



## International Peace Bureau

WWW: Working together for a World Without War

IPB News

16<sup>th</sup> May 2008 edition

### Disarmament for Development programme

In 2005 IPB launched a major new programme, designed to reflect widespread public concern at the rapid rise in global military spending (now totalling \$1204 billion); and the evidence that weapons -- such as small arms, cluster bombs, landmines -- seriously impede sustainable development. Post 9-11, the failure of military solutions should be obvious to all. IPB advocates reductions in defence budgets and the adoption of a 'human security' approach. Activities organised in pursuit of these goals include: seminars, publications, website, e-newsletter, exhibitions and a short film. National and international networks are gradually being developed.

### Military + social spending

#### New military spending toolkit from WILPF is now available

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) has released a very useful [Military Spending Toolkit](#) on their website. The toolkit contains, among others, draft letters, useful international resolutions and 'talking points' to use for meetings with governmental officials.

#### The Iraq Supplemental: A Three-Ring Circus

After weeks of backroom negotiations, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) finally unveiled the latest plan for funding the Iraq War late Tuesday night. As the plan was unveiled, anti-war groups ranging from United for Peace and Justice to Win Without War to the Iraq Campaign 2008 joined voices for the first time in their call to urge members to vote no on the funding. But while their messages are clear on the funding, the actual content and implications of other provisions in the bill need a careful examination. [Continued.](#)

#### Iraq contractor in shooting case makes comeback

Guards from the Blackwater security company were involved in a shooting in September that left at least 17 Iraqis dead at a Baghdad intersection. Outrage over the killings prompted the Iraqi government to demand Blackwater's ouster from the country, and led to a criminal investigation by the [F.B.I.](#), a series of internal investigations by the State Department and the Pentagon, and high-profile Congressional hearings. But after an intense public and private lobbying campaign, Blackwater appears to be back to business as usual. Read the rest at [NYTimes.com](#).

#### White House renews veto threat against troop funding bill

Congress appears increasingly unlikely to meet its goal of approving President Bush's war funding request before Memorial Day as divisions

deepened among Democrats and the White House issued a fresh veto threat. [Whole article \(AP\)](#).

### New Zealand super fund continues to invest in weapons and arms

Ethical divestment seems to be catching on - at least in some countries. The National Pensions Reserve Fund (NPRF) in Ireland [has divested](#) from six large companies that were involved in cluster munitions. NPRF tries, on a consistent basis, to follow the model of the Norwegian Pension Fund which uses clear and consistent ethical guidelines. The New Zealand government, on the other hand, still has a long way to go before they consistently implement their ethical investment policies, although progress seems to be going in the right direction.

A [new report](#) from No WARP (Network Opposed to Weapons and Related Production) demonstrates in detail how the New Zealand Superannuation (i.e. Pensions) Fund (NZSF) continues to invest money in large corporations that produce weaponry of various sizes. It seems that the Guardians of the NZSF consistently try to avoid any preliminary requests to divest. However, there have been some significant changes lately. According to IPB Vice-President Alyn Ware, "*there have been a few key developments*". These can be summed up in three parts, being:

- " 1) Two government funds administered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs have adopted policies to not invest in any companies involved in the manufacture of weapons, production of pornography or production of tobacco products.*
- 2) The Minister responsible for the Accident Compensation Commission (ACC) announced in April that ACC was in the process of divesting from investments in companies involved in the design, testing, assembly and/or refurbishment of nuclear explosive devices*
- 3) On 4 April 2008, the Guardians of the NZ Superannuation Fund announced their intention to exclude companies involved in the manufacture of cluster munitions (adding to their previous exclusions of companies involved in whaling or the manufacture of landmines)."*

The exclusion of companies involved with CM does however depend on the final outcome of the Dublin conference, where a cluster munitions ban treaty will be negotiated by the end of May. In addition to waiting for the treaty to be signed, the Guardians might also continue to wait till all ratifications are in order before implementing their promises.

### Weapons and their effects

#### Massive turnout for Article 9 conference in Japan

30 000 participants all over Japan took part in the Article 9 conference, with 22 000 in Tokyo alone. The conference is an attempt to promote the current Japanese article as an international tool to avoid war, by having more governments making it an amendment to their constitution as well. Article 9 states that: "*Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign*

*right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. (2) In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized."* If you want to read the initial report from the conference, [click here](#). At [whynot9.jp](#) you will find out how the article 9 can be an international tool. Former IPB President [Cora Weiss also gave one of the keynote speeches](#) at the opening ceremony. For general information, check out [wikipedia.org](#), and read as well a smaller summary on [asia.news.com](#).

### **Senegalese women push for ratification of regional arms treaty**

The women members of the Senegalese civil society speak out as their human rights are violated with small-arms. An ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) arms-trade convention came into place in 2006, and has as far been ratified by Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Sierra Leone. Senegal adopted the convention in 2007, but has still not ratified it. This arms-trade convention is very important for the Senegalese women, since they are [the main victims](#) of small-arms in Senegal. There is more on this topic at [fr.allafrica.com](#) and [malao.org](#) (Both in French).

### **Arms Trade Treaty only solution against growing arms use**

The arms-blockade by several African countries, where a Chinese ship was refused permission to transport 77 tonnes of arms to the increasingly violent Zimbabwe, shows the need for an International Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). The world should not have to rely on local civilians to take action against the arms trade. In the case of Zimbabwe IPB sources says it is already too late, and the 77 tonnes of arms have been delivered from China by airplane instead, making it impossible for locals to stop. Had there been an ATT in place, this would have been possible to prevent, and the already tense situation in Zimbabwe would not be fuelled by more weapons. Read more at [nzherald.co.nz](#).

### **Cluster Munitions Coalition Media list with extensive information on cluster munitions**

[Click here](#) to see the latest CMC media list, where you will find links to news coverage on issues related to cluster munitions from 7<sup>th</sup> till 14<sup>th</sup> of May.

### **Depleted Uranium may cause cancer and mutations in Afghan newborns**

After accusations of US usage of depleted uranium in 2001 from an Afghan junior minister [were crushed by the Afghan Public Health Ministry](#), the official story has now been revised. *"The Public Health Ministry, so far, has no information from any official source about the presence of nuclear contamination in Tora Bora and has launched no investigation about it. The ministry even has no plan for such an investigation."* This story might have been successfully buried by the Health Ministry had it not been for new accusations for the existence of depleted uranium, this time coming [from the doctors themselves](#).

Medical practitioners report an doubled increase in less than two years of premature-born and malformations, such as bigger heads and/or limbs. The US forces denies any current use of DU in Afghanistan, but Major Chris

Belcher, spokesman for the coalition forces does admit that *"I don't have any knowledge of what might have been used in 2001 and 2002. If there was an armour threat, the DU rounds would have been used to counter that threat."* The [US is also being accused of having undermined a WHO report](#) saying that the DU used in Iraq in 1991 and 2003 did not pose any real risk to the civilians.

## Weapons of Mass Destruction

### Appeal for Vanunu is moving in Norway

In the last 6 weeks there has been a tremendous interest in Norway for the liberation of Mordechai Vanunu, Israel's nuclear hostage. The media have given extensive and sympathetic coverage, and the cabinet obviously is under strong pressure to stop ignoring the many calls for action in the matter. [Continued](#).

### U.S. says Iran security pledge not on table

The United States said on Wednesday the major powers had no plans to offer Iran security guarantees to encourage it to suspend nuclear activity, hours after Russia floated the idea. [Original article \(Reuters\)](#).

## Resources

### Pax Christi International's New Public Website

Pax Christi International (IPB member organisation) has re-developed its website. The structure of the site is based on the Strategic Framework 2008 - 2010 and gives a background about the Pax Christi global peace network. The new public website is now available in English and in French and soon also in Spanish. Go to [www.paxchristi.net](http://www.paxchristi.net).

### HD-Centre publication: Reflections on guns, fighters, and armed violence in peace processes

The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue has announced the publication of their edited collection, [Viewpoints - Reflections on Guns, Fighters, and Armed Violence in Peace Processes](#), which is the first of a two-part series bringing together first-hand accounts and careful observations from individuals with diverse connections to and experiences of peace processes. Viewpoints provides space for their views on how weapons control, violence reduction, and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration fare in peace negotiations and processes. Learn more on [www.hdcentre.org/](http://www.hdcentre.org/) website.

### No Bases Network is creating a worldwide database

The No Bases Network is currently compiling a database with all relevant information on foreign military bases worldwide. It would be greatly appreciated if you would take some time to fill in the available information on military bases in your area or on bases of your interest. You can fill in as many entries as you like. Please go to <http://www.nobasesnetwork.org/searchandcontribute>.

### UNIDIR Publication: Disarmament Forum 2008

Each issue of this quarterly, bilingual (English-French) journal focuses on a specific topic related to disarmament and security. Visit [unidir.org](http://unidir.org).

## Others

### Global Peacebuilders' summit in Belfast great success

IPB secretariat Kenneth Mostad participated in the peacebuilders' summit in Belfast last week, where mediators from around the world had been encouraged by SpringBoard Opportunities in Ireland to come and learn from each others experiences. The two-day long summit included a "conflict-tour", where the international delegates were shown areas of conflict in Belfast, as well as visiting centres for peace and development-projects.

The second part of the programme was held in the beautiful Europa hotel, which has an unfortunate record of being the most bombed hotel in Europe. There was an unprecedented gathering of people coming from all corners of the world to share experiences with each-other. The goal of creating a global peace-builder network has been a veritable success, which can be seen by visiting [globalpeacebuilders.org](http://globalpeacebuilders.org).

### World Social Forum process expands to more regions

New social movements, social organisations and working groups for Arab, Asian and Russian regions are now created in the ever expanding World Social Forum process. If you want to know more about the expansion or join a working group, visit [openfsm.net](http://openfsm.net).

### AFRI famine walk

IPB members AFRI (Action from Ireland), creators of the successful "Just a second" campaign, is arranging a march against the growing world famine. Participants will walk from Doolough to Louisburgh, starting on 17<sup>th</sup> May. If you want to know more, visit [afri.ie](http://afri.ie).

### Middle-Eastern peace - New appeal

The Hommes de Parole Foundation in Paris that has earlier organised meetings between Rabbis and Imams for Peace is now doing an appeal for peace in Israel. Their youtube film-clip is terrific, and deserves a visit by itself. Go to <http://www.hommesdeparole.org/petition> for a closer look.

### Nuclear Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, Second PrepCom 2008

The NPT PrepCom 2008 concluded in Geneva on May 9. Civil society participants from all over the world are digesting the outcomes and the mass of information produced during the two week long conference. Preliminary reports to be found on the following websites:

- [The](http://www.un.org/NPT2010/SecondSession/) official conference website:  
<http://www.un.org/NPT2010/SecondSession/>
- At <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/2008index.html> there is extensive information regarding including the NGO statements, Government declarations and working papers.

- <http://www.acronym.org.uk/npt/index.htm> has many useful analyses. The chair's factual summary is at: <http://www.acronym.org.uk/npt/08chair.htm>
- Also visit the [this link](#) to see a UN press release on NPT prepcom, as well as more from Acronym.

### IPB co-organised two main side-events

1. NUCLEAR COSTS: On 28 April 2008, IPB organised a meeting, together with the World Council of Churches, on the theme: *Nuclear weapons at what price? An economic, moral and political assessment*. This session was held within the framework of the NGO programme at the NPT PrepComm, in the Palais des Nations. Speakers included Stephen Schwartz, co-author of *Atomic Audit* (Brookings Institution, USA) and Marie Dennis, co-President, Pax Christi International. Colin Archer, IPB Secretary-General spoke about the political costs of nuclear weapons and introduced IPB's new publication on this topic, written by Ben Cramer, entitled *Nuclear Weapons: at What Cost?* (definitive text available in the coming weeks). For texts of presentations, see below:

[SCHWARTZ : text](#); [SCHWARTZ : presentation](#);  
[DENNIS : text](#)

2. WORLD COURT PROJECT: "Good faith is a fundamental principle of international law, without which all international law would collapse," Judge Mohammed Bedjaoui declared last week. President of the International Court of Justice when it gave its 1996 advisory opinion on nuclear weapons, and more recently Algerian Foreign Minister, he delivered the keynote address to a 1 May conference, "*Good Faith, International Law, and the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons: The Once and Future Contributions of the International Court of Justice*," at the Warwick Hotel in Geneva. The event was co-organised by IPB and several other international NGOs. [>>MORE](#)

In addition, IPB Secretariat assisted with various NGO activities, including the visit of over 80 young people, many from Germany, under the auspices of BANg (Ban All Nukes generation). They organised actions with banners outside the UN, lobbied delegates, etc. Their main event was a full-day simulation of negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention, held at the International School. <http://www.bang-europe.org/geneva/index.php>. See wonderful photo-gallery at:

<http://www.bang-europe.org/geneva/gallery.php>

### Newsletters

IPB receives many e-newsletters, both from our members and non-member organisations. Click [here](#) for a list with hyperlinks.

### Calendar

Click [here](#) for IPB's international events calendar.

For disarmament events, go to the comprehensive **Disarmament Calendars** of UN and other intergovernmental, grassroots and civil society events in

key cities by the Geneva Forum at [www.geneva-forum.org](http://www.geneva-forum.org) and by Reaching Critical Will at <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/disarmcal08.html>

Message to IPB members: if you have reports of activities that are relevant to this newsletter please email them to the Secretariat.

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