

COP29

WHY PUBLIC MILITARY SPENDING MATTERS TO CLIMATE FINANCE DISCUSSIONS



Briefing

November 2024

TIPPING POINT NORTH SOUTH
creative campaigning for global justice

MILITARY SPENDING & EMISSIONS: HIDDEN DRIVERS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

The global military is a major driver of climate change. It is exempt from compulsory reporting its greenhouse gas emissions to the IPCC/UNFCCC despite some countries' militaries being among the largest institutional consumers of fossil fuels in the world. This is a scandal that needs exposing.

These emissions are a direct result of runaway global military spending since the former cannot happen without the latter. Combined, they ensure that all human development is harmed in myriad ways.

As a matter of urgency we need this issue taken up and addressed by the many stakeholders this serious matter falls to for action – from civil society to governments to international institutions, especially the UN.

Last but not least, policy-makers concerned with *Green New Deal* economic thinking (in the UK, Europe, the USA and elsewhere) must take account of the links between these closely linked issues: military spending & emissions, the just green transition and sustainable human safety. We need *peaceful, green, prosperity*.

COP29: Why Public Military Spending Matters To Climate Finance Discussions is the fourth in Tipping Point North South's ***United Nations and the Global Military*** series of reports and briefings that offer fresh new thinking for progressively converting military spending into funding for development and climate finance, strengthening sustainable human safety, and averting climate catastrophe under the United Nations framework.

Tipping Point North South's work on global military spending and emissions is supported by The Network for Social Change, Marmot Trust, the Ratcliff Foundation and Jam Today under the project title *Transform Defence for Sustainable Human Safety*.

November 2024

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Tipping Point North South is a 'for the benefit of community' co-operative, supporting and initiating creative, campaign-driven projects that advance the global justice agenda.

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MILITARY EMISSIONS, MILITARY SPENDING & THE “COP OF PEACE”

To be a true ‘COP of Peace’ Baku needs much more than a call for a month-long ‘peace truce’. As a petro-state that is accused of ethnic cleansing, COP29 host country Azerbaijan has gone to great PR lengths in calling for the climate emergency to be the moment nations come together in the spirit of co-operation, in order to move forward on finding solutions to the climate crisis. In one regard, its truce statement does make an important recognition:¹ *“Conflicts increase greenhouse gas emissions and ravage the environment, polluting soil, water and air. The devastation of ecosystems and pollution caused by conflicts worsen climate change and undermine our efforts to safeguard the planet.”* This is a big step forward: COP29 acknowledges the impact of conflict-related GHG emissions. But remember the 5.5% global military carbon footprint doesn’t include conflict emissions.² At 5.5% this is more than the combined GHG emissions of the 54 nations of the African continent. We need all parties to go much further if COP29 – the ‘Finance COP’ and the ‘Peace COP’ – is to really turn the climate emergency corner on the two-headed monster that is global military spending and military emissions.

COP29 CIVIL SOCIETY MOMENTUM BUILDING TO INCLUDE PUBLIC MILITARY SPENDING IN THE ANNUAL \$5TRILLION DEMANDED FOR CLIMATE FINANCE

Momentum is building to include public military spending in the annual \$5trillion demanded by civil society for climate finance.³ Developed countries need to address the role and responsibility of their runaway military expenditure in the climate emergency through the allocation of trillions of dollars to fossil-fuel-reliant militaries and associated (supply-chain) industries instead of climate finance.



Recent civil society Global Weeks of Action (Payup and Phaseout 13-20 Sept) and (Peace and Climate Justice 21-28 Sept)⁴ both recognised that the need to shift climate finance from ‘billions to trillions’ calls for the big spending military nations to have their priorities scrutinised and for that to lead to calls for the redirection of a significant percentage of those trillions to climate finance. This will carry through to the climate movement’s COP29 demands.

Research published by Oil Change International to coincide with the Payup and Phaseout campaign included a call to divert military spending alongside an end to fossil fuel subsidies and deep tax measures as routes to reach the \$5tr annually:⁵

“A wealth tax on billionaires could generate \$483bn globally, while a financial transaction tax could raise \$327bn. Taxes on sales of big technology, arms and luxury fashion would be another

¹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20240930162350/https://cop29.az/en/news/cop29-presidency-officially-launches-joint-solemn-appeal-for-a-cop29-truce>

² <https://www.sgr.org.uk/publications/estimating-military-s-global-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

³ <https://climatenetwork.org/2024/09/20/us5trillion-owed-to-global-south-by-global-north-due-to-the-climate-crisis/>

⁴ <https://payupandphaseout.org/>; <https://climatemilitarism.org/weekofaction/>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2024/sep/24/rich-countries-could-raise-5tn-of-climate-finance-a-year-study-says>

\$112bn, and redistributing 20% of public military spending would be worth \$454bn if implemented around the world.” The Guardian

Israel’s annihilation of Gaza and the war in Ukraine have brought this civil society momentum forward. Associated with this ever-growing awareness and action is the inevitable **focus on the military supply chain without which no war can be expedited: that is to say, the arms industry.**

DEATH AND DESTRUCTION: ARMS INDUSTRY POLLUTERS & PROFITEERS

- The top 100 arms companies accounted for \$592 billion in arms sales in 2021 (pre-Ukraine, pre-Gaza).⁶
- The top 20 arms companies alone account for two thirds of the total arms sales in the world. They come from just a handful of countries: USA, China, Russia, UK, France and Italy
- Israel has dropped more bombs on Gaza in less than a year since October 2023 than were dropped on Dresden, Hamburg and London combined during WW2.
- Two years into the ongoing Russian war in Ukraine has potentially caused 175 million tCO₂e of military and conflict-related emissions; 45 million tCO₂e of which were directly from the fossil-fuel consumption of the Russian military and to a lesser extent as well as the Ukrainian military.
- The US coalition dropped 4,000 bombs in Afghanistan in 2017 and more than 7,000 bombs in 2018.
- The Saudi coalition carried out 19,000 airstrikes in Yemen between March 2015 and January 2019, dropping British and American made bombs.

MILITARY SPENDING VS CLIMATE FINANCE: MORE COUNTRIES ARE ENGAGING

The ongoing genocide in Gaza, wars in Ukraine, Sudan and DRC were addressed by many nations at the recent UN General Assembly in September. **Brazil’s President Lula** spelled out arms-race vs climate finance scandal:

“The year 2023 holds the sad record for the highest number of conflicts since the Second World War. Global military spending increased for the ninth consecutive year — reaching 2.4 trillion dollars.... These resources could have been used to combat hunger and address climate change...”

At a UN General Assembly press conference held by leaders of **AOSIS (Association of Small Island States and LDC Group** (Lesser Developed Countries), the Chair of AOSIS Fatumanava III Dr. Paolelei Luteru said:

“Last year, 2023, saw the world military expenditure increase for the ninth consecutive year, reaching a total of \$2,443 billion. Funds for military conflicts and aggressions? Available at the ready. Yet funds to save lives and livelihoods from the climate crisis are continuously delayed.”

And at the Bonn Climate Conference in June, the **Arab Group & G77+China** suggested developed countries could raise \$441 billion “by adopting targeted domestic measures” such as a “financial transaction tax”, a defence company tax, a fashion tax and a “Big Tech Monopoly Tax”.⁷

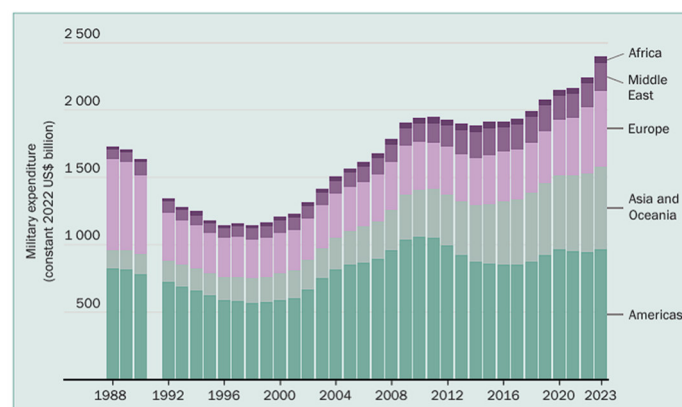
⁶ <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2022/sipri-fact-sheets/sipri-top-100-arms-producing-and-military-services-companies-2021>

"Referring to the document in talks on the new finance goal yesterday, Saudi Arabia's negotiator justified a tax on arms manufacturers by saying that military emissions of planet-heating gases represent 5% of global historical emissions. 'One... potential idea is to have a tax on defence companies in developed countries,' he said, suggesting it could be put forward.... Around \$21 billion a year could come from a 5% tax on the annual sales of the top 80 defense firms in developed countries, the paper says." Climate Home News

NEW CLIMATE FINANCE GOAL: TAP THE TRILLIONS ALLOCATED TO THE BIG MILITARIES

Agreement on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) for climate finance is mired in obfuscation and delay by the very nations historically responsible for the climate crisis and which have persistently failed to fulfil their legally binding climate finance pledges.

- The Climate Action Network has estimated that rich nations need to pay developing countries a minimum of \$5 trillion per annum in public climate finance.
- The wealthiest countries (Annex II) spend 30 times more on their militaries than on providing climate finance for the world's most vulnerable countries.⁸
- In 2023 the world spent \$2.4 trillion on their militaries.⁹
- **If the current trend continues, between 2024 and 2030 we can expect to see more than \$17 trillion spent on the global military, around 55% will be spent by Annex II rich developed countries on their own militaries**
- Value for money:¹⁰ the \$2 trillion lifetime cost of Lockheed Martin's F-35 fighter jets could have funded UN disaster risk reduction for the next 4,000 years or global biodiversity conservation at \$100 billion per annum for the next 20 years or WHO funding at \$2 billion per annum for the next 1,000 years.



World military expenditure, by region, 1988–2023

Note: The absence of data for the Soviet Union in 1991 means that no total can be calculated for that year.

Source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, Apr. 2024.

⁷ <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2024/06/06/developing-countries-suggest-rich-nations-tax-arms-fashion-and-tech-firms-for-climate/>

⁸ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/climate-collateral-how-military-spending-accelerates-climate-breakdown/>

⁹ <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2024/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2023>

¹⁰ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/value-for-money/>

MILITARY SPENDING CORRELATES TO MILITARY EMISSIONS AND MUST BE FULLY ADDRESSED BY UNFCCC

To redirect wasted military spending trillions is to deliver win-win for climate, climate finance and peace. **Ever rising military spending contributes significantly to increases in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.**¹¹ **It is incompatible with every climate target** since the more spent on heavy-duty fossil-fuel hungry weaponry, the greater the military emissions. Israel has dropped more bombs on Gaza in less than a year than were dropped on Dresden, Hamburg and London combined during WW2.

- The global military carbon footprint was estimated to be 5.5% of total global emissions.
- This is more than the combined annual emissions of the 54 nations of the African continent.
- It is twice as much as emissions from civilian aviation.
- This estimate does not include conflict-related emissions (Gaza, Ukraine, post 9/11 wars).
- The GHG emissions burden of the Russian invasion of Ukraine is currently estimated to be 175 million tCO₂e.¹² Latest research on Israel's war on Gaza estimates the emission burden of 60 million tCO₂e.¹³

Key actions civil society call for include all nations to (i) compulsory submit full and comprehensive GHG military emissions reporting to IPCC/UNFCCC (ii) include their militaries and military technology industries in their NDC GHG emission reduction plans and targets and for (iii) the planned AR7 cycle IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities to include the climate impacts of war and conflict on cities.¹⁴



Credit: Cpl Neil Bryden RAF. © Crown copyright

¹¹ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/indefensible/>; <https://transformdefence.org/publication/climate-in-the-crosshairs/>

¹² <https://climatefocus.com/publications/climate-damage-russian-war-in-ukraine-24-months/>

¹³ <https://www.qmul.ac.uk/media/news/2024/hss/new-study-reveals-substantial-carbon-emissions-from-the-ongoing-israel-gaza-conflict.html>

¹⁴ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/military-and-conflict-related-emissions-report/>

WE MUST PUSH BACK THE 'MILITARISATION' OF OUR CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Ever increasing military spending does not deliver peace.

- Between 2010 and 2022, conflicts have almost doubled, from 30 in 2010 to 56 in 2022.
- 74% of arms sales are made by the P5 members of the UN security council and the majority of their arms sales go to the global south.
- Conflicts drive 80% of all humanitarian needs.
- By 2030, at least half of the world's poor people will be living in fragile and conflict-affected countries.

These numbers do not take the contemporary and future impact of the climate emergency.

The big military spending nations are preoccupied with a plethora of adversarial threats on land, air, sea and outer space. **In the face of 2°C or more of warming, these conventional threats need to be in their place, proportionately, alongside much greater but entirely marginalised massive human security threats of this 21st century: climate breakdown, pandemic and deteriorating global inequality.**¹⁵

Meantime, military thinking is taking us down the road of the 'securitisation' of the climate emergency where the answer to everything from climate refugees to climate related conflict to humanitarian response is framed as a military response matter.¹⁶ This is at best wholly inadequate, at worse, wholly disingenuous. The climate emergency is not a pretext for the military to re-invent itself as the climate 'saviour'. Its emissions are significant. Its ever-rising budgets are draining resources from climate finance.

We are going in the wrong direction: it is incomprehensible that governments are ploughing more and more taxpayers' money into their militaries when desperately needed climate finance for mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage is being delayed by the very nations historically responsible for the climate catastrophe.

Civil society calls are clear: #PAYUP for Climate Finance. Tap military spending as a legitimate and significant source of public finance to contribute to the annual \$5 trillion climate finance sum needed and complement it with an arms industry excess profits tax. Win-win for climate, climate finance, and peace.

OUR COP29 DEMANDS



Global North governments should pay up. End public subsidies for fossil fuels. Tax systems should be reformed, so polluters and profiteers pay their dues.

Vast amounts of government spending on weapons and military operations that harm people, destroy the environment while also being

¹⁵ <https://transformdefence.org/publication/how-to-transform-defence-10-talking-points-for-a-difficult-conversation/>

¹⁶ <https://www.tni.org/en/publication/primer-on-climate-security>

a massive source of carbon emissions, should be diverted towards programs for climate justice and our planet's security.

WHAT WE WANT: MILITARY SPENDING

- COP29 – COP of Peace to include redirected military spending in the NCQG as a way for developed to meet their obligations.
- NDCs – Concrete plans for developed countries to reduce their military spending in order to invest in climate action in their Nationally Determined Contributions.
- Ensure G77+China plans to include arms industry as part of wider rich country sales tax for climate finance remains on the table.

WHAT WE WANT: MILITARY EMISSIONS

- All nations to compulsory submit full and comprehensive GHG military emissions reporting to IPCC/UNFCCC.
- All nations to include their militaries and military technology industries in their NDC GHG emission reduction plans and targets.
- The planned AR7 cycle IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities to include the climate impacts of war and conflict on cities.
- Article 2.1.(c) of the Paris Agreement obliges states to “making finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development”. On this basis, increased military spending undermines the mandate of Article 2.1.(c) and should therefore be progressively reduced.



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