

## **A Brief Summary of the Faslane 365 Yearlong Blockade**

Since 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 thousands of people from throughout the UK, ten European countries, and as far away as Japan have protested at Faslane against Trident, Britain's nuclear weapons system. There have been over 180 days of presence and nearly a thousand people arrested for blockading and charged with Breach of the Peace. Most of these were held overnight, sometimes for up to 36 hours, only to be released the next day with all charges dropped. Only 51 cases have actually been prosecuted. Thus far only eight trials have been completed with six people found guilty and two acquitted. Four cases have been dropped part-way through. Fines have ranged from £100 to £500.

The 125 autonomous participating groups have sought to apply critical public pressure for the disarmament of Britain's nuclear weapons and to demonstrate the range of serious concerns – from human rights to climate change – that people in the real world consider to be the vital challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These groups included, among many others, environmentalists like Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, faith groups including Buddhists, Quakers and Christians, Unity! the union of asylum seekers, human rights campaigners, artists, acclaimed writers, musicians and actors, peoples' choirs, clowns, groups of professionals such as teachers, lawyers and health professionals, and Elected Representatives including Scottish Councillors and Parliamentarians from Holyrood, Westminster, Wales, Europe, and Holland.

Blockaders have used diverse, creative tactics. They have sat in the road, linked arms, superglued hands together and to the gate, "locked-on" with carabiners inside sections of plastic and steel pipe and even a concrete filled barrel which police had to cut through with a jackhammer. Base traffic has been disrupted for up to six hours at a time. Activists have sat atop tripods in the gateway and road so MOD had to erect scaffolding to remove them. One group scaled the fence while others rode bicycles in through the gate triggering the 'bandit alarm' so that the base was locked down.

Greenpeace blockaded Trident in its port by anchoring the Arctic Sunrise across the sea gate until police cut the anchor to remove her. Fifty University lecturers and students held a seminar in the gateway. There were solemn religious services such as Quaker meetings, Buddhist meditation, a candlelit Christmas vigil and a service by the Bishop of Reading, in mitre and vestments, who led the congregation to block the gateway. Several theological colleges held a service ending in a blockade.

In a moving testimony ten Japanese including survivors of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki laid peace cranes across the gateway and some locked on through large sections of bamboo. There were musical and theatrical performances, and many groups engaged in colourful and humorous actions. Spaniards poured paint over themselves and Swiss dressed as cows. There has been a Tea Party, a Silent Disco, a blockade by bananas in tiny tinfoil lock-ons, and a Faslane Highland Games with a Tug of Peace across the gateway. Blockaders have ranged in age from 13 to 89.

Faslane 365 will culminate in a Big Blockade on 1st October 2007, in which many of the groups and individuals who have been part of Faslane 365 over the year will join together (with some who haven't made it to Faslane yet this year) to celebrate the year and renew our commitment to seeing Trident banished from Scotland and a nuclear-free world.