



## International Press Communiqué: Burning a hole in our budget!



Geneva, 11 April 2013. On 15 April, over 100 organisations all over the world will (for the third time) come together for the [Global Day of Action on Military Spending](#). This coordinated global effort constitutes a civil society movement for change.

The current economic crisis has put pressure on governments to reduce spending on essential human needs: confronting climate change, battling deadly diseases, achieving the Millennium Development Goals. But with some exceptions, national governments continue to waste enormous resources on the military.

Figures from the 2011 [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute](#) (SIPRI) annual report show that **the world's governments devote more public money than ever on the military: \$1,738 billion per year**. If spent differently, this would go a long way to resolving the real and immediate challenges facing our planet.

On 15 April, SIPRI will announce the military spending figures for 2012. It is also [Tax Day](#) in the USA, a traditional time for awareness-raising actions on how much of the US budget is spent on defence and funding wars overseas, while the Administration is cutting back on taxpayers' social services. Given the ongoing budget crisis debate, there is bound to be a huge interest among the general public.

As in previous years, **the United Nations will issue a formal statement of support for the Global Day**, and will contribute at the highest levels to a specially-organised seminar in Geneva.

The International Peace Bureau (GDAMS Coordinator) today issued two specific calls:

1. **At national level:** for all states to contribute to the [UN's Annual Report on Military Expenditures](#) by submitting their data on national defence budgets.
2. **At international level:** for all stakeholders to [raise the issue of military spending](#) during the current consultations to define the UN's Post-2015 Development Agenda.

If, as seems likely, total military spending at the global level in this year slightly reduced, the organisers of GDAMS underline the following six points:

1. **The cuts are on a relatively small scale** – especially if viewed in percentage terms rather than absolute numbers. There will be some job losses in the military sector. But many more jobs could be created if the resources were invested differently. We call for a 'transition economy'.
2. **They are reversible:** as soon as their economies improve, most governments will aim to restore the level of military 'readiness' to pre-crisis levels -- unless there is a strong movement to demand that social and development needs should have priority.
3. **The money saved is not channelled to social development.** In most cases it is swallowed up in debt-reduction. But our economies need expanding and reorienting to meet human needs, which requires public investment in health and education, housing and transport, employment and energy. This can be achieved, not only by re-directing military budgets, but also by taxing more heavily the super-rich and closing loopholes that keep revenues low.
4. **The cuts are not made in the right places:** the most destructive tools in the military arsenal are nuclear weapons. That is the absolute priority for the axe, though in some states it is the most heavily-protected budget – even though they are unusable in every conceivable conflict.
5. **Some countries are in fact increasing their military spending:** (Sweden – Poland – Japan...) Or at least maintaining the level more or less steady: (Finland – Denmark...) In these places especially, the argument for reductions is a powerful one.
6. **Underlying attitudes to security have not changed.** Governments think they can solve problems like terrorism or resource shortages by military means, while the deeper causes are not tackled. Yet these are the problems which are used to justify massive spending on the military.

GDAMS 2012 was a great success, with around 100 actions initiated in 43 countries. This year, activists will organise an even wider range of actions -- from protests at military production facilities, to teach-ins, petitions and flash mobs. New and much broader coalitions are being forged. Each location will devise its own creative approach, but the collective message will highlight the latest figures allocated to global military spending.

The GDAMS actions in capital cities and other locations will offer photo opportunities and important stories about military spending.

Some examples:

In Oakland, a 'Living Graveyard' will be displayed.

NDH-Cameroon will organize a 'Citizens' Tea', a gathering with the public and journalists. In Chile, a street pantomime will feature the "[Invisibles por la Paz](#)" with a video from Spain;

In Tucson, protesters will stand outside the Raytheon Missile plant;

A coalition in Nairobi will organise a petition, a workshop and a procession;

Peru will be joining GDAMS from a remote area where militarisation is rampant with a one-hour long special radio broadcast on military spending.

**For interviews, contact Colin Archer, Secretary-General, [International Peace Bureau](#)** (coordinating organisation): Tel: +41 22 731 6429 - [secgen@ipb.org](mailto:secgen@ipb.org)

For actions and contacts in each country: see the [GDAMS 2013 world map](#)

For details of Geneva activities/invitation letter contact: [aude.feltz@ipb.org](mailto:aude.feltz@ipb.org)

