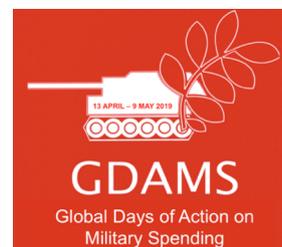


Global Campaign on Military Spending (GCOMS)
Launching the 2019 Global Days of Action on Military Spending
April 13 – May 9, 2019
Demilitarize: Invest in People's Needs!



The current context of international relations shows an increase in militarism with an accompanying and significant rise in world military spending. According to data released by SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) in May 2018, annual military spending has continued to increase by 1.1% in real terms. This expenditure has also increased in regions with a high level of conflict, such as the Middle East. According to SIPRI, 7 out of the 10 countries in the world with the highest military burden are in the Middle East. The rise in militarism both fuels and is fuelled by the arms trade, which continues the upward trend that began in the early 2000s as shown by the volume of international arms transfers during 2013-2017, which was 10% higher than during 2008-2012.

Moreover, the Trump government has increased military spending by US \$ 54,000 million; has launched attacks on Somalia, Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan, has renewed threats to North Korea and Venezuela, and has reinforced its military presence in the China Seas and elsewhere, while expanding US bases in the Pacific. In addition, it has withdrawn from the Iran nuclear deal and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. At the same time, the Australian government has announced its intention to become one of the world's top 10 arms exporters, moving up from its current position at number 20 and has allocated \$ 3.8 billion for subsidies to Australian arms manufacturers. This is a trend also visible in many other countries including Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, India, Israel and others.

In Europe, the draft European Defence Action Plan authorizes for the first time the allocation of EU funds to common defence programmes and has earmarked 90 million euros over three years (30 million in 2019) for research and development in the military and security field, **with security becoming increasingly militarized**. The proposal of the European Commission includes financing defence industries with 51,000 million euros between 2017-2027. We also observe the worrying trend of arms companies penetrating universities by providing research funding for military purposes.

We are, therefore, living in a time of military escalation and increasing political tension around the world. As evidence of this, the US and NATO are demanding its member countries to increase their military spending up to 2% of GDP, generating tensions with States outside NATO. This should be **money for social spending and human needs, not for the military!**

Global military spending already accounts for 2.3% of global GDP. Governments are allocating resources to the military that should be used to ensure that people can effectively enjoy their economic and social rights as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Charter of the United Nations, as well as human rights in general. Many peace and development organizations estimate that a 10% reduction per year and per country of the resources invested in the arms and defence sectors could enable the achievement of the main elements established by the United Nations in its 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Militarism has serious impacts on people's lives, generating major risks to their safety and well-being. According to the latest UNHCR report, there are 65,6 million displaced persons, of which 40,3 million are displaced in their own country, 22,5 million are refugees in other states and 2,8 million are asylum seekers. These are **persons displaced as a result of conflicts in countries like** Syria, Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, as well as several African and Latin American countries.

Nowadays, **climate change is the most pressing global threat**. Even the World Economic Forum agrees with this, yet politicians continue to listen to the 1 percenters rather than the vast majority. Climate change is a direct consequence of global power and mass consumption. It is the main threat to people in the Global South, as well as to the planet itself and its diversity.

The **Global Campaign on Military Spending (GCOMS)** is an international campaign founded in December 2014 and promoted by the International Peace Bureau. The aim of the campaign is to convince governments to invest money in the sectors of health, education, employment and climate change rather than the military. We urgently need to **build human security structures worldwide and at the same time put a stop to war and destruction**.

We need to involve an increasing number of citizens and organizations in an open and robust debate on the **counter-productive results of military expenditure**. More strongly 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! **Move the funds from the military to peace!**

Demilitarize: Invest in People's Needs!