

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Consultative Status with United Nations ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO

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GLOBAL DAY OF ACTION AGAINST MILITARY SPENDING

WILPF AUSTRALIA STATEMENT

WILPF Australia supports this global day of action.

Today the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)* released the military spending figures for 2013. Globally this totalled US\$1.75 trillion dollars.

The US is by far the world's highest military spender – at US\$640 billion last year.

Military expenditure in Asia and Oceania increased by 3.6 percent in 2013 – largely due to increased military spending by China, Indonesia, the Phillipnes, Vietnam and Australia.

Australia is 13th on the list of states with the highest level of military expenditure last year, at US\$24 billion. The Abbott government is still proposing to purchase 100 F-35 striker jets with an estimated cost of a **minimum** of \$48 billion. In the news today, we also hear talk about how many submarines to build in South Australia .

At the same time, the government talks of having to reduce aged pensions, increasing the retirement age to 70 and getting university students to take on more debt to fund universities. What priorities do you think our government should have? Do you want them to be spending on fighter jets or should governments concentrate on spending our taxpayers money on services we desparately need better funding for, such as housing, health and education – all of which are proposed to be slashed in the coming May budget.

The government has yet to tell Australians if we are paying the \$1.6 billion for the newly established US base in Darwin.

Are we part of an escalating arms race in our region? Would it not be preferable to build peaceful relations with our neighbours.

Please use today to reflect on the increasing trend to militarism in our region. Australians nneed to get the message across to our federal government that we do NOT support increasing militarism. We support peaceful, not aggressive approaches to conduct in our region.

DISCUSS THIS ISSUE WITH YOUR FRIENDS
LET THE GOVERNMENT KNOW WHAT YOU WANT OUR MONEY SPENT ON