

Press Release for Day of Atonement Actions

Ban Killer Drones, Upstate Drone Action, October 3, 2021

Just two weeks ago, several online journals published an article by Brian Terrell, a Catholic Worker from Maloy, Iowa, entitled *"No, the Longest War in U.S. History is Not Over"*.

In it, Brian pointed out the significance of October 7, 2001. On this day, in 2001, the United States began a 20-year long war against Afghanistan and initiated the so-called U.S. global *"War on Terror"*.

Brian believes that October 7th needs to be remembered especially in light of President Biden's pledge to hunt down people anywhere in the world who are viewed by the U.S. government as threats. Biden said: *"We will not forgive. We will not forget. We will hunt you down and make you pay"*. His threat is based on the U.S. use of weaponized drones to kill anyone, at anytime, anywhere in the world.

We, as members of the Ban Killer Drones network, propose to observe October 7, 2021 as a *"A Day of Atonement"*, a day to repent for the war crimes of our government and military in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere around the world.

Emblematic of those crimes is the August 29th U.S. revenge drone attack in Kabul that killed ten civilians.

As U.S. citizens whose tax dollars went into buying the MQ-9 Reaper drone that made that attack, and the missile it fired, the blood of Zemari Ahmadi and his three children, Zamir, 20, Faisal, 16, and Farzad, 10; Ahmadi's cousin Naser, 30; the children of Ahmadi's brother Romal: Arwin, 7, Benyamin, 6, and Hayat, 2; and two 3-year-old girls, Malika and Somaya is on our hands.

On Thursday, October 7th, we will gather, and we urge all those reading this to gather, at places of worship at 11am to call for a real end to the 20 years of U.S. terror against the people of Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. We urge a ban on weaponized drones and an end to any "*Over the Horizon*" airstrikes against Afghanistan and any other country. We will also call on our religious leaders to speak out clearly for peace, ending what has too often been a tragic, enabling silence from faith leaders over the 20 years.

Organize as best you can on such short notice. Having talking points for the media is key to any action. Call the press multiple times before the date. Television staffs need to get their copy edited for the evening sound bites. Help them succeed. Thank them.

Here are some talking points:

- 1) 10/7 was the start of 20 years of U.S. terror against the people of Afghanistan and the Middle East and elsewhere.

- 2) The fiasco of the 20-year occupation of Afghanistan that was exposed with the U.S. departure from that tortured nation has also exposed the mistake religious leaders made in supporting the war and "supporting the troops".

- 3) President Biden has vowed to continue drone attacks under the banner of "*Over the Horizon*"—continued illegal immoral assassinations and more generalized attacks. It appears that possibly 90% of those killed by weaponized drones have been other than those who were targeted. We urge religious leaders to call for an end to the use of weaponized drones, the illegal "*Over the Horizon*" and the U.S. vigilantism that it represents.

- 5) U.S. military contractors are eager to make China our enemy. Now is the time for religious leaders **not** to be silent. It is time for them to call for diplomatic

responses to China and to oppose a U.S. military build-up in Asia.

Bring signs and flyers, and, if possible, posters showing the photos and the names of the members of the Ahmadi family killed by the August 29 U.S. drone attack, to places of worship in your community.

See this video: In Memory of the victims of the U.S. Drone Strike in Kabul, September 29, 2021

Read Jack Gilroy's article on Covert Action: Blessed be the Warmakers? Why Post-9/11 American Religious Leaders Must Atone

ATTACHMENTS:

Day of Atonement Letter to Pastors

Day of Atonement Planned Actions