Minutes from the IPB Strategic Meeting on the GCOMS Campaign, 
Barcelona, 25/November/2017


Jordi Calvo started the meeting, and Nora Miralles introduced the GCOMS coordination team at the Delas Centre in Barcelona. The coordination team presented the actions that the campaign has put forward since the last GDAMS, and the ones in which the campaign is focused right now. The member of the team Pere Brunet explained that more than 116 GCOMS actions from our partners have taken place internationally (in 30 countries). He also presented the GCOMS webpage, GDAMS events and materials, and CutMilex materials, oriented to the political pressure towards national politicians to achieve a compromise in the reduction of military spending. He briefly described the GCOMS-GDAMS work during 2017, including actions, newsletters, and meetings with the International Steering Committee members. The final GDAMS 2017 Report is available in the GCOMS webpages.

![Meeting Scene]

Nina Krotov, from the Campaign, presented further details on Cut Milex. This is a new campaign, complementary to GDAMS which is conceptualized as an autumn action, as most of the national budgets are discussed in those months. The idea is to create a new campaign that is complementary to GDAMS, with its own objectives, and its own campaigning tools. As such, advocacy or outreach activities, such as street performances and protests, petitions, organization of debates and seminars, digital and media-oriented actions, can be backed by lobbying actions.

What has been done up until now? It's the first year, so we have overall been thinking on how to implement this action successfully. Two handbooks have been written, a more general focusing on lobbying strategies and a "social media toolkit" focusing on the use of twitter to challenge individually and collectively, directly and publicly political representatives about military spending issues.
Main message (with “NATO's 2%” as a key issue to focus on):

- To reduce military spending while redirecting its funds to social needs.
- To increase transparency and avoid opacity in official data on exports and military and defence industry.
- To introduce criteria for addressing military spending in national budgets in a comprehensive and rigorous way.
- To ensure that arms programs are audited and controlled by the nation's parliament.

Zoe Dubois, from the campaign, presented a proposal of GCOMS 2018 objectives and activities. For the 2018 GCOMS campaign, the idea is to manage two actions at two fixed times: on April for GDAMS and on October-November for CutMilex. To improve our impact, the GCOMS coordination team will pay attention to provide, as much as possible, a good communication on the campaign throughout the year. The idea is to continually communicate on military spending issues and all the actions that are taking place during the year, to gain more visibility but also to encourage our partners to achieve the objectives set.

One of the main objectives of GCOMS 2018 is to increase the number of partners and to reach a greater number of countries. So there is much that should be done to find knew potential partners around the world and to achieve more visibility. Zoe Dubois presented a detailed plan of actions (included in these minutes as an Annex) with a distribution of the activities along 2018.

1. The priority of mobilizing the public opinion

The main goal of GCOMS campaign is **reaching public awareness and public mobilization.** It should not be only political lobbying. We have to build oppositions in public opinion, change people thinking, not politicians, because their action is not innocent, they are increasing military spending on purpose. That should be the main goal. This doesn't mean we cannot promote discussions within the parliaments on military spending, but our function should be to organize and mobilize people. That means:
A new GDAMS proposal that was discussed is to organize 5 or 6 press conferences at the same time, coinciding with the release date of SIPRI data, in order to create impact notably through the publication of an Statement with already collected signatures of social, cultural, political leaders, intellectuals and other personalities supporting the Campaign. The idea would be to mimic the German Statement (http://demilitarize.org/appeal-german-society-disarmament-instead-armament/), by preparing and presenting simultaneous Statements in different European countries. Could we be able to reach 20 or 25 European organizations?

2. The message of the Campaign

The frame for the campaign should be that military spending, and so are weapons, are dangerous for security. Weapons are bringing war. That is the political fight we have to address: demilitarization of societies and minds. We can also work with Article 26 of the UN Charter: you should not dedicate more spending to defence than that you need. We should improve our relationship with the SIPRI.

In order to create coalitions, it is also important to highlight our alternate objectives, when we talk about redirecting military expenditure: development, social justice, and education.

We have to find a discourse, or a model, that could be useful everywhere, we need attractive material with fresh and strong slogans. For instance, the idea that the legal arms trade represents 40% of public corruption. We need to promote the idea that security is not military. We need another definition of security. Antimilitarism can be a weapon to fight fascism. Make visible the links between militarism and fascism. Militarization increases violence within the society.

A possible GCOMS’ objective and message could focus on a 10% reduction: what could be done with the redirection of 10% of the military budget? Fear paralyzes people, the TNI has studies on how to invest in social development and possible alternatives; we could use this information to edit materials that everybody can spread in their societies. We may also highlight everything that has not been done and the impact of austerity policies at the level of social welfare, while the military budget has risen in the same period. The idea of preparing alternate national budgets, centred in people’s needs and not on the military was also proposed.

We also need to build our advocacy campaign on the 2% GDP required by NATO, this argument has to also become central.

News on defence budgets are not reaching people, and one of our functions would be to help people to be informed on defence and military decisions. Very few media escape from the hegemonic militaristic discourse, we have to work with them in order to change that. GCOMS should raise public awareness on the importance of redirecting at least a 10% of the present military budgets.
3. Alliances

We should build alliances with women and environmental organizations, trade unions, human rights people, and anticorruption groups that are open to build alternatives. We need to make people think all together in the frame of the campaign.

But, sometimes, when we want to collaborate with organisations that are not pacifist, they don’t see the point, some of them are in favour of Army-based measures. Maybe the consensus could be less weapons, less war, less militarization, a reduction of defence budgets, and redirecting funds to human needs.

We could also engage with churches or religious groups that are working on peace and demilitarization and we should address industrial conversion, using it to engage trade unions to the process. Also, link military spending to the militarization of borders and management of the refugees’ crisis. We could create alliances with social movements opposing the demonization of certain communities, refugees or women and LGTB rights. We are already implementing those alliances in the social networks.

As a Peace movement, we have to inform and educate about militarization of the society, and military spending is one of those parts. Consensus: Put military spending in the middle point and then each part could proceed as they want, however keeping this common ground. Our responsibility is also to link climate change (and so the ecologists that fight against it) as well as development issues to the campaign for the reduction of military spending. We could also engage with the scientific community.

Let’s prepare for 2019 and 2020: let us start the discussion and link all of those facts, engaging more groups in disarmament activities. Let’s look for partners in other movements and to build a common ground.

3. Geographic goals: The idea of a big European campaign against EDAP in 2019

GCOMS should also have specific objectives for each world big region. This should be discussed and defined in a decentralized way, through regional meetings of GCOMS ISC members and partners. The attendants of the GCOMS meeting on November 25th started by discussing some potential European goals like having a big European campaign against EDAP. This is briefly discussed in the next paragraphs.

EDAP and PESCO seem non-questionable. We’ll have European elections in 2019: we could add to the campaign those groups that are addressing military spending and are not part of GCOMS yet. The frame of the new European elections is interesting. We should try to influence the elections campaign, warning on spending on defence, border security, counterterrorism, and on the near future goal to have a European common army. The idea of intervening in the European campaigns sounds interesting, and we have enough time to prepare actions, to persuade politicians, to raise awareness.

European army could be 50.000 people, that means to enlarge the whole army structure in Europe, the militarization of European politics. That is not a project of reducing military spending. Frontex is a part of the European army (ex. they need new ships). There is no sign they want to develop an independent army distinct from NATO and reduce national military spending. It is not going to be a small nice army. In addition, it is illegal with regard to the
Lisbon treaty; every democrat that is proud of the European treaty should say that they are incompatible. Maybe we could launch a seminar on the actual facts about a European army. We have to start a discussion in a common European ground on how to reduce military spending.

It would be desirable to reach a consensus on specific 2018-2019 GCOMS objectives also in Africa, North America, Central and South America, and Asia-Pacific, apart from Europe.
Annex: The 2018 GCOMS Campaign  
Proposed goals and activities

The Global Campaign on Military Spending (GCOMS) is an IPB international campaign founded in December 2014. The main aim is to reduce the global military spending while redirecting funds to the consecration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set up by the UN General Assembly, the Climate Change agreement (COP 21) and humanitarian crises.

GCOMS is run by a steering group of activists from all over world and many organisations of the civil society, and is coordinated by the Centre of Peace Studies J.M. Delàs in Barcelona as a decentralized office of IPB. It works through its members to change government policy and practice on military spending.

Objectives of GCOMS 2018

Much of the money locked into the military sector should be redirected and made available for peace and disarmament sectors as well as in public services such as health and education. The IPB five directions to redirect military resources include peace, disarmament, conflict prevention and resolution and human security; sustainable development and anti-poverty programmes; mitigation and adaptation on a climate change and biodiversity loss scenario; social programmes, human rights defence, and gender equality and green job-creation, and humanitarian efforts to assist refugees, migrants and other vulnerable populations.

In the last three years, the GDAMS campaign has included around 120 different actions in 20 countries (2015), 23 countries (2016) and 30 countries (2017). In this context, GCOMS 2018 should focus on several main objectives:

- Increasing the number of partner organizations and reaching a greater number of countries with active campaigners.
- Increasing the number of GDAMS public actions and street-based activities, to involve an increased number of citizens and to disseminate the GCOMS message. This includes demonstrations, protests, penny polls, peace vigils, marches, press conferences, and many others.
- Organising strong debates and panel sessions with significant speakers, reaching a wide media coverage.
- Introducing the military spending debate in National Parliaments, to reduce military budgets and increase transparency.
- Preparing an action on the European Parliament (with ENAAT) to ask for a reduction on European Milex, in the context of the NATO proposal of having Milex raised to 2% GDP.
- Promoting the production of statements and well-founded National Reports on Milex in countries with active campaigners.
GCOMS 2018 Campaigns and activities

GCOMS will include two main campaigns in 2018: GDAMS in April and Cut Milex in October-November.

GDAMS

GDAMS will run in April 2018, coinciding with the U.S. Tax Day (April 17, 2018) and the publication date of the SIPRI. Militarization is one of the causes of military conflicts. It encourages the proliferation of weapons and normalizes the use of armed and military force. By asking for a reduction on military spending, GDAMS aims at redirecting military expenses to human needs such as health or education and to preserving human rights. GDAMS will include several main messages:

- Budget increases in the U.S., NATO, and other countries must be stopped and reversed: world is over-armed.
- Peace is under-funded. Military spending must be redirected to human needs: poverty, refugees, climate change, education, health, access to energy and resources and many others.
- Human Security is always THE alternative to military security.

The campaign will design and produce simple, easy-to-use and easy-to-understand campaign material including texts and images, examples and a campaigners handbook. Contact and information exchange among GCOMS partners and Steering Committee members is essential. It will be based on periodic on-line meetings and continuous e-mail communication.

- All worldwide actions will be clearly publicised in the GCOMS webpage and disseminated through social networks: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.
- Newsletters will be periodically sent to all GCOMS partners.
- A selfie campaign, similar to previous years, will be organized.
- GCOMS 2018 will work to increase the number of partner organizations and to reach a greater number of countries with active campaigners.
- We will also work to increase the number of street-based and public GDAMS actions like demonstrations, protests, penny polls, peace vigils, marches (see the final report on GDAMS 2017, for instance).
- Public debates trying to reach wide media coverage will be fostered.
CUT MILEX

Cut Milex aims at introducing the military spending debate in Parliaments. It will be organized in October-November, coinciding with the discussion period of National Budgets in Parliaments. It is to not only about raising awareness about military spending, but also on encouraging politicians in Parliaments to take actions against it and to redirect part of the Milex budget to human needs. Cut Milex has a global perspective, asking for a reduction and redirection of military expenses in the maximum number of countries. But it has also a local perspective, as annual budget debates in different countries have specific and distinct structures. Activists in each country must therefore craft their own approach, including how to organize debates with Parliamentarians and how to shape the messages and proposals for them. Given that the political situation varies among countries, and given the lack of intergovernmental agreements and treaties to limit Military Spending, national-level action is vital.

The Cut Milex 2018 campaign will include several main messages:

1. To reduce military spending while redirecting its funds to social needs cooperation, conflict mediation and peace building.
2. To increase transparency and avoid opacity in official data on exports and military and defense industry.
3. To introduce criteria for addressing military spending in national budgets in a comprehensive and rigorous way.
4. To ensure that arms programs are audited and controlled by the nation’s parliament.

The idea is to generate powerful messages, in order to impact politicians and decision-makers, and to attract strong media coverage. A handbook with lobbying strategies is already available.
## GCOMS 2018: PROPOSED ACTIVITIES and TIMETABLE

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### LAUNCH OF GCOMS 2018
- Contact partners and ISC members
- Prepare GCOMS webpages for 2018 events and actions
- Update GCOMS webpage with relevant news
- Develop social-media presence (Facebook, Twitter) and disseminate news published on GCOMS webpages
- First ISC-skype meeting: ideas for the first GCOMS 2018 Statement
- Decide GDAMS dates, based on US tax Day and SIPRI calendar
- Prepare a draft GCOMS 2018 first Statement
- Contact ISC members: text refinement for the Statement
- Publish the GCOMS 2018 first Statement
- Contact partners and ISC members: ask for planned actions
- Include GDAMS planned actions in the GCOMS webpages
- Include new material in GDAMS webpages
- Support to GCOMS partners, including their material in the webpages
- Send and publish GCOMS-GDAMS Newsletter
- Update GDAMS webpages and GCOMS interactive world-map with all planned events and actions
- Start the Selfie campaign
- Second ISC-skype meeting: plan and identify GDAMS actions and goals
- Increasing partners & countries
- Promote GCOMS / GDAMS on social media, promote public actions and street-based activities & update campaigners material
- Produce new Infographics

### GDAMS DAYS
- Prepare articles on new SIPRI data
- Collect data from all GDAMS actions including material (photos and other details)
- Prepare articles and interviews on GDAMS actions
- Update GDAMS webpages and GCOMS interactive world-map with all planned / passed events and actions
- Third ISC-skype meeting: Second GCOMS 2018 Statement
- Contact ISC members: text refinement for the 2nd Statement
- Publish the GCOMS 2018 second Statement
- Promote active media coverage
- Collect data from all GDAMS actions
- Prepare GDAMS 2018 final report
- Publish GDAMS 2018 final report
- Include GDAMS 2018 material in the GCOMS webpages

### CULTMILEX CAMPAIGN
- ISC Cut Miles skype meeting: Cut Miles actions
- Prepare documents and motion examples
- Contact partners: ask for Cut Miles planned actions
- Prepare articles and interviews on Cut Miles actions
- Promote statements and reports on Miles at national levels
- Include Cut Miles planned actions in the GCOMS webpages
- Send and publish GCOMS-Cut Miles Newsletter

### ACTION at the EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: reduction of European Miles
- / / ?

- Include GDAMS 2018 material in GCOMS the webpage
- Publish GCOMS 2018 final report
- Publish GDAMS 2018 final report

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**Technical / Coordinating week:**

**ISC Meetings:**

**Specific actions:**

**Continued work / activities that should be done every week/2 weeks:**