



IMPACT REPORT 2025

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Introductory Overview

It has been another busy year for the Global Campaign on Military Spending UK - as we continue to oppose the government's plans for increasing military spending at the same time as cutting the budget for welfare support and overseas development. The Labour government has continued to increase spending on the military, and with Donald Trump pushing NATO members to commit to an eventual target of 5% of GDP to be spent, it is clear that we have much work ahead of us.

About GCOMS UK

The Global Campaign on Military Spending is the UK arm of the international movement to challenge the ever-increasing military budgets around the world, calling instead for this money to be invested in peacebuilding and socially productive sectors. GCOMS-UK is an umbrella organisation with more than 30 supporting organisations, overseen by a Steering Group of volunteers representing some of those organisations, which provides oversight and campaign input. GCOMS-UK currently employs one member of staff who coordinates the network on a part-time basis. We are funded exclusively by donations from supportive individuals and trusts.

The campaigning context

The world stands on a precipice. Armed conflicts are raging around the world, with more active wars than at any time since 1945 (Global Peace Index, 2024).¹ From the genocide in Gaza to major wars in Sudan, Ukraine and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and now the United States (U.S.) and Israel attacking Iran, plunging the Middle East into further crisis. The UK has supported Israel's genocide in Gaza and the U.S. attacks on Iran by providing logistical support. These conflicts cause huge levels of death and suffering to civilians, catastrophic damage to the environment, and waste precious natural resources and money. International law is at risk in a way which hasn't been seen for generations.

None of this is happening by accident. It is a result of the increasing militarisation of society, rising nationalism and the resurgence of the military as an imperialist tool. Governments are spending trillions on the machinery of war. In almost every nation, including the UK, there are insatiable appetites among the political elites for ever-more military spending, even as poverty increases, public services crumble and climate breakdown worsens.

In the UK, annual military spending has increased by tens of billions of pounds in recent years. This is all while **4.3 million children (one in four) are currently living in poverty**. Now, the government has announced **plans to raise military spending to 3% of GDP**, an increase worth tens of billions more. This money has to come from somewhere. Much is already coming from **slashing the overseas aid budget**, which funds vaccines, food aid and disaster relief for the world's poorest people. The rest risks being taken from UK public services.

The argument that more military spending means more security does not hold up. Rather than providing security, militarisation fuels authoritarianism, provokes adversaries, risks escalating conflict, and diverts resources from the public services and infrastructure that people actually need to be safe. Real security comes from **healthy communities, a stable climate, functioning public services and genuine international cooperation**. These are being defunded to pay for weapons we already have in abundance. The government's own National

¹ <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/GPI-2024-web.pdf>

Security Risk Assessment concluded that **climate breakdown poses the most serious long-term threat to UK security**.²

Britain, already **one of the world's most heavily armed nations**, is the sixth biggest military spender in the world (SIPRI, 2024).³ Its navy and air force, in particular, have very powerful military capabilities and the ability to 'project force' globally. Its nuclear-armed submarines, which constantly patrol international waters, are armed with enough firepower to cause a nuclear winter. Along with European military allies, our armed forces already have conventional force superiority over, for example, Russia in most major weapons systems. The UK is not under-resourced militarily and also continues to sell weapons to governments that abuse human rights, fuelling conflicts abroad even as it speaks of upholding international law.

The public does not support the current trajectory of the Labour Government. A recent poll by YouGov found that only 34% support boosting borrowing to fund increases in military spending, while 65% of people oppose tax hikes and 65% oppose cuts to public services to fund such increases.⁴

Over the year ending Dec. 2025, the organisation continued and deepened its role within the UK peace and security field:

- publishing relevant information on UK military spending, in a global context;
- encouraging and assisting our Supporting Organisations to speak up on the issue, and to mobilise their own supporters;
- initiating and resourcing the annual Global Days of Action on Military Spending (GDAMS).

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/696e0eae719d837d69afc7de/National_security_assessment_-_global_biodiversity_loss_ecosystem_collapse_and_national_security.pdf

³ <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>

⁴ <https://yougov.com/en-gb/articles/54010-are-britons-willing-to-rebuild-uk-national-power>

Campaign Highlights

Our campaigning year started with our 2025 AGM, held on 11th February, where Professor Ron Smith from Birkbeck, a Defence and Political Economist at the University of London and expert on the UK military spending landscape, spoke about the future of military spending in the UK. The well-attended event heard about the history of military spending trends and discussed the Defence Reviews which were published shortly afterwards.

In February the Government announced that it would be increasing military spending by £13.4bn, paid for by slashing the overseas development budget. GCOMS UK issued a public statement describing the move as “appalling” and said that the “*obsession with ever-increasing military spending will not make us safer – it must be rethought*”.

In March we issued our usual detailed analysis of the figures contained in the Spring Statement, which set out the Prime Minister’s commitment to increase military spending to 2.5% of GDP by 2027-28. The conclusion of the analysis shows the severity of the situation: “The government is sacrificing the poorest and most vulnerable, both internationally and in the UK, in pursuit of major military expansion. The failure to appreciate how such cuts undermine security at the household and community level is especially tragic.”

In June the Government published the long-awaited Strategic Defence Review, to which GCOMS-UK had submitted a consultation response in 2024. We pointed out that the announcement lacked “a fundamental analysis on how to increase peace and security in the world, focussing instead on spending billions more on the UK’s armed forces” and instead offered “more of the same – throwing endless billions into the military”. We later shared a detailed analysis of the SDR, and produced a briefing for MPs ahead of the Parliamentary debate. We were then able to share supportive quotes from MPs from that debate on social media. Shortly after we welcomed and shared the Alternative Defence Review, published by CND and the transport union RMT.

Also in June the Government announced the results of the Spending Review, which we described as a “stark demonstration of current priorities” as it saw military spending increasing at the expense of other departments. We also reacted to the announcement at the NATO summit that the UK would aim to increase military spending to 5% of GDP.

In September we welcomed the news that the Trade Union Congress reversed its support for military spending, following a motion brought by the Universities and Colleges Union. We also attended the Labour Party Conference, where we spoke to MPs and activists about our campaigns and attended a number of fringe meetings covering our campaigning areas.

In November we issued an analysis of the Budget, which reaffirmed the increase in military spending. Our analysis found that the Budget “confirmed that the government is prioritising very high levels of military spending at the expense of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable, as well as urgent action to tackle the pressing climate and nature crises.”

Link to statements and mentions:

[SDR announcement is a 'blank cheque for the arms industry'](#)

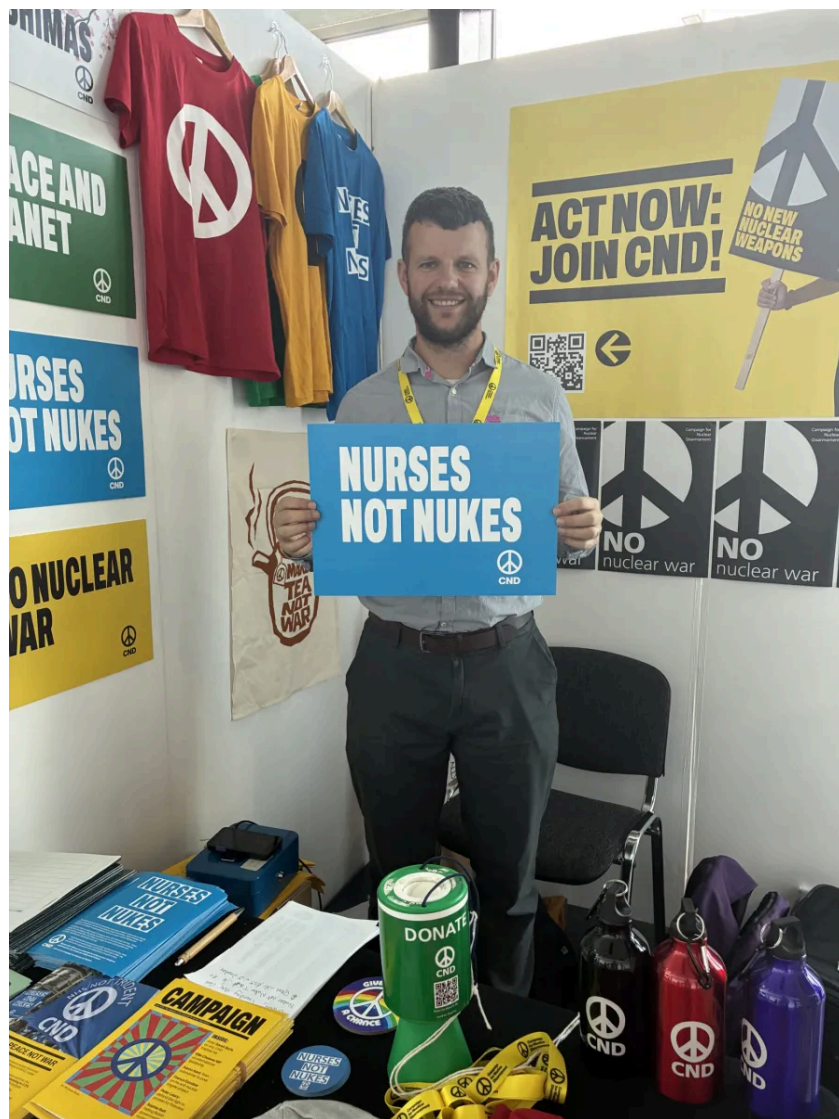
[NFPB: Call to reverse decision on military spending increase - April 2025](#)

GCOMS-UK Coordinator Russell Whiting spoke at several events in 2025:

[Northern Friends Peace Board members' meeting. \(March 2025\)](#)

[Don't Bank on The Bomb Scotland \(April 2025\)](#)

[Labour Party Conference \(October 2025\)](#)



Russell at the CND fringe meeting – 'Britain's nuclear expansion'



The GCOMS UK banner on display at the Yorkshire CND Peace and Craft fair in the beautiful surroundings of Victoria Hall in Shipley - November 2025

GDAMS 2025

The international theme for the Global Days of Action on Military Spending was 'War costs us the earth' and while we echoed this sentiment in our work, given the UK context, we also campaigned under the banner of 'Welfare not warfare'.

Prior to GDAMS, we joined international groups in signing a global statement which asserted "Militarism is clearly fuelling all these wars and violence, but despite calls to move away from weapons and violence to peace negotiations and disarmament, governments are doubling down on a recipe for disaster by significantly increasing their military budgets." In addition to signing the statement, we also encouraged supportive organisations and individuals to do the same.

GCOMS-UK kicked off GDAMS with an [article in Labour Outlook](#) which argued that the "current trajectory of increased military spending at the expense of social welfare and international aid is both morally and strategically flawed."

During GDAMS, the latest statistics on global military spending were released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The figures showed that global military spending grew by almost 10% more than inflation, reaching the highest record ever recorded, at \$2.7 trillion. We also highlighted the UK figure, which had increased by 2.8% to \$81.4 billion.

Many of our supporting organisations put on events or encouraged their own supporters to take action during GDAMS. Our Network Coordinator Russell Whiting spoke at an online meeting of Don't Bank on the Bomb Scotland, while the UK arm of Don't Bank on the Bomb issued an open letter to UK institutions funding nuclear weapons and held their own online meeting to promote their campaign.

Women in Black London held their regular vigils to coincide with GDAMS - highlighting the spiralling levels of military spending in the UK and encouraging passers-by to write their alternative priorities for the tens of billions of pounds. Yorkshire CND also held a street stall as part of GDAMS in collaboration with Leeds Food Not Bombs, highlighting both the current plans to increase military spending and the concurrent cuts to welfare and overseas development budgets.

Local Stop the War groups held a number of meetings around the country to highlight the "Welfare not Warfare" messaging, where local politicians, trade unionists and campaigners spoke. Representatives from Campaign Against the Arms Trade and Rethinking Security, both GCOMS-UK supporting organisations, spoke at a meeting organised by the New Economy Organisers Network titled *Making Sense of Increased Military Spending*.

GCOMS-UK also highlighted the Early Day Motion proposed by Diane Abbott MP, working with Parliamentary CND. EDM 925 calls on the government to reverse plans for military spending increases and instead for the money to be used for "funding into public services, international development, and climate action to build a safer, fairer, and more sustainable future for all."



Women in Black
Peace Vigil during
GDAMS 2025

Statements and Analyses

As in previous years, we were pleased to be able to publish well-researched analyses of government budgets and announcements relating to military spending:

1. [Global military spending continues to spiral according to the latest figures - April 2025](#)
2. [Soaring Global Military Spending Is Sidelining the SDGs - 27 October 2025](#)
1. [The ticking bomb of European rearmament - 3 November 2025](#)
2. [THE UK'S £1 BILLION THANK YOU TO UNCLE SAM - 7 November 2025](#)
3. [Budget confirms that huge rises in military spending are damaging action to tackle poverty and environmental crises - 27 November 2025](#)
4. [BUDGET 2025: ORDINARY PEOPLE PAY FOR A NUCLEAR WAR DRIVE - 8 December 2025](#)

Financials

GCOMS-UK's work in 2025 was primarily funded by a grant of £10,000 from the Marmot Charitable Trust. Among other fundraising efforts, we are currently seeking support to update and reprint our successful resource: *"A Pocket Guide for Campaigning Against Increasing Military Spending"*.

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|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----------|
| Opening balance on 1 January 2025 | | £6858.52 |
| Income | | |
| Grant funding | £10,000.00 | |
| Individual donations | £21.24 | |
| Total | £10,021.24 | |
| Expenditure | | |
| Coordinator | £12,875.00 | |
| Bank charges | £66.00 | |
| Total | £12,941.00 | |

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|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Closing balance on 31 December 2025 | £3,938.76 |
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Future Plans

GDAMS 2026 will take place from April 10 to May 9th. We are supporting Stop the War's ongoing campaign [Welfare not Warfare](#), and calling for the UK government to cancel its proposals to increase spending on the military, specifically the plans to spend 3.5% of GDP during the next parliament, and instead focus on initiatives aimed at diplomacy, conflict reduction, and disarmament through funding socially productive projects, including the alleviation of poverty and inequality at home and around the world, and stronger efforts to mitigate the climate and nature crises.

GLOBAL DAYS OF ACTION ON MILITARY SPENDING (GDAMS)

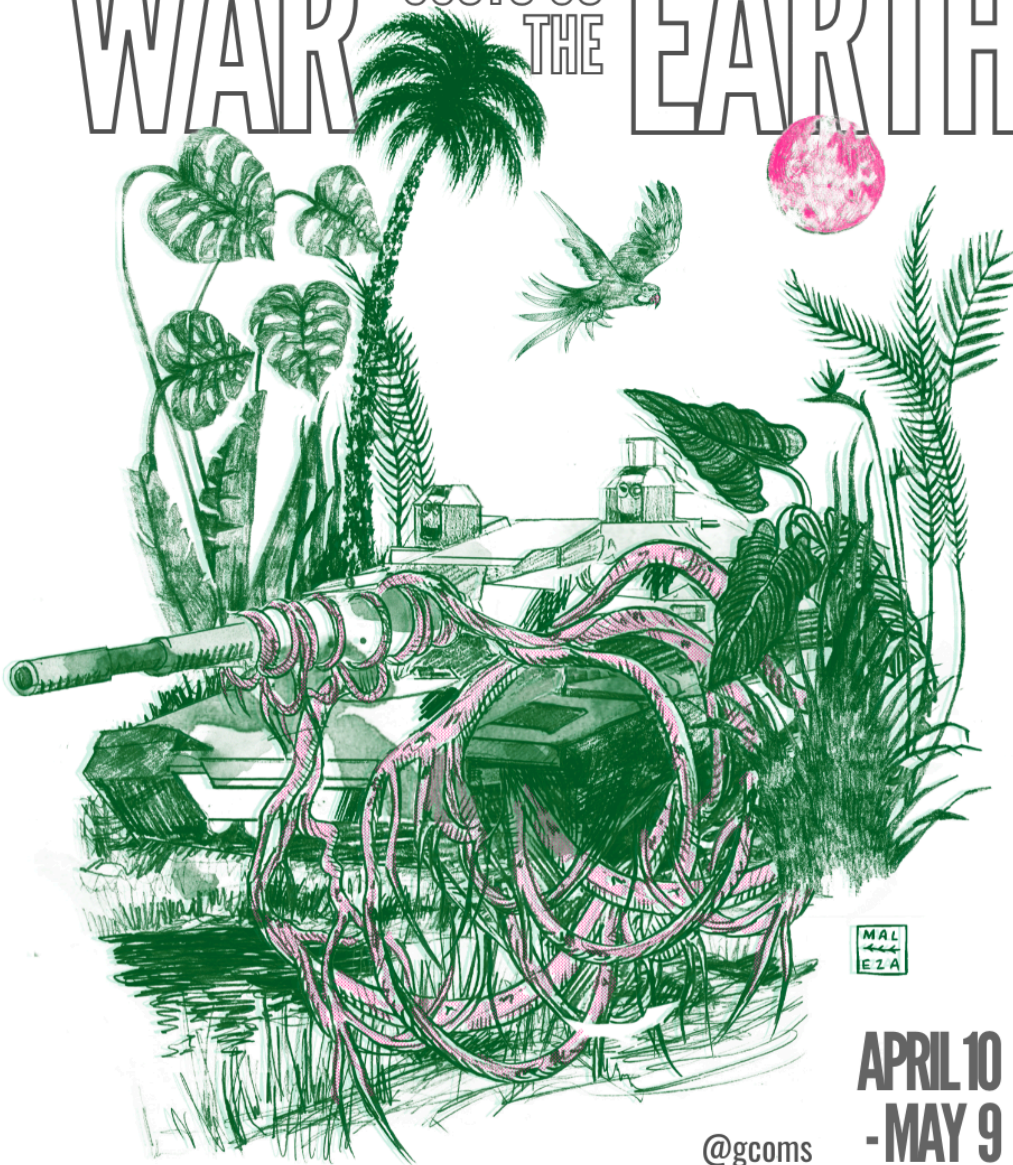
GCOMS-UK



APRIL 10 - MAY 9 2026

Read the full statement: <https://demilitarize.org.uk/news/gdams2026statement/>

WAR COSTS US THE EARTH



APRIL 10
- MAY 9

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GDAMS Global Days of Action
on Military Spending

2026