



# ‘Reset for the 21<sup>st</sup> century’: The Global Military and the United Nations

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A co-operative that supports and initiates creative, campaign-driven projects that advance the global social justice agenda

## Contents

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Introduction .....	3
<b>Key Takeaways .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Vision .....	4
Recommendations.....	4
<b>THE BIG PICTURE.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Three Questions to the Top 20 military spenders .....	9
New UNFCCC topic: Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence.....	10
The UN @ 100 in 2045: Celebrating a renewed collective 'human safety' compact? .....	11
<b>Value for money? Global military spending, UN funding and the SDGs .....</b>	<b>12</b>
In search of value for money.....	13
Fund the SDGs gap.....	14
One framework for military budget reductions: Introducing the Five Percent proposal .....	15
<b>The global military, climate change &amp; knowledge gap.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Calculating the contribution of the military to climate change .....	18
The time has come for this to be called out at UN level. Why? .....	19
<b>SDG 16 'peaceful societies' must address runaway military spending .....</b>	<b>21</b>
SDG 16 wide range of targets but only one reference to arms trade .....	22
SDG 16 MUST tackle runaway military spending for the following reasons .....	22
<b>Security Council high-level open debate: 'Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence' .....</b>	<b>23</b>
Context: Climate Change and the Security Council.....	23
What is Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence? .....	25
High-level open debate on Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence .....	26
Increasing momentum on the Security Council .....	26
'Don't bring a speech, bring a plan' .....	27



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

In December 2020, to mark the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Paris Agreement, Tipping Point North South announced its latest initiative: Transform Defence for Sustainable Human Safety.

It launched with the publication of two reports: *Indefensible: The true cost of the global military to our climate and human security* and *Global Military Spending, Sustainable Human Safety and Value for Money*.<sup>1</sup>

This work grew out of TPNS's *Five Percent Proposal*<sup>2</sup> that argued runaway global military spending was every bit as structurally relevant to international development issues of power imbalance, extreme poverty, displacement and ecological breakdown as debt cancellation, trade, tax and climate justice.

The terrible combined human impact of conflict and climate change on many millions of people in the global south, inevitably meant this work would lead to asking critical questions about how all this impacts on the activity and role of the United Nations (UN).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://transformdefence.org/publication/indefensible/> and <https://transformdefence.org/publication/value-for-money/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://transformdefence.org/the-five-percent-proposal/>

This briefing pulls together the various ways in which the global military as whole – and primarily the top 20 spenders and arms sellers – impact on the SDGs and on climate change.

It explores:

1. **Why the impact of the global military on climate change demands much more attention and scrutiny at UN level.**
2. **Why we need to divert runaway military spending to make up the SDGs funding shortfall.**
3. **How a wider debate on definitions of 'security' and 'defence' is of benefit to the UN and citizens of the world.**
4. **Why a Security Council high level open debate is needed to bring all these inter-related issues together in order to frame an urgent new 21<sup>st</sup> century paradigm for security – that of 'sustainable human safety'.**

In the light of the UN Secretary General's call to launch a reset for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, its recommendations suggest ways to explore a reset in relation to this much overlooked issue and in turn raise ever greater awareness, debate and action.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### VISION

For the international community to

- **Acknowledge** climate change, global health, inequality/poverty reduction and conflict prevention as top priority, inter-related hard defence issues
- **End** the 'Cinderella' status for these extreme threats to our collective human safety
- **Collectively undertake** upending the risk pyramid and
- **Redefine** 'defence' and **repurpose** military spending so as to **transform** defence for sustainable human safety in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- **Place** carbon neutral peace and defence at its heart.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

This briefing offers five key recommendations:

- ❖ Apply rigorous evidence-based value-for-money approaches to military spending
- ❖ Part-fund the \$2-4 trillion SDGs 2021-2030 funding gap from escalating military budgets 2023-30 and beyond
- ❖ Create a new UNFCCC TOPIC 'Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence' and fill the 'Knowledge Gap' across UN and national processes on the global military's greatly under-estimated carbon footprint

- ❖ Make SDG 16 'Peaceful Societies' much more challenging in its remit in relation to the global military and spending
- ❖ Hold a Security Council high-level open debate on the impact of the global military on climate change and under-development and the concept of 'Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence'

### **1. APPLY RIGOROUS EVIDENCE-BASED VALUE-FOR-MONEY APPROACHES TO MILITARY SPENDING**

In the face of immediate and combined human safety threats from climate emergency, pandemic, mass species extinction, conflict, poverty and inequality and the low level of funds allocated to address these clear and present threats, we need more and urgent evidence-based assessments of global military spending and its relevance to sustainable human safety over the coming decades.

For example, the \$2 trillion lifetime cost of the F-35 weapon programme could fund any one of the following:<sup>3</sup>

- Climate finance for 20 years
- Global biodiversity conservation at \$100bn per annum for the next 20 years
- WHO funding at \$2bn per annum for the next 1,000 years
- UN peacekeeping operations at current \$5bn per annum for the next 444 years

### **2. PART-FUND THE SDGS 2021-2030 FUNDING GAP FROM MILITARY BUDGETING 2023-30 AND BEYOND**

We have just 10 years to go before the end of 2015-2030 SDGs cycle. The world's estimated financial needs for achieving the SDGs are between \$5 and \$7 trillion a year. Having found approximately \$3 trillion so far, an extra \$2-4 trillion a year is still yet to be found.<sup>4</sup> There is no question that on grounds of morality as well as security, diverting significant sums from defence budgets to help fill these outstanding SDG commitments is a totally sensible call.

### **3. CREATE A NEW UNFCCC TOPIC AND FILL THE KNOWLEDGE GAP ON MILITARY CARBON FOOTPRINT ACROSS UN AND NATIONAL PROCESSES**

We have collectively and consistently ignored the massive yet unaccounted for historic and present-day responsibility of the world's militaries for climate change, from their day-to-day operational activities to the wars and conflicts of which they are part (and post-conflict carbon burden of reconstruction).

While some nations are aware that the climate change imperative impacts on their military, the solutions on offer are far from adequate.

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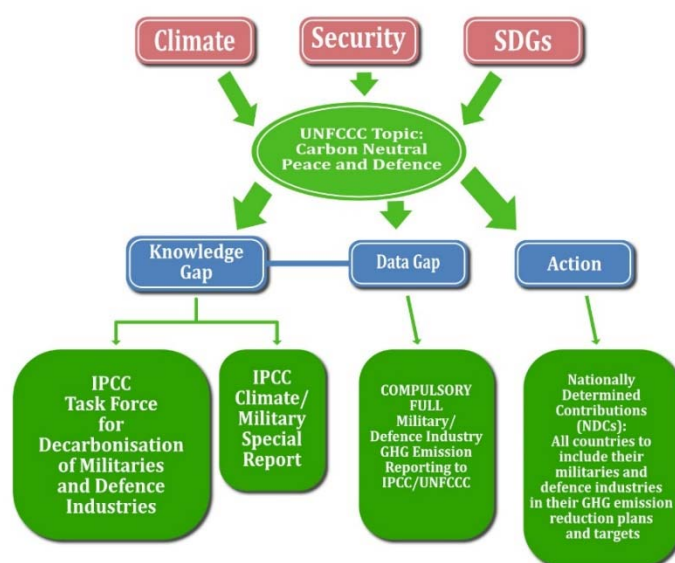
<sup>3</sup> *Global military spending, sustainable human safety and value for money*,  
<https://transformdefence.org/publication/value-for-money/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sustainablegoals.org.uk/filling-the-finance-gap/>



In fact, it is a deliberate choice on the part of those nations, which comprise the world's top military spenders, that the formulation of urgent international treaties on climate change faces one great omission: the problem of the gaping data hole (and hence by extension a serious knowledge gap) concerning the global military carbon footprint and associated environmental and societal impacts. Citing 'national security' as a reason, only a few countries submitted limited and inadequate data on military emissions to the UNFCCC in their annual GHG emissions inventories.<sup>5</sup> The military/defence sector has also been excluded from any IPCC assessment so far, and as a consequence, there has been minimal public debate on the military/defence sector in our march towards a net-zero world.

To address all these we need the following set of actions, illustrated in the flow chart below:



#### 4. SDG 16 'PEACEFUL SOCIETIES' MUST BE MADE STRONGER

SDG 16 needs to go much further in addressing the consequences of runaway military spending and take account of its relationship to

**Power:** Runway military spending is as every bit as central to understanding power, poverty, economic crises and unjust distribution of resources as other structural issues (and civil society campaigns) such as debt, trade, tax, climate change.

**Hypocrisy:** The P5 nations to be called out on this. Approximately 80% of global arms sales are made by the Permanent 5 members of the security council (USA, UK, Russia, China, France) plus Germany<sup>6</sup> – the same nations charged with keeping the peace of the world. All this while the majority of their arms sales go to the global south.

**Waste:** Many of the world's poorest countries and fastest growing economies (both measured in terms of GDP per capita) spend much more on their military than either on education or on

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sgr.org.uk/resources/carbon-footprint-military-sectors-eu>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2021/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-international-arms-transfers-2020>

health; excessive military spending impedes economic development (SDG 8) and significantly impacts on the efforts to reducing poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2) and improving health (SDG 3) and education (SDG 4).

#### 5. SECURITY COUNCIL HIGH LEVEL OPEN DEBATE: 'CARBON NEUTRAL PEACE AND DEFENCE'

We have to upend the risk pyramid, redefine defence and repurpose military spending. Climate change and global health, inequality/poverty reduction and conflict prevention are hard defence issues and in turn, runaway military spending and war/conflict are major contributors to the creation of these conditions in the first place.

We must end the 'Cinderella' status for these extreme threats to our collective human safety, transform defence for sustainable human safety and place carbon neutral peace and defence at the heart of it.

Tipping Point North South (TPNS) is a London based non-profit co-founded in 2009 by former senior debt, trade, tax and climate campaigners. TPNS has co-produced a number of cinema documentaries and high-profile campaign events while developing a number of single issue campaigns in tandem. Transform Defence is now its priority policy/advocacy project.

Transform Defence for Sustainable Human Safety works is TPNS's main advocacy project and works to put sustainable human safety at the heart of 21st century foreign, defence, security and international development policy-making. We must question the limits and deficiencies of 20th century national self-interest if we are to address the greatest threat to our collective survival – runaway climate change. Transform Defence describes the paradigm shift we will need to meet this monumental challenge.



Earth compared to all its water & air.  
(Illustration: Félix Pharand-Deschênes,  
Concept: Adam Nieman.)

## THE BIG PICTURE

**No human, economic or environmental transformation is complete without parallel progressive foreign policy and defence transformation.**

We are in the midst of the sixth mass extinction.

Yet the most socially and economically damaging threat to our collective global security/safety – climate change – is but a poor relation when set alongside other 'conventional' threats.

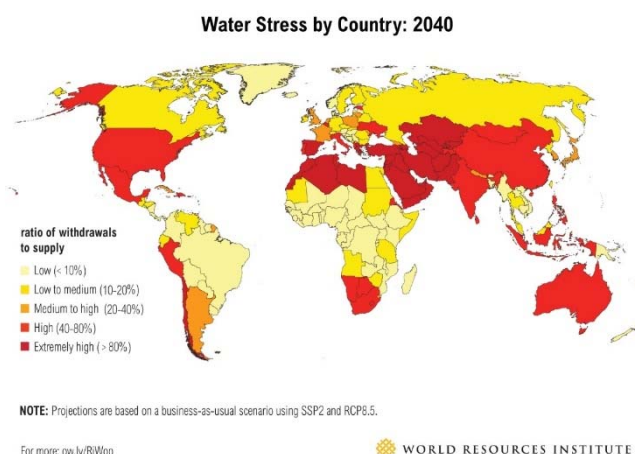
The foreign and defence policies of nations around the world – especially the top 20 nations which allocate large sums to defence spending – are preoccupied with a plethora of adversarial threats on land, air, sea and space; nuclear weapons; cyber weaponry and AI. National budget allocations reflect this. From battlefield to nuclear wasteland; from outer space to deepest ocean. From pilotless planes to robot soldiers, it's all covered.

Except it's not all covered. A suite of other, equally (or more) devastating yet deeply 'unsexy' **hard defence threats** are left in the wings. The scale of climate emergency alone is unprecedented. A total of 28 trillion tonnes of ice have disappeared from the surface of the Earth since 1994, contributing to sea level rises. To put this in context, "every centimetre of sea level rise means about a million people will be displaced from their low-lying homelands."<sup>7</sup> "If we did nothing at all to reduce emissions we could get 5 metres of sea level rise just from Antarctica by 2200."<sup>8</sup>

Climate change and global health are laying bare the magnitude and depth of the desperate state we are in. The post-pandemic global economy, coming not so long after the 2008 crash, will further compound this with ever greater poverty and inequality.

As we try to develop transformative policies – at speed – that address all of these huge challenges, we must not (conveniently) forget to include foreign and defence policy-making since it is profoundly interlocked with all these other issues. In truth, while nations have been busy declaring war/proxy war, cold or hot, on others, we have been led to this point: **we have collectively declared war on ourselves and our planet.**

No F-35 will stop New York City, Alexandria, Shanghai, Amsterdam, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo, Venice, Bangkok, Mumbai and London going under water; no nuclear warhead will solve India and Pakistan's disappearing water-table; no anti-terror AI will stop West Africa's growing desertification.



<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/aug/23/earth-lost-28-trillion-tonnes-ice-30-years-global-warming>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/may/05/antarctica-ice-sheet-melting-global-heating-sea-level-rise-study>





Comparison of impact of sea level rise in the Washington DC after 4°C and 2°C of global heating. The Pentagon building barely escapes being under water after 2°C of global heating. (Climate Central)<sup>9</sup>

Every person, community, society, nation, region needs protection from aggressors and terrorists and it is the job of government to defend its citizens from such threats. These threats need to be in their place, proportionately, alongside much greater but entirely marginalised human security threats such as climate breakdown and pandemic.

And, it would appear, some in the most powerful military might agree.

*“Rosa Brooks, a Counselor to Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in the Obama Administration, suggests the US military’s future leaders agree national security threats are centered on the economy and the environment rather than threatening global powers with massed battalions. She reports a session with majors and lieutenant colonels at the Army’s School of Advanced Military Studies at Fort Leavenworth, where she asked what they saw as the most serious threats facing the US in the next two decades. When she offered North Korea, Iran, or Al Qaeda, no hands went up, Islamic terror more generally elicited only one or two in agreement, along with weapons of mass destruction. The far more popular answers were resource scarcity and conflict driven by climate change alongside global economic collapse. This suggests that many officers must be suffering some existential doubts: the big threats are not ones the military can do much about.”<sup>10</sup>*

### THREE QUESTIONS TO THE TOP 20 MILITARY SPENDERS

The Transform Defence project would pose three questions to the political and military leadership of the global military in all its various forms: NATO, the UN P5, EU CFSP, Gulf States: specifically, the top 20

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.climatecentral.org/news/global-icons-at-risk-from-sea-level-rise-pictures-19633>

<sup>10</sup> *Close the Pentagon: Rethinking National Security for a Positive-Sum World*, Charles Kenny, 2020

military spenders — currently, USA, China, India, Russia, UK, Saudi Arabia, Germany, France, Japan, South Korea, Italy, Australia, Canada, Israel, Brazil, Turkey, Spain, Iran, Poland and Netherlands.<sup>11</sup>

Given that (i) defence budgets largely reflect foreign and security policy priorities and (ii) we are in the midst of the climate emergency and likely repeated pandemics with all the social breakdown that flows from these two colliding, we would like to ask:

- 1) With respect to decarbonisation and your role in having contributed to the climate emergency, what thinking are you doing to reverse big-ticket carbon intensive military expenditure plans in order to release large proportions of our \$2 trillion a year towards different yet equal human safety needs: carbon net-zero social and economic transformation, pandemic surveillance and control, peacekeeping, poverty/inequality reduction, whether national or global and what is the timetable for change?
- 2) Since the climate emergency and COVID-19 combined have painfully shown us that ‘we are all in this together’, when can we expect the bar to be raised and a much needed paradigm shift in modern foreign and defence policy thinking delivered? One that reflects our 21<sup>st</sup>-century human safety reality and by extension, offers greater ‘human safety’ value for money than is the case with current defence thinking and spending.
- 3) Taking on board former Soviet President Gorbachev’s plea for “rethinking the entire concept of security”, and building on 75 years of the United Nations, what new global frameworks need forging that will assist the move from foreign and defence policy predicated on 19th-century geopolitical thinking to one fit-for-purpose in this 21st century? We have one planet, one human family and ten short years before we are lost to catastrophic climate breakdown.

#### NEW UNFCCC TOPIC: CARBON NEUTRAL PEACE AND DEFENCE

Currently, there are 13 UNFCCC Topics: **Action on Climate and SDGs, Adaptation and Resilience, Capacity-building**, Climate Finance, Climate Technology, **Education & Youth, Gender, Land Use, Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform, Mitigation, Pre-2020 Ambition and Implementation, Science**, Market and Non-Market Mechanisms. Inexplicably, militaries and defence industries are not a part of any of them.

Militaries and defence industries are directly implicated in many of them (in bold), particularly ‘Action on Climate and SDGs,’ ‘Adaptation and Resilience,’ ‘Capacity-building’ and ‘Mitigation.’ As we explain in this briefing, we cannot fully tackle climate emergency and SDGs without properly addressing the role and impact of militaries on climate and SDGs.

This is why we need **Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence** as a suggested new UNFCCC Topic. A net-zero climate-just world cannot be fully realised without Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence. We need our militaries to be fully on board for the carbon neutral future and be accountable for their past actions and damages. It is also of great urgency and importance that we have the corresponding transformation of our out-dated collective foreign, security and defence policies if we are to ensure long-term sustainable human safety.

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<sup>11</sup> *Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2020*, SIPRI, [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/fs\\_2104\\_milex\\_0.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/fs_2104_milex_0.pdf)

## THE UN @ 100 IN 2045:

### CELEBRATING A RENEWED COLLECTIVE 'HUMAN SAFETY' COMPACT?

In 1945, after two devastating world wars, which included the use of the unthinkable- nuclear weapons- we arrived finally at the United Nations.

It was and remains an incredible human achievement. A place where the peoples and nations of the world can come together to work, debate, argue. It does the best it can under the constraints put upon it – notably the clash of national/regional/superpower interests.

And all too often, that's when things fall apart.

But even at this 11th hour, we can do more. We can go further, to build on the human family as embodied by the best of the UN. To do that, we need our leaders –including our military – to think the unthinkable, think different, think the obvious. The UN was the manifestation of the need to find a new way, something better that entailed breaking with the old ways.

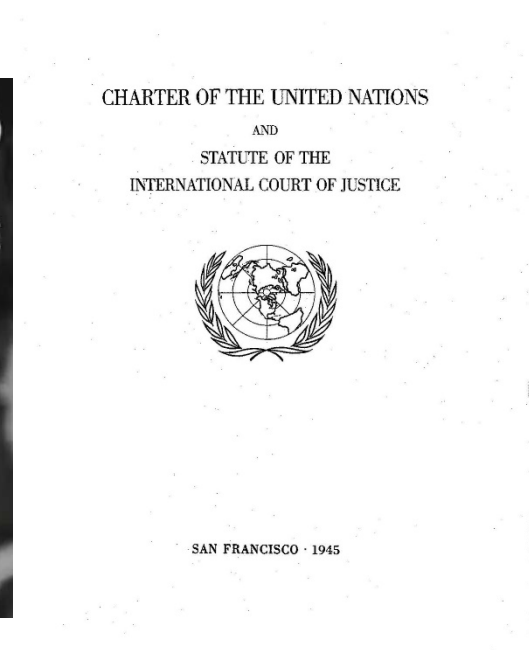
While nations – led by the UN – try to grapple with the climate emergency, the pandemic emergency and the economic emergency that will flow from both (not having yet recovered from the 2007/8 global financial crisis), we cannot give a free pass and exempt from equal transformation the matter of global foreign, security and defence policy.

For it affects everything too.

Can we rise to the 1945 UN challenge and have an even greater transformation in international relations by 2045? A renewed celebration of the human family, coming together with a new compact Sustainable Human Safety with Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence at its heart?



British Prime Minister Clement Attlee speaking on United Nations Charter in 1945.



**Transform Defence for Sustainable Human Safety** works to put sustainable human safety at the heart of 21st century foreign, defence, security and international development policy-making. We must question the limits and deficiencies of 20th century national self-interest if we are to address the greatest threat to our collective survival – runaway climate change. Transform Defence for Sustainable Human Safety describes the paradigm shift we will need to meet this monumental challenge.

Every person, community, society, nation, region needs protection from aggressors and terrorists and it is the job of government to defend its citizens from such threats. But climate chaos and pandemic show us that 'national security' – or rather sustainable human safety – policies need to be drawn from a much wider remit if they are to truly rise to the challenge of combating the greatest threats to our collective human safety. The time has come to place conventional threats alongside the much greater but entirely marginalised human safety threats of climate change and pandemic.

Moreover, a much-needed cost-benefit analysis of present-day defence spending can only move us towards far greater, genuine 'value for money' as we redirect and repurpose military spending from 20th-century 'national security' protection of 'national interests' to 21st-century sustainable human safety needs.

The climate emergency, Covid-19, Black Lives Matter and #MeToo Movement are all demanding an already long overdue social and economic change. A practical, imaginative, brave discussion about redefining and re-making foreign and defence policy such that it is truly fit-for-purpose as well as understanding its role in climate change, pandemic, economic, racial and gender injustice must be an integral part of the system change process.

## VALUE FOR MONEY?

### GLOBAL MILITARY SPENDING, UN FUNDING AND THE SDGS

We have to upend the risk pyramid, redefine defence and repurpose military spending. Climate change and global health, inequality/poverty reduction and conflict prevention are hard defence issues. No more 'Cinderella' status for these threats to our collective human safety.

Why?

- The greatest threats to our collective safety are climate change and pandemic. *Both are exacerbated by poverty, inequality and conflict.* More than half of the countries requiring aid to help deal with the pandemic are already in protracted crises, coping with conflict or natural disasters.
- The Pentagon is but one of many leading defence agencies to categorise climate change as a major security risk – though this is primarily through the lens of militarisation, treating the issue as a traditional national security threat.
- The UK and USA, for example, had categorised pandemic as a Tier One security risk *before* the COVID-19 pandemic – yet left their citizens utterly unprotected in the face of the emerging crisis, resulting in more than half a million unnecessary and *fully preventable* deaths (as proven by the incredibly low death rates in countries such as New Zealand, South Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam).





We need an evidence-based approach and ask are we getting military spending ‘value for money’?

### IN SEARCH OF VALUE FOR MONEY

A TPNS Transform Defence report (2020) looked at various ‘value for money’ comparative examples, including the cost of the Lockheed Martin F-35 weapons system and its estimated global total lifetime cost of \$2 trillion.<sup>12</sup> That \$2 trillion could have funded any one of a number of critical agencies/activities below:

- Climate finance for 20 years
- UN disaster response for the next 400 years
- UN disaster risk reduction for the next 4,000 years
- Global biodiversity conservation at \$100bn per annum for the next 20 years
- WHO funding at \$2bn per annum for the next 1,000 years
- WHO’s COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund for 2,963 years
- Global pandemic surveillance and control at \$8bn per annum for the next 250 years
- Money for 4 years to lift the poorest people in the world above extreme poverty (UBI for the 700 million poorest)
- UN peacekeeping operations at current \$5bn per annum for the next 444 years
- UN peacekeeping at \$15bn per annum for the next 133 year

Looked at in another way, global military spending in 2020 is almost \$2 trillion (\$1,981 billion, SIPRI) – one single year’s worth of world military expenditure would ‘procure’ any of the above, and 20 years’ worth of world military expenditure would procure all of them. Furthermore, **to do all of the above requires \$740bn a year (and \$500bn of this is UBI for 700m people), equating to mere 37% of annual global military spending.**

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<sup>12</sup> *Global military spending, sustainable human safety and value for money*,  
<https://transformdefence.org/publication/value-for-money/>



**RECOMMENDATION: We need more rigorous and widely shared evidence-based assessment of global military spending in the face of immediate combined human safety threats from climate, pandemic, conflict and inequality.**

This F35 case study should raise alarm bells. We should be confidently arguing that, when set alongside conventional threats and the money allocated to them, the 21<sup>st</sup> century set of priorities listed above surely are, *on any and all grounds* of defence, security, safety – of equal – or greater – measure and validity.

## FUND THE SDGS GAP

*"The mandarins who are managing this pandemic are fond of speaking of war. They don't even use war as a metaphor, they use it literally. But if it really were a war, then who would be better prepared than the US? If it were not masks and gloves that its frontline soldiers needed, but guns, smart bombs, bunker busters, submarines, fighter jets and nuclear bombs, would there be a shortage?"*

Arundhati Roy, 'The pandemic is a portal', *Financial Times*, April 2020

- In 2018 (the latest year available), the public expenditure (by national governments and state-owned enterprises) on climate change amounted to \$261 billion, 14% of what they spent on defence \$1822 billion, a ratio of 7:1.<sup>13</sup>
- A 2015 report by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network found that achieving the SDGs in health, education, agriculture and food security, access to modern energy, water supply and sanitation, telecommunications and transport infrastructure, ecosystems, and emergency response and humanitarian work (SDGs 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14 and 15), including additional sums to allow for climate change mitigation and adaptation, would require further spending from public sources of \$760–\$885 billion a year between 2015–30 (2013 prices).<sup>14</sup> This amounts to 46–54% of world military spending in 2015.
- In a 2018 study, it is estimated that if the UN had invested \$200 billion in peacekeeping operations with strong mandates during the period 2001–2013, major armed conflict would have been reduced by up to two-thirds (relative to a scenario with no peacekeeping operation) and 150,000 lives would have been saved. The actual budget over these 13 years was \$59 billion. The \$200 billion scenario is indeed a major increase on \$59 billion, but this larger commitment would decline over time as peacekeeping missions go on to significantly reduce current and future risk of conflict. The researchers conclude that "UN peacekeeping is clearly a cost-effective way of increasing global security."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.climatepolicyinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Updated-View-on-the-2019-Global-Landscape-of-Climate-Finance.pdf>; <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2019/world-military-expenditure-grows-18-trillion-2018>

<sup>14</sup> <http://unsdsn.org/resources/publications/sdg-investment-needs>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/700203>

**The current SDGs are short by \$2-4 trillion** and the push is on to try and get the private sector to step up its contribution. But still, the great majority of SDGs funding is public.

On many levels, it makes complete sense to be considering yet one more area of state support: redirecting a significant percentage of military budgets to other, equally important yet profoundly underfunded human safety needs: climate change and mass species extinction; disaster risk reduction; global human health; conflict prevention and peacekeeping; growing inequality.

We have 10 years to go before the end of 2015-2030 SDGs cycle. The world's estimated financial needs for achieving the SDGs are between \$5 and \$7 trillion a year. Having found approximately \$3 trillion so far, an extra \$2-\$4 trillion a year is still yet to be found.<sup>16</sup> There is no question that on grounds of morality as well as security, diverting significant sums from defence budgets to help fill these outstanding SDG commitments is a totally sensible call.

**RECOMMENDATION: Part-fund the SDGs \$2-4 trillion gap from escalating military budgets 2023-2030 and beyond.**

### **ONE FRAMEWORK FOR MILITARY BUDGET REDUCTIONS: INTRODUCING THE FIVE PERCENT PROPOSAL**

The TPNS Five Percent campaign proposal<sup>17</sup> grew out of the conviction that runaway military spending should be regarded as a 'structural' campaign issue by international development NGOs, working alongside partners in the global south and North America. We are fast approaching \$2 trillion p/a on global military spending, not including the (long-term) 'costs' of military operations and wars (ie veterans, pollution, environmental and infrastructure destructions, etc). It is doubly scandalous that in these times of climate emergency, pandemic and austerity, nations are increasing military budgets.



By joining the ranks of debt cancellation and tax justice, military spending savings could be regarded as yet one more significant 'new' revenue stream, redirecting the funds captured to serving the needs of the global community.

Inevitably, definitions of 'defence' are ever more central to this proposal since the question of whose interests are really served by the ever-increasing global military expenditure is at the heart of this matter. Ultimately, it fundamentally challenges us to see military spending as every bit as central to understanding power, poverty, economic collapse, unjust distribution of resources no different from, indeed complementary to, structural campaigns such as debt, trade, tax, climate change and most recently the so-called 'war on drugs'. It is not an adjunct to any of these issues – it is implicated in each and every one of them.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.sustainablegoals.org.uk/filling-the-finance-gap/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://transformdefence.org/publication/the-five-percent-campaign-2013-report/>

## THE 5% FORMULA

The 5% formula is a two-part mechanism to achieve major, year-on-year cuts to global military spending over 10 years and beyond. It is a long-term, sustainable formula that works for every country.

**The first decade calls on the top 20 military spenders** (accounting for 85% of \$1.9 trillion world spending)<sup>18</sup> to cut their military spending absolutely by 5% each year for a decade. This equates to compound cut of 40% to global military spending over the decade, back to mid-1990s spending levels ie \$1 trillion dollars, the lowest in recent history ('lowest' still being far too high). (NOTE: It would also, by extension, result in significant cuts to military greenhouse gas emissions.) The sum saved over this first decade of absolute cuts would deliver an estimated \$760 billion to be redirected to core urgent human and environmental needs.

**After the first 10 years, we call upon all nations to adopt the 5% threshold rule to sustainably restrain the global military spending** – no country allows any increase in military spending to outstrip economic growth. Most economies grow less than 3% annually; this effectively translates as 2% annual reduction to their military spending.

**For example:** 0% economic growth = 5% cut to annual military spend; 2% growth = 3% cut to annual military spend; 5% growth = no increase; 7% growth = only 2% increase on annual military spend. *Most economies grow less than 3% annually; this effectively translates as 2% annual reduction to their military spending.* These savings are then divided equally to fund both domestic and international needs.

**NOTE:** The 5% Formula is not a call for a one-off absolute cut. It is also not about a call for say, an annual 10% cut to a given defence budget in any year without a baseline since any supposed redirected saving could be nullified by an even bigger increase (say 12%) to the size of the baseline defence budget. The 5% formula creates the means to drive spending down year on year. Lastly, 5% formula is not about absolute year on year percentage cuts with the aim of zero military spending. Whilst it's unrealistic to think we will get to zero military spending, nevertheless, the 10% calls by IPB and others, set the bar high.

## FIVE PERCENT FORMULA SAVINGS

After a decade of applying the Five Percent Formula (a mere 5% annual cut over 10 years), annual global military spending will be \$1.19 trillion rather than the current \$1.98 trillion.

The total saving over the first decade amounts to \$790bn. **If the Five Percent Formula is applied across the board now, by the end of the current SDGs cycle (2030), the diverted fund would fill 40% of the SDGs funding gap of \$2 trillion (or 20% if the gap is \$4 trillion).**

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<sup>18</sup> *Trends In World Military Expenditure, 2019*, SIPRI. [https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/fs\\_2020\\_04\\_milex\\_0.pdf](https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-04/fs_2020_04_milex_0.pdf)

## THE GLOBAL MILITARY, CLIMATE CHANGE & KNOWLEDGE GAP

Until now, we have collectively and consistently ignored the massive yet unaccounted for responsibility of the world's militaries for climate change, from their day-to-day operational activities to the wars and conflicts of which they are part. We must start to factor both into climate calculations because we are ignoring them at our peril.

*"Climate change is the defining issue of our time – and we are at a defining moment. We face a direct existential threat. Climate change is moving faster than we are – and its speed has provoked a sonic boom SOS across our world. If we do not change course by 2020, we risk missing the point where we can avoid runaway climate change, with disastrous consequences for people and all the natural systems that sustain us." **UN Secretary-General António Guterres**<sup>19</sup>*

*"The contribution of military activities to the unprecedented series of environmental crises facing the world today has been largely overlooked and, to an extent, willfully ignored." **Abeer Majid, 'The Impact of Militarism on the Environment'**<sup>20</sup>*

*"The United Nations Environment Programme acknowledges that there has been insufficient oversight and scant research at the international and national level on the military's impacts on the natural environment and climate change." **'Demilitarization for Deep Decarbonization,' International Peace Bureau**<sup>21</sup>*

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from day-to-day military activities, overseas bases, and conflict/war, as well as the carbon intensive impact of conflict/war (ie the post-conflict rebuilding), are not included in global emissions totals. This means we have significantly underestimated the total global GHG emissions from *all* human activity so far.

In fact, it is a deliberate choice on the part of those nations, which comprise the world's top military spenders, that the formulation of urgent international treaties on climate change faces one great omission: the problem of the gaping data hole (and hence by extension a serious knowledge gap) concerning the global military carbon footprint and associated environmental and societal impacts. Citing 'national security' as a reason, only a few countries submitted limited and inadequate data on military emissions to the UNFCCC in their annual GHG emissions inventories. The military/defence sector has also been excluded from any IPCC assessment so far, and as a consequence, there has been minimal public debate on the military/defence sector in our march towards a net-zero world. In fact, the general public and indeed many policy makers themselves do not realise we have such a knowledge gap on the role of the global militaries and defence industries in climate change.

No knowledge inevitably means no action. Militaries are also exempted from national greenhouse gas reduction targets – very few, if any, countries have made an effort to reduce their true military carbon footprint in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

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<sup>19</sup> *Secretary-General's remarks on Climate Change*, 10 September 2018, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2018-09-10/secretary-generals-remarks-climate-change-delivered>

<sup>20</sup> *The Impact of Militarism on the Environment*, Abeer Majeed, 2004. [https://pgs.ca/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/militarism\\_environment\\_web.pdf](https://pgs.ca/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/militarism_environment_web.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> *Demilitarization for Deep Decarbonization*, Tamara Lorincz, 2014. <http://www.ipb.org/books/demilitarization-for-deep-decarbonization-reducing-militarism-and-military-expenditures/>



## CALCULATING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE MILITARY TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Recent reports<sup>22</sup> have brought into the open the scale of the global military's collective carbon emissions burden.

- The carbon footprint of the global militaries and associated defence industries is 445 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (2017); this is larger than the annual greenhouse gas emission of the entire country of Italy, and not much smaller than the total GHG emissions by UK (505 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) and France (482 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent) respectively.
- The global militaries and defence industries account for at least 1% of the total global greenhouse gas emissions, and the figure could be as high as 5%. For comparison, civil aviation accounts for approximately 2.1 % of global GHG emissions, and international aviation alone is responsible for around 1.3% of global GHG emissions. This means that the global military-industrial complex accounts for the compatible amount of greenhouse gas emissions as civil aviation which is essential for global trade and our modern well-being. When everyone is thinking to do their bit by taking fewer flights and buy local food and consumer products, militaries are having a free pass to buy and operate as many big-ticket gas guzzlers (eg, F-35s and Eurofighter Typhoons) as they want, with no hard question asked by our politicians.
- If we rank the world's militaries together as a single country, they would be the 29th biggest oil consumer in the world, just ahead of Belgium or South Africa. To put it another way, this is half the oil consumption of the world's 5th biggest economy, the UK or the 6th biggest, France.
- The total carbon footprint of EU15's militaries and defence industries is 60 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent – that is the same amount of emission as Ireland and roughly 2% of the total

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<sup>22</sup> Ho-Chih Lin and Deborah Burton, '*Indefensible: The true cost of the global military to our climate and human security*,' Transform Defence, 2020, <https://transformdefence.org/publication/indefensible/>. Neta C. Crawford, "Pentagon Fuel Use, Climate Change, and the Costs of War," Costs of War Project, 2019, <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/ClimateChangeandCostofWar>. Oliver Belcher, Patrick Bigger, Ben Neimark, and Cara Kennelly, "Hidden Carbon Costs of the 'everywhere war': Logistics, Geopolitical Ecology, and the Carbon Boot-print of the US Military," 2019, <https://rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/tran.12319>. Various reports by Stuart Parkinson, Scientist for Global Responsibility, <https://www.sgr.org.uk/projects/climate-change-military-main-outputs>.



greenhouse gas emissions by EU15 in 2017. In the EU, direct CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from aviation account for about 3% of total emissions.

- The total GHG emissions of the nine-year Iraq War (between 2003 and 2011) were approximately 254 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent. That's slightly more CO<sub>2</sub> released than the 14th biggest economy in the world, Spain, in 2016, and only a quarter less than the 6th biggest economy, France.

#### THE TIME HAS COME FOR THIS TO BE CALLED OUT AT UN LEVEL. WHY?

- Never-ending war and climate change are unholy bedfellows. The Iraq figure above is just *one* war – the Iraq war; we have not added in the ongoing (civil) wars in Afghanistan (on course to become the longest war in US history), Yemen, Syria, Gaza (Palestinian Territories), Libya, Somalia and Ukraine, to name just a few. What of the uncalculated carbon burden of previous wars? WW1? WW2? Vietnam/Laos? And until we stop confrontational international politics and great power competition altogether, there will inevitably be more carbon intensive wars of scale in the future.
- War needs oil. To enable and sustain the political space at home to both wage war and prevent war weariness, leading military powers conduct wars with air-power and aerial bombardment. The US coalition dropped 4,000 bombs in Afghanistan in 2017 and more than 7,000 bombs in 2018.<sup>23</sup> The Saudi coalition carried out 19,000 airstrikes in Yemen between March 2015 and January 2019, dropping British and American made bombs.<sup>24</sup> The US-led coalition (including UK, France, the Netherlands and Iraq) has launched more than 15,000 airstrikes in Syria – in the battle for Raqqa alone, at least 21,000 munitions were dropped<sup>25</sup> – while Russia conducted 9,000 airstrikes between October 2015 and March 2016.<sup>26</sup> During Israel's 7-week Operation Protective Edge in 2014, more than 6,000 airstrikes were carried out in Gaza, the 3rd most densely populated polity in the world, with an area size much smaller than London.<sup>27</sup>
- Reconstruction needs oil. Cement production is one of the largest industrial sources of GHG emissions in the world – estimated to contribute approximately 8% of total global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The World Bank's 2017 *Toll of War* report on the consequences of war in the 10 most-impacted Syrian cities estimated that nearly 900,000 housing units were destroyed in Syria. The cement required to rebuild these units will release approximately 22 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the massive task of clearing the debris before reconstruction can start will generate yet more GHGs.

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.afcent.af.mil/About/Airpower-Summaries/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2018/Saudi-Arabia-air-raids-on-Yemen/index.html>;  
<http://yemendatapoproject.org/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/seven-years-bombardment-whos-bombing-whom-syria-1543076396>;  
<https://airwars.org/>

<sup>26</sup> <https://jamestown.org/program/putin-the-peacemaker-ends-operations-in-syria/#.V0-5oHroycw>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/key-figures-2014-hostilities>

<sup>28</sup> <https://transformdefence.org/publication/indefensible/>

## Recommendations

The TPNS report '*Indefensible: The true cost of the global military to our climate and human security*' includes the following recommendations<sup>29</sup>

- I. **CREATE A UNFCCC TOPIC:** Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence in the UNFCCC Topics Categories. No human, economic or environmental net zero transformation is complete without parallel transformation in foreign affairs, defence, security and international development.
- II. **CREATE AN IPCC TASK FORCE FOR DECARBONISATION OF MILITARIES AND DEFENCE INDUSTRIES** to investigate climate impact of the military/defence sector and devise plans to address existing and prevent further damages. The task force will explore options and recommend solutions to fully decarbonise global militaries and defence industries. The task force will also propose initiatives to transform defence into building climate-resiliency in vulnerable communities and countries and enhance sustainable human security.
- III. **PUBLISH AN IPCC SPECIAL REPORT** on the role of the global militaries and defence industries in climate change to assess existing and future impacts and explore response options.
- IV. **MAKE IT *COMPULSORY* FOR NATIONS TO SUBMIT *FULL* GHG EMISSION REPORTING OF THEIR MILITARY TO IPCC/UNFCCC.** Nations' militaries, military industries, and attendant conflicts and wars must be included in their GHG emission reporting and carbon-reduction targets. This reporting must also account for emissions incurred overseas, especially for those nations with overseas bases. The Task Force on National GHG Inventories must look into how to incorporate these into the next Refinement to the IPCC Guidelines for National GHG Inventories.
- V. **NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTIONS (NDCS): ALL COUNTRIES TO INCLUDE THEIR MILITARIES AND DEFENCE INDUSTRIES IN THEIR GHG EMISSION REDUCTION PLANS AND TARGETS,** taking into account *total carbon footprints* of their militaries and defence industries. Militaries to publish their plans to decarbonise to meet the net-zero goal – simple technical measures (e.g. solar panels on military bases or electric killer drones) are not the answer.

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<sup>29</sup> IPB's *Deep Decarbonisation* Report of 2014 also carries an extensive set of UN related recommendations on a similar theme, <http://www.ipb.org/books/demilitarization-for-deep-decarbonization-reducing-militarism-and-military-expenditures/>

## SDG 16 'PEACEFUL SOCIETIES' MUST ADDRESS RUNAWAY MILITARY SPENDING



*On 24 May 2018, Secretary-General António Guterres released his Agenda for Disarmament, entitled Securing Our Common Future. In the Agenda, he observes that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development took an important step towards articulating how arms control, peace and security contribute to development. **Beyond addressing illicit arms flows, there remains a vast potential to operationally link the implementation of disarmament objectives with many other Sustainable Development Goals, in order to bring the historical relationship between disarmament and development back to the forefront of international consciousness.** [our emphasis]*

*'United Nations efforts to reduce military expenditures. A historical overview', Michael Spies<sup>30</sup>*

*UN secretary-general António Guterres has issued his first official report on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, the world's pre-eminent road map to fighting poverty, inequality and injustice by 2030. ... Across the globe, over 795m people are chronically undernourished, nearly 2bn face water insecurity, and nearly 65m were forced out of their homes last year by war and violence. And the world is not becoming any more hospitable: in over 68 countries, levels of peace declined while over 800m people are vulnerable to the extreme impacts of climate change, through droughts, heatwaves or rising sea levels.*

*The secretary-general's report, issued July 17, argues for greater financing and political will. This may be needed but it is unlikely to get to the root of the problem. A lot of good people work in development, trying to make progress on those 17 goals that may change the world. But until policymakers and the development community set their sights on the defence sector, they are facing a Sisyphean task. The report frequently mentions the impact of violence and insecurity, with conflict identified as "the most insurmountable barrier to poverty eradication and sustainable development". And yet the defence and security sector is not mentioned once.*

*Katherine Dixon, Director for defence and security at Transparency<sup>31</sup>*

*The COVID-19 pandemic is now testing humanity's resilience to the extreme, exposing and reinforcing long-standing grievances, injustices, inequalities and fragility around the world. Human development is on course to decline this year for the first time since 1990. We see widespread protests in cities around the world, igniting*

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.un.org/disarmament/publications/occasionalpapers/unoda-occasional-papers-no-33-october-2019/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/af202f82-72be-11e7-aca6-c6bd07df1a3c>

*calls for justice for all people. A growing economic crisis and political, social, and cultural dislocation are hurting billions of people, especially those who are already vulnerable or living in fragile and conflict-affected countries. As lockdowns are lifted, rising frustrations and unmet grievances could fuel further polarization, social unrest, fear and desperation. Amid increasing national tensions, global cooperation and our ability for collective action are facing renewed pressure.*

*It is now more clear than ever how crucially important national and local action for peace, justice and inclusion are for our common future. Even as the SDG16+ targets were being negotiated, we knew that their implementation would be demanding and critical to unlocking the 2030 Agenda as a whole. Without reduced inequality, violence, injustice and corruption, it will be impossible to make the necessary progress on global agendas such as education, health, gender equality, and climate change.*

*Joint Statement: Act Now for SDG16+<sup>32</sup>*

### SDG 16 WIDE RANGE OF TARGETS BUT ONLY ONE REFERENCE TO ARMS TRADE

The 12 targets within SDG 16 are wide-ranging and include those that relate to rule of law, corruption, accountability and transparency, access to justice and extended participation in democratic processes. *In relation to conflict there is one target that specifically references the arms trade and it reflects the work undertaken by civil society on the Arms Trade Treaty – it is the target to significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows by 2030.* This is a good starting point.

But when 70% of arms sales are made by the P5 members of the security council and those same five nations charged with keeping the peace of the world while the majority of their arms sales go to the global south, SDG 16 is sorely lacking.

- Conflicts drive 80% of all humanitarian needs. (*The World Bank, 2019*)
- We have a global refugee crisis of a scale not seen since WW2, much of it driven by wars past and present
- By 2030, at least half of the world's poor people will be living in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

### SDG 16 MUST TACKLE RUNAWAY MILITARY SPENDING FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS

- **Power:** Runway military spending is as every bit as central to understanding power, poverty, economic crises and unjust distribution of resources as other structural issues (and civil society campaigns) such as debt, trade, tax, climate change.
- **Hypocrisy:** The P5 nations to be called out on this. Approximately 80% of global arms sales are made by the Permanent 5 members of the security council (USA, UK, Russia, China, France) plus Germany<sup>33</sup> – the same nations charged with keeping the peace of the world. All this while the majority of their arms sales go to the global south.

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.sdg16.plus/covid-19>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2021/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-international-arms-transfers-2020>

- **Waste:** Many of the world's poorest countries and fastest growing economies (both measured in terms of GDP per capita) spend much more on their military than either on education or on health; excessive military spending impedes economic development (SDG 8) and significantly impacts on the efforts to reducing poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2) and improving health (SDG 3) and education (SDG 4).

We need to look at the progress (or not) of many of the key SDGs through the additional prism of global runaway military spending.

*We, the SDG 16+ Global Coalition, a group over 100 partners and 40 countries, encourage Member States to consider reviewing SDG 16 annually at the HLPF [High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development]. This affirms that SDG16 strongly links with all other goals, in line with the integrated and indivisible nature of the 2030 Agenda... Today, progress towards SDG 16 is backsliding. In light of this, an annual review of SDG 16 at every HLPF is highly warranted. It will provide much-needed opportunities for the international community to demonstrate measurable progress on peace, justice, and inclusion and explore the vast interlinkages that SDG 16 has with all other SDGs.*

*'Putting SDG 16 Front and Center at the HLPF through an Annual Thematic Review'<sup>34</sup>*

**RECOMMENDATION.** Re-elevate the Disarmament and Development Agenda and re-prioritise action on the longstanding well understood 'conflict of interest' of P5 members role in maintaining global peace while being the world's top arms sellers as well as the undermining of development by arms sales from richer nations to poorer nations.

## SECURITY COUNCIL HIGH-LEVEL OPEN DEBATE: 'CARBON NEUTRAL PEACE AND DEFENCE'

### CONTEXT: CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In June 2021, Security Council Report published '*The UN Security Council and Climate Change*'<sup>35</sup> – a comprehensive review of how climate change has become more and more present in Security Council debates and how this 'fits' with the current – and future – remit of the Security Council. Is the Council overstepping its authority by delving into an issue that may often only have tangential links to conflict? Is the Council infringing on the authority of other UN organs with more expertise in this area?

*"While climate mitigation and adaptation measures are within the purview of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and contributions to such measures are outlined in the Paris Agreement, many Security Council members view climate change as a security threat worthy of the Council's attention. Other members do not. One of the difficulties in considering whether or not the Council should play a role (and a theme of this report) is that there are different interpretations of what is appropriate for the Security Council to do in discharging its Charter-given mandate to maintain international peace and security.*

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<sup>34</sup> <http://sdg.iisd.org/commentary/guest-articles/putting-sdg16-front-and-center-at-the-hlpf-through-an-annual-thematic-review/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2021-07/in-hindsight-the-un-security-council-and-climate-change.php>



*Notwithstanding these tensions, the issue has gained traction in the Council in recent years. An increasing number of Council members are choosing to hold signature events on climate change and security, during their monthly Council presidencies, to support the integration of climate change language into formal Council outcomes (that is, resolutions and presidential statements), and more broadly, to approach peace and security issues with greater sensitivity to the harmful effects of climate change...*

*For example, they often discuss the impacts of climate change on women and youth—and the role that these groups can play in responding to climate-security risks— and they explore how climate change, pandemics, hunger, and conflict interact to compound security risks in conflict-affected and other vulnerable settings. Council members have often seen efforts to tackle climate-security threats as an element of the UN system's conflict prevention work, and in more recent years, many of them have also viewed addressing climate change as an important part of the UN's peacekeeping, peacebuilding and sustaining peace efforts.*

*A further focus of this report is the significant institutional architecture that has been established just since 2018, both within and outside the UN system, to help undergird the efforts of the Security Council and the broader UN family on this issue. This has included the establishment of an Informal Expert Group of Members of the Security Council on Climate and Security and a Group of Friends on Climate and Security, among other initiatives...*

*The Security Council is increasingly grappling with climate change as a security threat. More and more, meetings on climate change and security (and related topics) are being convened, climate-security language is being incorporated into resolutions, and various mechanisms are being established to help support the Council's work on this issue. But it is difficult to determine the future course of Council engagement on climate and security. While most members of this organ are committed to a Council role, some influential members have strong reservations about the extent to which it should devote energy and resources to climate change. In addition, the Council is still trying to understand and define the nature of the challenge (which varies depending on the context), and to ascertain the Council's precise role, and added value, in addressing climate and security matters. Its outcomes can have strong political and legal significance, but they require resources and know-how to implement. While the Council has emphasised the need for risk assessments and risk management strategies in particular contexts, and called for better reporting on climate-security risks, it will be more challenging to carry out such tasks if funding is not available for climate advisors in peace operations. Even if the worst-case scenarios are avoided, the climate crisis is likely to deepen. Its consequences for human security will mount, bringing linkages between climate-related factors and conflict into sharp relief. In such a world, the Council failing to respond will make it appear out of touch with fundamental threats to international peace and security—and human survival."*

The 10 pages of annexes that detail Security Council meetings and debates, climate change language in Security Council outcomes and other Security Council Documents tells the story in itself – climate change is embedded in Security Council matters and can only become more so.

And while the intersection of climate and security is ever more present, the parameters of this debate need to be broadened to provide (i) far greater scrutiny concerning the true cost of the global military on our climate, human security and international development and (ii) meaningful discussion on how we arrive at an urgent, new all-embracing paradigm for our collective security: namely, **sustainable human safety**.

This will always be a challenging topic as long as the UN P5 and other big spending military nations are at the heart of shaping defence and security thinking at the UN. But the writing is on the wall and even the most resistant of nations know that the IPCC's 'Code Red for Humanity' warning is real and looming.

Addressing the Security Council in February 2021, UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for “embracing a concept of security that places people at its centre, stressing that COVID-19 has laid bare the devastation that *non-traditional* security threats can cause on a global scale. In all such efforts, it will be essential to build on the strengths of the Security Council, Peacebuilding Commission, international financial institutions, regional organizations, civil society, the private sector, academia and others.” [our emphasis]

‘Carbon neutral peace and defence’ is one route to addressing ‘non-traditional security’.

### WHAT IS CARBON NEUTRAL PEACE AND DEFENCE?

The **Transform Defence** project is calling for a new category to be added to the UNFCCC Topics list: **Carbon neutral peace and defence**<sup>36</sup>. To include such a topic within the UNFCCC family of urgent headings would be to recognise (1) the contribution of nations’ militaries and defence industries to climate change and environmental damage accrued as a result of day-to-day operations, resource extraction and weapon production and conflicts/wars, and (2) that the human cost of all this falls disproportionately on the poorest, on women and on children.

The UNFCCC topic inclusion would

- bring to the fore the need to drive military GHG emissions first to net-zero (currently voluntarily and no serious plan and actions) and then to negative.
- act as a catalyst for accelerating inevitable debate on carbon neutral peace and international dialogue on how we bring about a transformation of foreign and defence policies fit for purpose in a post-carbon, climate changed 21<sup>st</sup> century, allowing space for solutions-based new ideas on how to achieve Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence
- reflect the primary UN concern from its inception: the hope to secure peace between nations and the close connection between ‘disarmament and development’<sup>37</sup>.



<sup>36</sup> <https://transformdefence.org/carbon-neutral-defence/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.un.org/disarmament/publications/occasionalpapers/unoda-occasional-papers-no-33-october-2019/>

## HIGH-LEVEL OPEN DEBATE ON CARBON NEUTRAL PEACE AND DEFENCE

Given the Security Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security coupled with the UN's lead on the urgent global need to decarbonise every aspect of human activity, it seems timely to be asking for a High-Level Open Debate that would address:

- the impact of the global military on climate change and inadequate GHG emission reporting in National Inventories and NDCs;
- the attendant vicious circle that the role of the military on climate change imposes on the world's poorest: the impact of conflict and post-conflict reconstruction on climate change added to the impact of conflict and violence on people and environment;
- the impact of runaway military spending on *all* economies – developed world and developing world; and the undermining of many of the SDGs;
- discussion of new thinking/framework to enhance – *and better still finance* – global collective human safety and security. Ideas such as Carbon Neutral Peace and Defence (outlined above) and the Transform Defence approach to re-apportioning of defence spending such that climate mitigation/adaption; peacekeeping and conflict prevention; and pandemic preparedness are included as major items inside national 'defence' spending.

## INCREASING MOMENTUM ON THE SECURITY COUNCIL

This High-Level Debate proposal can build on the momentum already underway to expand the framing of the climate change/security at the UN Security Council.

### Informal Group of Experts of the Security Council

*Climate change is the defining issue of our time and a multidimensional challenge. Its security dimension remains to be addressed comprehensively and systematically by the United Nations and particularly by the Security Council, for the Council to live up to its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security...*

*Millions of people around the world today already experience the effects of climate change which exacerbates, prolongs or contributes to the risk of future conflicts and instability and constitutes a key risk to international peace and security...*

*The ten members of the Security Council also announced that they will convene an Informal Group of Experts of the Security Council in order to assist the Council to achieve a more comprehensive and systematic approach on climate-related security risks in situations on its Agenda.*

***Joint statement by 10 members of the United Nations Security Council (Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Tunisia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the United Kingdom, Viet Nam) and 3 incoming members of the United Nations Security Council (Ireland, Kenya, Norway) on the Open Debate of the Security Council on Climate and Security, July 24, 2020<sup>38</sup>***

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<sup>38</sup> <https://new-york-un.diplo.de/un-en/news-corner/200724-climate/2368770>

### Group of 51 Friends of Climate and Security

*We encourage the Security Council to continue mandating peacekeeping operations as well as Special Political Missions to consider climate-related risks in their activities. We sometimes hear that peacekeeping missions have more pressing issues to focus on than climate change. While this may seem true at a first glance, in many ways the effects of climate change make it harder to keep the peace. It is hardly a coincidence that eight out of the ten countries hosting the largest multilateral peace operations are located in areas highly exposed to the impact of climate change.*

**Item 2 from the plan of action included in a Statement by the 51 members of the Group of Friends of Climate and Security, presented at the United Nations Security Council Open Debate on Climate and Security, 24 July, 2020<sup>39</sup>**

### UN Secretary-General Presents 10 Priorities for 2021

The key 2021 priorities to address as laid out by the UN Secretary General - pandemic, climate chaos, poverty and inequality - are also the greatest threats to our collective human safety. They should be the final wake-up call for nations to put their geopolitical differences behind them and work together – and finance together – the means to set in motion a *new international relation* reset for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>40</sup>

- **Respond to COVID-19**
- *Start an inclusive and sustainable economic recovery*
- **Make peace with nature**
- **Tackle poverty and inequality**
- *Reverse the assault on human rights*
- *Gender equality, the greatest human rights challenge*
- **Heal geopolitical rifts**
- **Reverse the erosion of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime**
- *Seize the opportunities of digital technologies while protecting against their growing dangers*
- **Launch a reset for the 21st century**

### New Security Council Members

The new members of the Security Council also bring invaluable expertise and energy to this matter and may wish to help advocate for this topic to be debated.

**Ireland**, with one of the finest peacekeeping contribution records of all nations and who has come onto the Security Council with a manifesto on its commitment to development and peace; **Mexico** with its commitment to UN Disarmament and arms control along with its groundbreaking if challenging commitment to call out the failure of the war on drugs; **Norway** with its groundbreaking report in 1987 'Our Common Future' which gave birth to the sustainable development agenda and its PM Erna Solberg today co- chairs UN Secretary General's Advocacy group for SDGs.

### **'DON'T BRING A SPEECH, BRING A PLAN'**

Ahead of the 2019 Climate Action Summit the UN Secretary-General famously said: "don't bring a speech – bring a plan".

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.swedenabroad.se/de/botschaften/un-new-york/current/news/statement/>

<sup>40</sup> <http://sdg.iisd.org/news/un-secretary-general-presents-10-priorities-for-2021/>

Any plan to address the climate emergency must address all players and all factors. To be addressing all these issues without attention to the \$2trillion p/a on global military spending; the contribution of the global military to climate change; interrogation of the \$2tr 'value for money' case in light of the enormity of the threats of climate chaos and pandemic to actual human safety; and the impossible task of poorly funded peacekeeping up against the deadly combination of conflict and climate, is to be talking around a very big elephant in the room.

We are already well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, facing 'modern' man-made threats of climate chaos, a sixth mass extinction and global pandemic, 'armed' with an out-of-date 20<sup>th</sup> century defence and security paradigm, based on a 20<sup>th</sup> century model of extractive and exploitative capitalism.

It's not working.

**We need a practical, imaginative, brave discussion about redefining and re-making foreign and defence policy – and critically, the attendant budgeting – such that it is truly fit-for-21<sup>st</sup> century purpose. This will help frame a deeper understanding of its role to date in climate change, pandemic, economic, racial and gender injustice. In this way, foreign and defence policy transformation will be a vital part of the system change process which people and planet are crying out for.**

*"What we urgently need now is a rethinking of the entire concept of security. Even after the end of the Cold War, it has been envisioned mostly in military terms. Over the past few years, all we've been hearing is talk about weapons, missiles and airstrikes... The overriding goal must be human security: providing food, water and a clean environment and caring for people's health. To achieve it, we need to develop strategies, make preparations, plan and create reserves. But all efforts will fail if governments continue to waste money by fueling the arms race... I'll never tire of repeating: we need to demilitarize world affairs, international politics and political thinking."*

*Former President of the Soviet Union,  
Mikhail Gorbachev, April 15, 2020<sup>41</sup>*



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<sup>41</sup> <https://time.com/5820669/mikhail-gorbachev-coronavirus-human-security/>





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