the majority of airstrikes there have been drone strikes, which would indicate a higher total than anywhere outside Afghanistan, which is a declared war-zone. Civilian deaths are likely under-counted because methods of identifying 'militants' are poorly defined and self-referential.

Resistance continues at Hancock and drone bases around the country. For more information on Drone Warfare and resistance to drone warfare at Hancock Air National Guard Base: <http://upstatedroneaction.org>
