

COP27



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Mr. Simon Stiell, Acting Executive Secretary
UNFCCC Secretariat
P.O. Box 260124
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Germany

Daniele Violetti,
Director-ad interim, Means of Implementation
Division
UNFCCC Secretariat
P.O. Box 260124
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Re: Appeal to UNFCCC to Study Climate Impacts of Military Emissions and Military Spending for Climate Financing

Dear Executive Secretary Stiell and Director Violetti,

In the lead up to the Conference of the Parties (COP) 27 in Egypt, our organizations, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the International Peace Bureau and World BEYOND War, are jointly writing this open letter to you about our concerns related to the adverse impacts



of military emissions and expenditures on the climate crisis. As armed conflicts rage in Ukraine, Ethiopia and South Caucasus, we are gravely concerned that military emissions and expenditures are derailing progress on the Paris Agreement.

We are appealing to the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate (UNFCCC) to conduct a special study and publicly report on the carbon emissions of the military and war. We are also asking that the Secretariat study and report on military spending in the context of climate finance. We are troubled that military emissions and expenditures continue to rise, impeding countries' capacity to mitigate and adapt to the climate crisis. We are also worried that the ongoing wars and hostilities between countries are undermining global cooperation needed to achieve the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Since its inception, the UNFCCC has not put on a COP agenda the issue of carbon emissions from the military and war. We recognize that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has identified the possibility of climate change contributing to violent conflict but the IPCC has not considered the excessive emissions from the military to climate change. Yet, the military is the largest consumer of fossil fuels and biggest carbon emitter in the governments of state parties. The United States' military is the largest consumer of petroleum products on the planet. The Costs of War Project at Brown University released a report in 2019 entitled "Pentagon Fuel Use, Climate Change, and the Costs of War" that showed that the carbon emissions of the U.S. military are larger than most European countries. Many countries are investing in new fossil fuel-powered weapons systems, such as fighter jets, warships and armoured vehicles, that will cause carbon lock-in for many decades and prevent rapid decarbonization. However, they do not have adequate plans to offset the emissions of the military and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. We are requesting that the UNFCCC put on the agenda of the next COP the issue of military and war emissions.

Last year, global military spending rose to \$2.1 trillion (USD), according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The five largest military spenders are the United States, China, India, United Kingdom and Russia. In 2021, the U.S. spent \$801 billion on its military, which accounted for 40% of world military expenditures and more than the next nine countries combined. This year, the Biden administration has further increased U.S. military spending to a record high of \$840 billion. By contrast the U.S. budget for the Environmental Protection Agency, which is responsible for climate change, is only \$9.5 billion. The British government plans to double military spending to £100 billion by 2030. Worse still, the British government announced that it would cut funding from climate change and foreign aid to spend more on weapons to Ukraine. Germany also announced a €100 billion boost to its military spending. In the latest federal budget, Canada ramped up its defence budget currently at \$35 billion/year by \$8 billion over the next five years. Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are increasing military spending to meet the 2% GDP target. NATO's latest defence expenditures report shows that military spending for its thirty member countries has risen dramatically over the past 7 years from \$896 billion to \$1.1 trillion USD per year, which is 52% of world military spending (Chart 1). This increase is more than \$211 billion per year, which is more than double the climate financing pledge.



Chart 1

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total NATO Military Spending (US dollars)	\$896 billion	\$911 billion	\$918 billion	\$972 billion	\$1,031 billion	\$1,107 billion

Source: Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2020), March 2021.

In 2009 at COP 15 in Copenhagen, wealthy Western countries made a commitment to establish an annual fund of \$100 billion by 2020 to help developing countries adapt to the climate crisis, but they failed to meet this target. Last October, Western countries led by Canada and Germany published a Climate Finance Delivery Plan claiming that it will take until 2023 to meet their commitment to mobilize \$100 billion every year through the Green Climate Fund (GCF) to assist poorer nations deal with the climate crisis. Developing countries are the least responsible for the crisis, but are the hardest hit by climate-induced extreme weather events and urgently need adequate financing for adaptation and loss and damage.

At COP 26 in Glasgow, rich countries agreed to double their funding for adaptation, but they have failed to do so and they have failed to agree on funding for loss and damage. In August of this year, the GCF launched its campaign for a second replenishment from countries. This funding is crucial for climate resilience and a just transition that is gender-responsive and targeted to vulnerable communities. Instead of marshalling resources for climate justice, this past year, Western countries have rapidly increased public spending for weapons and war. We are requesting that the UNFCCC raise the issue of military spending as a source of funding for climate financing facilities: the GCF, the Adaptation Fund, and the Loss and Damage Financing Facility.

In September, during the General Debate at the United Nations, the leaders of many countries denounced military spending and made the connection to the climate crisis. The Prime Minister of the Solomon Islands Manasseh Sogavare stated, “Sadly more resources are spent on wars than on combatting climate change, this is extremely unfortunate.” The Foreign Minister of Costa Rica Minister for Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica, Arnaldo André-Tinoco expounded,

It is inconceivable that while millions of people are waiting for vaccines, medicines or food to save their lives, the richest countries continue to prioritize their resources in armaments at the expense of people's well-being, climate, health and equitable recovery. In 2021, global military spending continued to increase for the seventh consecutive year to reach the highest figure we have ever seen in history. Costa Rica today reiterates its call for a gradual and sustained reduction in military spending. For the more weapons we produce, the more will escape even our best efforts at management and control. It is about prioritizing the lives and wellbeing of people and the planet over the profits to be made from weapons and war.



It is important to note that Costa Rica abolished its military in 1949. This path of demilitarization over the past 70 years has led Costa Rica to be a leader in decarbonization and biodiversity conversation. Last year at COP 26, Costa Rica launched the “Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance” and the country can power most of its electricity on renewables. At this year’s UN General Debate, the President of Colombia Gustavo Petro Urrego also denounced the “invented” wars in Ukraine, Iraq, Libya, and Syria and argued that wars have served as an excuse to not tackle climate change. We are asking that the UNFCCC directly confront the interconnected problems of militarism, war and the climate crisis.

Last year, scientists Dr. Carlo Rovelli and Dr. Matteo Smerlak co-founded the Global Peace Dividend Initiative. They argued in their recent article “A Small Cut in World Military Spending Could Help Fund Climate, Health and Poverty Solutions” published in *Scientific American* that countries should redirect some of the \$2 trillion “wasted every year in the global arms race” to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and other development funds. Peace and the reduction and re-allocation of military spending to climate financing are crucial to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees. We call on the UNFCCC Secretariat to use your office to raise awareness about the impacts of military emissions and military expenditures on the climate crisis. We ask that you put these issues on an upcoming COP agenda and commission a special study and public report. Carbon-intensive armed conflict and rising military spending can no longer be overlooked if we are serious about averting catastrophic climate change.

Finally, we believe that peace, disarmament and demilitarization are vital to mitigation, transformational adaptation, and climate justice. We would welcome an opportunity to meet with you virtually and we can be reached through the WILPF office’s contact information above. WILPF will also be sending a delegation to COP 27 and we would be pleased to meet with you in-person in Egypt. More information about our organizations and sources for the information in our letter are enclosed below. We look forward to your reply. Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,

Madeleine Rees
Secretary General
Women’s International League for
Peace and Freedom

Sean Conner
Executive Director
International Peace Bureau

David Swanson
Co-Founder and Executive
Director
World BEYOND War



ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATIONS:

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF): WILPF is a membership-based organization that works through feminist principles, in solidarity and partnership with sister activists, networks, coalitions, platforms, and civil society organizations. WILPF has member Sections and Groups in over 40 countries and partners around the world and our headquarters is based in Geneva. Our vision is of a world of permanent peace built on feminist foundations of freedom, justice, nonviolence, human rights, and equality for all, where people, the planet, and all its other inhabitants coexist and flourish in harmony. WILPF has a disarmament program, Reaching Critical Will based in New York: <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/> More information of WILPF: www.wilpf.org

International Peace Bureau (IPB): The International Peace Bureau is dedicated to the vision of a World Without War. Our current main programme centres on Disarmament for Sustainable Development and within this, our focus is mainly on the reallocation of military expenditure. We believe that by reducing funding for the military sector, significant amounts of money could be released for social projects, domestically or abroad, which could lead to the fulfillment of real human needs and the protection of the environment. At the same time, we support a range of disarmament campaigns and supply data on the economic dimensions of weapons and conflicts. Our campaigning work on nuclear disarmament began already in the 1980s. Our 300 member organisations in 70 countries, together with individual members, form a global network, bringing together knowledge and campaigning experience in a common cause. We link experts and advocates working on similar issues in order to build strong civil society movements. A decade ago, the IPB launched a global campaign on military spending: <https://www.ipb.org/global-campaign-on-military-spending/> calling for a reduction and re-allocation to urgent social and environmental needs. More information: www.ipb.org

World BEYOND War (WBW): World BEYOND War is a global nonviolent movement to end war and establish a just and sustainable peace. We aim to create awareness of popular support for ending war and to further develop that support. We work to advance the idea of not just preventing any particular war but abolishing the entire institution. We strive to replace a culture of war with one of peace in which nonviolent means of conflict resolution take the place of bloodshed. World BEYOND War was begun January 1, 2014. We have chapters and affiliates around the world. WBW has launched a global petition “COP27: Stop Excluding Military Pollution from Climate Agreement”: <https://worldbeyondwar.org/cop27/> More information about WBW can be found here: <https://worldbeyondwar.org/>

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