

THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN ON MILITARY SPENDING (GCOMS 2018)

Have you ever thought that the world spends too much on war and militarism? Millions of people share this point of view but it has yet to become a major segment of political discourse. We want to change that! The issue is especially relevant in a period in which tensions between major states and between governments and violent fundamentalists are becoming increasingly militarised. Pressure to spend more taxpayer money on weapons systems and warfare is growing. The current situation is also the result of past military spending.

In December 2014, the [International Peace Bureau](#) (IPB) announced the launch of a **permanent, global, year-round campaign** to tackle the worldwide issue of excessive military spending. In 2016, the world's governments spent [over USD 1.67 trillion](#) on the military sector. This is money that could be better spent or invested in creating jobs for young people, feeding the hungry, protecting all citizens from the adverse effects of climate change, researching epidemics...and much more. For several years, IPB has called for annual reallocations of 10% (as a minimum) from the military budgets of all states; and advocated the reduction of arms *production* as well as the international weapons trade.

The campaign builds on over a decade of work completed by IPB and others on the theme of '**Disarmament for Sustainable Development**'. It incorporates the [Global Day of Action on Military Spending](#) (GDAMS – now in its 8th year), which shares a similar goal and is also coordinated by the IPB.



WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

The **overall goal** is to achieve major reallocations of military expenditures (especially in high-spending countries) to five broad alternative areas, which include:

1. **Peace:** disarmament, conflict prevention and resolution, human security;
2. **Sustainable development** and anti-poverty programmes;
3. **Climate change** and biodiversity loss – for mitigation and adaptation;
4. **Public services/social justice**, human rights, gender equality and green job-creation;
5. **Humanitarian programmes** to support the most vulnerable groups.

All the above are part of a wider global transformation towards a culture of peace.

Given that the political situation varies among countries, and the lack any inter-governmental agreement or treaty to limit military spending, national-level action is vital. Each campaigning centre needs to define its own targets and approach. IPB's role is to provide an overall framework and give assistance in a variety of ways.

Example: Some groups use the slogan 'Move the Money!', others, 'Redirect Military Expenditure' or 'Action against Military Spending'. There are demands for various levels of reallocations. Different things work well in different places. Our hope is that all will recognize their programmes within the GCOMS umbrella grouping.

WHAT ARE OUR OBJECTIVES?

The campaign has four main purposes:

1. To extend the global community of activism concerned with this issue;
2. To reach a wide general public and help them express their views;
3. To successfully lobby politicians and other decision makers;
4. To engage both the mainstream and the alternative/civil society media in covering the debate and giving space to those favourable to the GCOMS perspective.



HOW WILL CHANGE COME ABOUT?

IPB's intention is to foster synergies both within each country and internationally so as to gradually strengthen the global movement challenging militarism. This can be done in many ways and each activist or group may have a different focus. The GCOMS campaign aims to help its participants move step by step, each time into a higher gear.

Example: *What may start out as a small scale street action could lead to a series of well-attended public seminars or pieces of published research. This, in turn, could develop into a national coalition, once sufficient outreach is done to draw in different civil society sectors. This coalition could start a programme of national media activity, combined with lobby work at the parliament, which could result initially in a controversy or major policy debate, and ultimately in a switch of government priorities.*

HOW CAN WE PROMOTE A REDUCTION ON MILITARY SPENDING?

Right now the issue of military spending is not prominent in the context of national discourse – it emerges at the top of the media agenda only on select occasions: for instance when a war is announced, a budget decision reaches a crunch, or geo-political tensions rise. Our aim is to make it a controversial debate in which every citizen's voice can count. Over the next few years we will give the issue more visibility, through:

- ongoing campaigning;
- future, greater GDAMS campaign actions;

Ideas for this event are already being developed. Locations, timing, partners, media engagement and funding are all under consideration. **Two possible outcomes** are: an **Observer Committee** of international personalities, and an **International Declaration** demanding reductions in military budgets and proposals for re-investing the resources in programmes to address social and environmental need.

WHO ARE THE PARTNERS?

Such an ambitious shift in priorities will require help from many areas of society. Right now, IPB has 300 member organisations, and there are also around 100 other groups involved in hosting or sponsoring GDAMS events. In addition, we aim to widen our support base and engage with significant actors in sectors such as:

- Peace & Disarmament
 - Development
 - Environment
 - Social Justice
 - Labour
 - Faith
 - Youth
 - Political Parties
 - Women
- Researchers in related fields
- Professionals/ Scientists/ Economists
- Media Outlets and Journalists / Educators / Celebrities

At the more official level, we are already engaging in dialogue with parliamentarians, governments/diplomats, international/UN agencies, and (ex-) military officials.

WHAT DO PARTNERS GAIN FROM BEING PART OF THE CAMPAIGN?

Military spending is a worldwide problem and cannot be confronted from home – even if the main decisions are made in government proceedings in capital cities. Security is a shared issue and campaigners are often inspired by actions and creative ideas from elsewhere. An ongoing, coordinated global effort can help cast a spotlight on the actions of each group and create a greater sense of momentum.

HOW WILL WE COMMUNICATE?

Every campaign requires an effective strategy of communication. In this case we will encourage work at the national level, since that is where the primary political decisions on military spending are made. Message types will include both the formal and the informal: from written reports to video clips and 'selfies'. Our platforms will range from mainstream press and TV to social media and social movement communications of all types.

Visit our website: www.demilitarize.org



HOW IS GCOMS ORGANIZED?

The IPB itself has over 300 member organisations from over 70 countries. In addition, there are nearly 100 partner organisations engaged in the annual GDAMS project. All are welcome to join! Just drop us a line at: coordination.gcoms@ipb.org. The GCOMS is run by a dynamic group of activists from all over world, and is coordinated by the staff at the Centre of Peace Studies, J. M. Delás (on behalf of IPB), based in Barcelona, Spain. Further contributions from individuals, organisations and foundations are always and most welcome.

INVITATION

We invite all those who share our perspective to contact the IPB Secretariat in the coming weeks and months and to consider how they can contribute to this important and ground-breaking international effort.

More information at: www.ipb.org and www.demilitarize.org

Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ipb1910> and <https://www.facebook.com/demilitarizeday>