

Statement Margriet Bos

10th June 2020

Court of Cochem, Germany

I've told you a little about myself before. I am not a special person. I am just a human being. I don't own the truth.

I can't tell if a few years from now I'd do the same thing again.

I don't regret entering the airbase because I was hoping to create a frustration for a place where death and destruction are being prepared. It was the right step for me. I acted from my conscience and conviction and had the intention to do the right thing and I acted nonviolently.

In recent years, I have become increasingly convinced that all life on earth is connected. Not only do all people form one big human family, we are connected to nature in the same intimate way. Although the living world can do well without people, the other way around is certainly not possible. (Although the human species is the only one who is hardly aware of this, I believe...). In fact, without us, forests, oceans and rivers would probably not be in such a terrible state.

The connection, I think, comes from the fact that we all have the same creator, who creates from an infinite love and enjoys beauty and joy.

That's why it seems to me that only love can help us forward. Love creates space. Love celebrates diversity. And from this comes that no human being has the right to kill or threaten another human being, whoever this human being may be. And planning to kill people [is] exactly what happens at Büchel Air Base, and that's why I tried to disrupt the normal course of events there and draw attention to it.

The production, preparation, threat or use of nuclear weapons in any way goes against the power of love from which and for which we were created. Allow me to briefly explain the problem with nuclear weapons.

In the process of producing nuclear weapons, all means are allowed to obtain the necessary minerals. People are being ~~expropriated~~ [expelled] from their land, and their sacred sites dishonoured; drinking water is being seriously polluted, making people sick and disrupting ecosystems. [The process] sows death and destruction, already in the first stage of building these immoral weapons. In the factories where atomic bombs are built, the number of sick workers is exceptionally high. Working with the raw materials and processing them spoils nature AND mankind, even before the weapons are ready and used as weapons. The threat -- mentioned as the most important means of having nuclear weapons -- sows fear and distrust and builds walls between people. It [the threat] is a major impediment to resolving conflicts without violence or threat of violence. It puts constant pressure on international relations.

Finally, there is the actual deployment of atomic bombs -- a weapon that makes no distinction between soldiers and civilians. Everyone is hit in one big blow. And then decades later in smaller big waves of destruction.

On 6 August 1945, the world saw the devastating power of nuclear weapons. Relief is virtually impossible, [unavailable] because of the scale of destruction. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki, even today, 75 years later, the effects of the nuclear attacks are still being felt. According to the Red Cross, 390,000 people are still struggling daily with the aftermath of the nuclear attacks on Japan.

The atomic bombs lying on Büchel exceed the force of the bombs that fell on Japan many times over. Not to mention the countless tests in which radiation -- with its sickening effect and destruction also -- took place and people died. In addition, all released radiation affects ecosystems and people for a long time. A chain of death. Nothing but death.

The oceans of money invested in the development, manufacture, and maintenance of nuclear weapons are taken from things that benefit us as human beings.

How much easier would the road to sustainable, nonviolent peace be if we harnessed these resources for diplomacy, the cultivation of connection and peace, education in nonviolent communication, and a fairer distribution of the good we get from this earth?

These weapons of mass destruction are too big for us humans. They don't fit us. We can't oversee the disastrous consequences. None of us, including world leaders who currently control them. They're inhuman, unmanageable, immoral and illegal, according to human and divine law.

Although you, judge Zimmermann, have heard it several times and this will not be the last time this is said, I would like to mention here for the sake of completeness that the international Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968 is violated by the presence of atomic bombs on Büchel. According to this treaty, the US is not allowed to have nuclear weapons in Germany (Art. II) and Germany is not allowed to receive nuclear weapons from the US (Art. I).

The Geneva Conventions prohibit indiscriminate attacks on non-combatants, attacks on neutral states and damage to the environment that lasts longer than the conflict. The Hague Peace Agreement prohibits any use of poison or poisonous weapons. Both Germany and the US are part of all these treaties.

Finally, humanitarian law of war is violated in many ways when the use of nuclear weapons is considered. These include the principle of military necessity and humanity, the principle of differentiation of purpose, proportionality, humanitarian access and extensive, long-term and serious damage to the natural environment.

Because nuclear weapons cannot be used without violating these binding international treaties and

more importantly, **because** they violate the deepest being of us as humanity, and **because** Germany and the U.S. at Büchel Air Base are preparing and planning a war with nuclear weapons that would violate international treaties, and **because** the Nuremberg Charter and Principles hold everyone responsible for intervening when war crimes are planned, even if this is done by governments, **therefore**, I believe that in the case of the illegal conduct at Büchel Air Base, my actions were not civil disobedience but my civic duty, a legal obligation and an attempt to prevent crime.

I want to go back to the love I was talking about before, which is leading for me. It also led me to take action in a way that I did not harm anyone on July 15, 2018.

Someone who is an example to me in the power and scope of love is Jesus Christ, the man who, for his words and acts of nonviolent love, was tried and executed by the state and religious authorities of his time. What he did, he did not do to be disobedient to the law, but because he remained obedient to the God of nonviolent love, justice, and peace -- regardless of the consequences for him personally.

He inspired millions of people, including, for example, Dorothy Day, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. People who -- like me -- didn't have a fixed this-is-the-right-way in mind, but a vision of where we can go, if we want to get closer to a world where man and nature can live in peace and space.

I don't dare to compare myself to them, but that's how I try to live.

It is simple (but not necessarily easy!): Either we choose more love, peace and justice, or we don't.

Every step we take takes us in a certain direction.

If it turns out later that I shouldn't have taken this step, I hope to have the courage to adjust my course. In the same way, every person has to make that decision. And later you will make a decision about me, about us.

I don't have much power or influence. But I have more privileges and freedoms than many others, and I try to use them, for example, for nature, which has no legal status but is a [innocent] ~~mere~~less victim of the existence of nuclear weapons. Power is very tricky. It changes you before you know it. It's hard to resist. And relinquishing power is even harder.

The balance of power in the world is skewed -- at every level where we humans relate to each other.

But I don't agree with the status quo and I refuse to accept it. No state has the right to lay such a huge threat as having an atomic bomb on the rest of the world, superpower or not. And no one has the right to cooperate with such states.

I'm just a human being, and I don't have much power. But I believe that my actions and the actions of every human being can have great effects. That's another reason I entered Büchel

Air Base: Hoping to draw attention to the suffering being prepared there. And I will not remain silent as long as I believe that things can be done differently. That's why I went to Büchel Air Base, and that's why I asked you to hear me today -- because I'm hoping that we can do it differently as people, that a world without nuclear weapons and without violence is possible.

And if I can't anymore, for whatever reason, others will take my place -- because we are made to live together in peace, without the threat of violence, to enjoy all the good that is on this earth.

I have no intention of appealing your ruling. Though I'm very happy that others are doing their utmost to take all the possible legal paths to justice. Should you decide to sentence me, I would much rather prefer to not pay the fine.

I realize that it is easy to look at my case from just a regional perspective, with just the facts in mind, and that -- you will say -- "What is or isn't on that base doesn't matter. You had no right to be there."

As far as I'm concerned, the perspective is global and universal: What I'm allowed to do, trying to prevent evil without hurting anyone else, everyone should be allowed to do. And what I'm not allowed to do, threatening a human life, no one should be allowed to do.

I'm grateful that you listened to me today. And I wish you peace and all the best.