



# Global Campaign on Military Spending (GCOMS)

## Statement on the occasion of the 2018 Global Days of Action on Military Spending

### April 14<sup>th</sup> – May 3<sup>rd</sup>

The **world is over-armed and peace is under-funded**. This claim is now more valid than ever. One of the most urgent tasks of all nations during the next years is to **reduce military expenditure**. Climate change and anthropogenic planet warming is a gigantic problem that will have devastating effects on a majority of the world's population. Strategies that are spoiling the planet while seeking benefits for a very few can only be supported by violence, and violence is usually conducted through armies and enhanced by militarism and military spending. War business, powered by many Military-Industrial Complexes, is based on arms trade and power structures that lead to civilian deaths and devastating conflicts, preying on the planet and actively contributing to climate change. Actions to **reduce climate change effects** require a massive reduction in military spending and renewed efforts to use negotiation to solve conflicts.

The world is becoming crazy. Military spending in 2016 amounted to \$1.68 trillion. Many governments are planning increases in military budgets together with cuts in health, education and development cooperation. The news on **military budget increase proposals** in the U.S. is alarming: the Congress recently approved a \$ 165 billion increase in military spending over a two year period. Meanwhile, many other states like Australia, New Zealand, France, UK, Germany, Cameroon, Kenya, Nigeria, Spain, Italy and others are following U.S. guidelines without any discussion. Wars in Syria and Yemen are being fuelled by the arms trade while North Korea is being used to justify a new arms race. Japan's Prime Minister Abe is attempting to amend the war-renouncing Article 9 of their constitution. The European Union will (for the first time in its history) invest money in the near future to develop new weapon systems. This may also trigger an arms race in regions like **Africa and Middle East**, where significant European exports are directed. We are witnessing massive increases in military spending (including on nuclear weapons, in spite of the Ban Treaty) by the great powers, increasing the danger of disastrous wars. This comes at a time when the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists have moved the hands of their Doomsday Clock to 2 minutes to midnight, the closest it has been to global annihilation since the Hiroshima and Nagasaki A-bombings.

The **Global Campaign on Military Spending (GCOMS)** is an international campaign founded in December 2014 and promoted by the [International Peace Bureau](#) and national campaigns around the world. The aim of the campaign is to push governments to invest money in the [UN 2030 SDGs](#) like health, education, employment and climate change, as well as peace-making, rather than the military. The GCOMS also incorporates the Global Days of Action on Military Spending (GDAMS), which is now in its 8th year. GDAMS 2018 will group a wide range of actions worldwide between April 14 and May 3<sup>rd</sup> to **raise public awareness that military spending must be redirected to human needs**.

The idea of **masculinity has always been at the root of violence and militarization**, and **gender issues are at the heart of GCOMS**. Because the very best indicator and predictor of a state's peacefulness is not wealth, inequalities or religion, but how well its girls and women are treated, [according to Valerie Hudson et al.](#) Sustainable development, the welfare of the world and the cause of peace requires the maximum participation of women on equal terms with men in all fields.

Weapons and arms trade fuel many conflicts worldwide, and they end up generating **refugees** who are not then accepted in rich countries. Instead of focusing for example on **poverty, energy injustice** and on the needs of individuals, northern countries insist on investing in the military, stopping refugees and fighting terrorism with violent measures which worsen the situation in many countries **in Africa and other regions**. They issue nice statements on poverty and development aid, but at the same time are also signing arms trade and military cooperation agreements. Moreover, instead of tackling the underlying **causes of terrorism**, governments use terrorism to justify military spending increases. We must oppose such hypocrisy.

Redirecting funds from the military to human needs will only succeed through **education and activism**. And, as already mentioned in 1992 and 2017 [by two strong and relevant groups of scientists](#), success in our global environmental endeavour requires a great reduction in violence and war. Resources now devoted to the preparation and conduct of war, amounting to over \$1.68 trillion annually, should be **diverted to meet the new challenges**. As a first step, **we call for a 10% reduction of military spending in all countries and alliances, including NATO**, and for a redirection of these funds to human needs and [the UN Sustainable Development Goals](#).

We need to involve even more citizens and organizations in an open and robust debate on the **counter-productive results of military expenditure**. More than ever, we urge you to reach out to new partners to work on the on-going [Global Campaign on Military Spending](#), and to make the Global Days of Action on Military Spending a great success!