



14 April 2014 – Global military spending levels constitute an unconscionable use of resources and remain at an all-time high according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. In 2012 military spending reached a total of USD 1.75 trillion.

In a world where millions of human beings live in extreme poverty, die of malnutrition, lack medical care and where pandemics continue to kill, it is imperative to pursue good faith disarmament negotiations. Budgets must shift away from weapons production, war-mongering, and surveillance of private persons. Instead, available resources must be devoted to addressing global challenges including humanitarian relief, environmental protection, climate change mitigation and adaptation, prevention of pandemics, and the development of a green economy.

On the occasion of the Global Day of Action on Military Spending, the United Nations Independent Expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order, Alfred de Zayas, calls upon all Governments to proactively inform the public about military expenditures and to justify them:

“Every democracy must involve civil society in the process of establishing budgets, and all sectors of society must be consulted to determine what the real priorities of the population are. Lobbies, including military contractors and other representatives of the military-industrial complex, must not be allowed to hijack these priorities to the detriment of the population’s real

needs.

On the basis of representative opinion polling, parliaments should implement the will of the people and significantly reduce military expenditures, whether in the field of arms production, military research, military bases abroad, surveillance of private citizens, 'intelligence'-gathering, or overt and covert military operations. Tax revenue must be reoriented toward the promotion of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, for research into sustainable sources of energy and for the promotion of sustainable development.”

“In my next report to the Human Rights Council September session, I intend to explore the possible impact of military expenditures on an international order which is democratic and equitable. In this respect, I will examine the level of information provided to the population on military expenditures and what safeguards exist to prevent abuses in this regard”, Mr Zayas says in his statement.

“I am surprised that in the current context of global socio-economic crisis, few have voiced indignation regarding the disproportionate levels of military spending. The place to exercise austerity is in wasteful military expenditures, not in social protection.”

UNRIC related links:

UNRIC's backgrounder on [Human Rights Council](#)

UNRIC's backgrounder on [disarmament](#)