

IPB · Marienstr. 19 – 20 · 10117 Berlin

His Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres
UN Secretary-General
United Nations Headquarters
New York City

Berlin, 29.09.2020

Call for Disarmament and the Reduction of Global Military Spending

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

We write to you on behalf of the International Peace Bureau and more than 11.000 signatories to express our support for your call for a global ceasefire. We would also like to emphasize the need for (nuclear) disarmament and the reallocation of money from the military to healthcare, social, and environmental needs – to the fulfilment of the Social Development Goals.

COVID-19 has made it clear that the world we live in has weaknesses and vulnerabilities. Healthcare systems have reached the limits of their capacities as a consequence of irresponsible political decisions that have led to dramatic underinvestment in healthcare. On the other hand, social systems were not able to help employees, who are fearful of job and income losses. The ILO has reported that working hours for the second quarter of 2020 fell by 17.3 percent – equal to the loss of 495.000.000 full-time jobs – and are expected to remain high in the third quarter, at 12.1 percent, or 345.000.000 full-time jobs. The tragedy that the pandemic caused to refugees and people living in areas of armed conflict zones is immeasurable.

This pandemic has also made clear that states need to re-prioritize their spending. While many of the problems raised by the pandemic could have been at least partially solved, it was the lack of funding which hindered it. In 2019, worldwide military expenditure reached USD 1,917, and spending on new nuclear weapons in the next 20 years is scheduled to top 1 trillion dollars. Even during the heights of the Covid-19 pandemic, the European Defence Fund increased from a compromise of EUR 6 billion to 7 billion.

Militarization is the wrong path; it fuels tensions and raises the potential for war and conflict. It aggravates already heightened nuclear tensions and creates a vicious circle. We strongly believe that the elimination of nuclear weapons, disarmament and the reduction of global military spending should be the main guidelines for our solutions. We must trust in and build upon multilateralism and strengthen international law and its enforcement. We support the efforts of the trade union movement globally and locally in their call for a new social contract. We fight for societies based on human rights, which can solve the ecological challenges and pursue global social justice.

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With disarmament, the implementation of the SDGs, a global social contract, and a new global green peace deal, we can address challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Your initiative to establish a global ceasefire in response to the pandemic was a step in the right direction, and we support your renewed push. We are ready to work with your office and the UN organs concerned to rally the global peace and labour organizations to support this call. We will continue to call for action through the Global Campaign on Military Spending (GCOMS) and the 2021 IPB Barcelona World Conference.

The IPB, along with the more than 11.000 people that [signed this petition](#), call on all nations of the world, the UN and you, Mr. Secretary General, to act for a culture of peace and disarmament. A peaceful path means that we need a global strategy, a global social contract, and global cooperation based on International Law to ensure planet-wide support for people.

Yours faithfully,

IPB Co-President Lisa Clark

IPB Co-President Philip Jennings