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November 21, 2023

Mr. Ian Fry
Special Rapporteur on human rights and
climate change
OHCHR-UNOG
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
1211 Geneve 10, Switzerland

**Re: Request for a meeting to discuss the issue of military emissions and expenditures
in the context of human rights and climate change**

Dear Special Rapporteur Fry,

We are writing to you with urgency as global warming is accelerating and wars are raging in many countries such as Gaza, Ukraine, Yemen, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. People around the world especially in the Global South are greatly suffering from climate-related natural disasters and food and water insecurity. In the lead up to the Conference of the Parties (COP) 28 in the United Arab Emirates this month, our organizations – the International Peace Bureau, World BEYOND War, the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom-Canada - are gravely concerned that rising military emissions and expenditures are exacerbating global warming, derailing the Paris Agreement and diverting public funds away from climate finance, which prevent the enjoyment of human rights.

We are requesting a meeting with your office in the new year to discuss the issue of military emissions and spending in the context of human rights and climate change. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) latest report, *Trends in World Military Expenditure*, global military spending rose last year to reach a new high of \$2,240 billion (USD). The five largest military spenders are the United States, China, Russia, India and Saudi Arabia. In 2022, the U.S. spent \$877 billion on its military, which accounted for 40% of world military expenditures. Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are increasing their military spending to meet and exceed the alliance's 2% GDP target. NATO's latest defence expenditures report shows that military spending has risen dramatically since the Paris Agreement. The thirty-one NATO countries spent \$896 billion on military spending in 2015 and they spent over \$1.1 trillion USD in 2022 (Chart 1). This is an increase of \$276 billion per year, which is more than double the climate financing pledge for developing countries that Western countries have still failed to meet.

Chart 1

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total NATO Military Spending (US dollars)	\$896 billion	\$911 billion	\$918 billion	\$972 billion	\$1,031 billion	\$1,107 billion	\$1,153 billion	\$1,172 billion
	<i>*Paris Agreement</i>							

Source: Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2023), July 2023.

https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2023/7/pdf/230707-def-exp-2023-en.pdf

We are troubled that many countries are increasing military spending and investing in fossil fuel powered-weapons and war, but are not investing sufficiently on climate mitigation and adaptation. The UN Environment Programme released its annual Adaptation Gap report entitled *Underfinanced, Underprepared: Inadequate investment and planning on climate adaptation leaves world exposed* that found that countries are not adequately investing in adaptation and are not prepared for extreme weather events. UNEP estimated that the adaptation finance needed to implement domestic adaptation priorities is approximately US\$387 billion per year.

As well, the new Loss and Damage fund requires a massive contribution from the wealthy, Western countries that are the biggest historic carbon emitters and most responsible for the climate crisis. Yet, at the recent meeting on loss and damage, developed countries pledged \$500 million for the grant-based financing mechanism for reconstruction, rehabilitation and relocation in developing countries, which is woefully inadequate. The loss and damage fund and the adaptation gap could be fully resourced if countries reduced their military budgets and re-allocated them to climate action.

Thus, we are requesting that your office analyze the issue of military spending as a source of funding for climate finance including the Adaptation Fund and the Loss and Damage Fund. We are also asking

that your office publicly advise countries to decrease and redirect their military budgets for climate finance. We bring to your attention the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs' important 2020 report, *Rethinking Unconstrained Military Spending*, that also makes this recommendation.

We note that during the opening of the 78th Session of the General Debate at the United Nations this September, many leaders denounced military spending for how it deprives the international community of having the resources needed for climate action and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In his address, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica Arnaldo André-Tinoco declared,

Almost fifteen years ago, military spending slightly exceeded \$1 trillion. Today, world military has more than doubled, surpassing \$2 trillion despite Article 26 of the Charter of the United Nations that mandates the pursuit of peace and international security through the minimal spending on weapons.

In 1949, Costa Rica abolished its military, which has allowed the country to prioritize and invest in peace, environmental protection and social welfare. Costa Rica's path of demilitarization over the past 74 years has led it to be a leader in decarbonization and biodiversity conversation and is an example for other countries.

At the UN General Debate, the Presidents of Brazil, Bolivia and Honduras also raised their concerns about rising military spending. In his speech, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva emphasized "that military spending has totalled \$2 trillion, with nuclear spending reaching \$83 billion — 20 times higher than the regular UN budget." Leaders of Global South countries and civil society are calling for the reduction of military spending to invest in ensuring that we limit global mean temperature rise to 1.5C and we have a liveable planet.

Since its inception, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change has not put on an agenda or done a study on the military's climate impacts. We recognize that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has identified the possibility of climate change contributing to violent conflict in its assessment report, but the IPCC has not studied the military emissions. Yet, the military is the largest consumer of fossil fuel in the wealthy Western governments of the UNFCCC. For example, the United States military is the largest consumer of fossil fuel in the world. 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 and the U.S. has the largest military budget of \$877 billion. A 2022 report estimated that the combined emissions of the world militaries account for 5.5% of global emissions. The carbon emissions from the wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Ukraine have been ignored and unaccounted. These countries are also weakened economically from years of war and do not have the capacity to deal with climate-induced extreme weather events.

As well, many countries are investing in new costly weapons systems, such as fighter jets, which will cause carbon lock-in for decades and prevent rapid decarbonization. The most expensive weapons

system in human history is the U.S. fossil fuel-powered F-35 stealth fighter program that will cost \$1.7 trillion. This year, Canada announced that it would buy new a fleet of F-35 at a life-cycle cost of \$76 billion despite facing unprecedented out-of-control forest fires across the country. Moreover, countries do not have adequate plans to offset the emissions of the military and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Finally, we are also worried that the ongoing wars and hostilities between countries are undermining human rights and the global cooperation needed to achieve the Paris Agreement and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The IPCC's 6th Assessment report concluded with high confidence that "International cooperation is a critical enabler for achieving ambitious climate change mitigation, adaptation, and climate resilient development." However, we cannot cooperate with other countries if we are at war. Yet, Western countries are continuing to prolong deadly and destructive wars by exporting fossil fuel-powered weapons like tanks, missile systems and fighter jets in Ukraine and Gaza instead of supporting negotiations to end them. We are calling for ceasefires, peace talks and environmental peacebuilding, so human rights can be protected and cooperation can take place to tackle the climate emergency.

We believe that peace, disarmament and demilitarization are crucial pillars of realizing human rights int the context of climate change. We are heartened that peace is on the climate summit agenda for he first time at this year's COP. We hope we can meet with you over Zoom to discuss the problems of military emissions and expenditures in the context of human rights and climate change. We can be reached +49 (0) 30 1208 4549 or by email info@ipb-office.berlin Please see the descriptions of our organizations and a list of references at the end of our letter. We look forward to your reply. Thank you for your consideration.

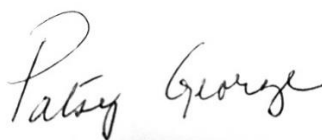
Sincerely,



Sean Conner
Executive Director
International Peace
Bureau



David Swanson
Co-Founder and Executive
Director
World BEYOND War



Co-chair Patsy George
On behalf of co-chair Ellen
Woodsworth and board
the Women's International
League for Peace &
Freedom (WILPF) Canada



Co-chair Lyn Adamson
On behalf of co-chair
Hannah Hadikin and
the board the
Canadian Voice of
Women for Peace
(VOW)

ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATIONS:

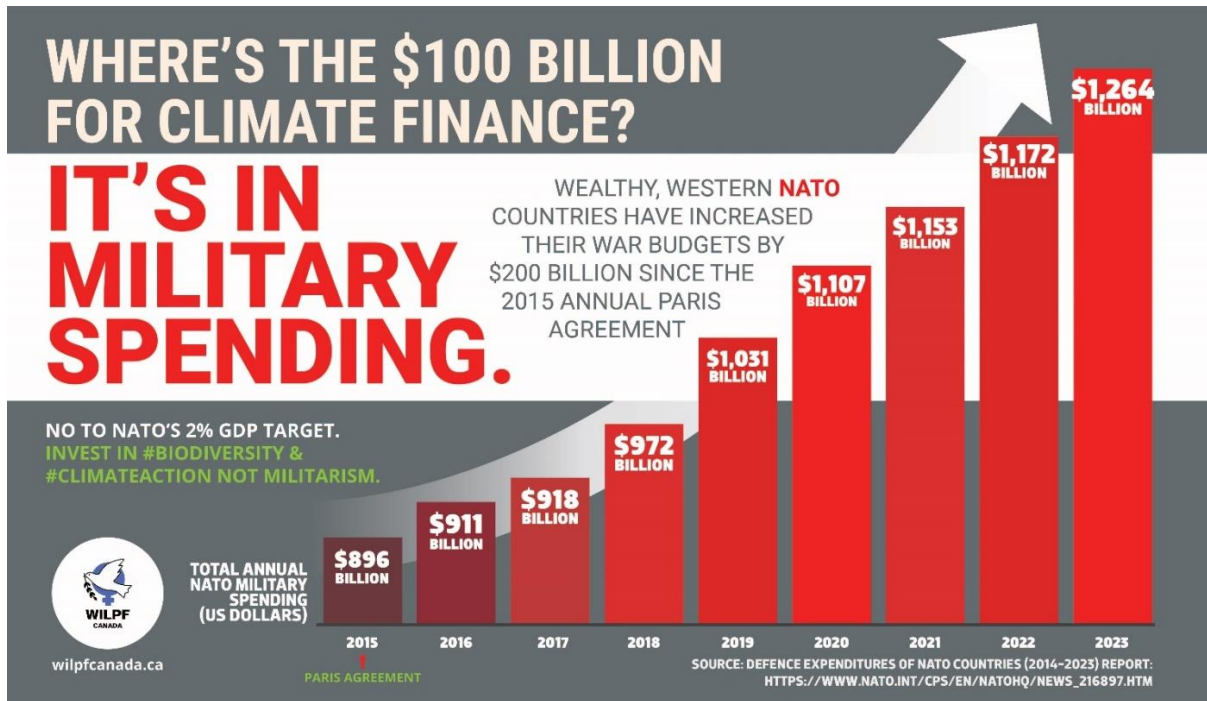
International Peace Bureau (IPB): The International Peace Bureau is dedicated to the vision of a world without war. Our current main programme centres on Disarmament for Sustainable Development and within this, our focus is mainly on the reallocation of military expenditure. We believe that by reducing 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 about the IPB: 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. Last year, WBW has a global petition “Stop Excluding Military Pollution from Climate Agreement”: <https://worldbeyondwar.org/cop27/> More information about WBW can be found here: <https://worldbeyondwar.org/>

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) is the largest national feminist peace organization with members and chapters across the country. VOW was established in 1960 and is a non-partisan, non-governmental organization comprised of a network of diverse women. VOW’s main office is in Toronto. VOW runs many campaigns related to women, peace, disarmament and anti-militarism. VOW has consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and every year brings a delegation of Canadian women to the UN Commission on the Status of Women conference. For over 60 years, VOW has tirelessly advocated for a world without war. VOW stands for a feminist peace based on nonviolence, disarmament, diplomacy and common security with gender equality. Web site: <http://vowpeace.org>

Women’s International League for Peace & Freedom (WILPF) Canada is a membership-led organization committed to a feminist peace, social justice, and gender equality. We are a non-partisan, non-governmental organization members across the country. We are the national section of WILPF International, which is the world's longest standing women peace organization founded in 1915, with 32 Sections and 13 Groups across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Two of our leaders, Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, won the Nobel Peace Prize. WILPF International is

headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and has a disarmament program called Reaching Critical Will in New York. Our Peace Women program monitors the United Nations' Women, Peace & Security agenda and we have an international Environment Working Group.
Web site: wilpfcanda.ca



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