



Peace Movement Aotearoa

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Global military spending drops slightly, but not far enough

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According to figures released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) today, the Global Day of Action on Military Spending, world military expenditure totalled US\$1.75 trillion in 2013, a fall of 1.9 % in real terms since 2012. However:

“The fall in the global total comes from decreases in Western countries, led by the United States, and despite increases in all other regions. In fact, military spending in the rest of the world excluding the USA increased by 1.8 per cent”.

- [‘Military spending continues to fall in the west but rises everywhere else, says SIPRI’](#), SIPRI, 14 April 2014.

The US is by far the world’s highest military spender - at US\$640 billion last year, and:

“The next three highest spenders - China, Russia and Saudi Arabia - all made substantial increases, with Saudi Arabia leapfrogging the United Kingdom, Japan and France to become the world’s fourth largest military spender”. SIPRI, as above

In 2013, Africa had the largest relative rise in military spending of any region, by 8.3% to reach US\$44.9 billion; in Latin America, military expenditure increased by 2.2% in real terms in 2013; and in the Middle East there was a 4% increase.

Military expenditure in Asia and Oceania increased by 3.6 per cent in 2013 - largely due to increased military spending by China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Australia.¹

Australia is 13th on the list of states with the highest level of military expenditure last year, at US\$24 billion. New Zealand’s military spending in the current financial year is more than NZ\$3.26 billion.

The comparatively small drop in military expenditure last year took place in the context of overall spending cuts in the US and Europe in particular, and unfortunately does not mark a genuine shift away from excessive and wasteful military spending towards increased spending on meeting human needs.

Last year's global military expenditure was, on average, almost US\$4.8 billion every day. By way of contrast, an average of more than 24,000 children under the age of five die every day from mainly preventable causes - lack of access to adequate food, clean water and basic medicines. This is one of the prices paid, the collateral damage that is seldom talked about, for maintaining armed forces in a state of combat readiness around the world.

Government spending priorities, both global and national, are the focus of 'Dollars and sense' - this year's public forum marking the Global Day of Action on Military Spending in Aotearoa New Zealand - with speakers from UNICEF NZ, the Living Wage Campaign, New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services and Peace Movement Aotearoa covering spending on children's wellbeing, a living wage for all workers, social spending, and military expenditure. 'Dollars and sense': from 1pm to 2pm, in the First floor conference room, St Andrew's on the Terrace, 30 The Terrace, Wellington. More details are available on Facebook at www.facebook.com/events/441466909320826

Links to more information:

- 'Military spending continues to fall in the west but rises everywhere else, says SIPRI', 14 April 2014, available at www.sipri.org and www.converge.org.nz/pma/sipri-release14.pdf
- SIPRI Factsheet 'Trends in world military expenditure, 2013', 14 April 2014, available at www.sipri.org and www.converge.org.nz/pma/sipri-facts2014.pdf
- Global Day of Action on Military Spending in Aotearoa New Zealand: information and event listings - www.converge.org.nz/pma/gdams.htm
- 'Global military spending drops slightly, but not far enough' is on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PeaceMovementAotearoa/notes

Reference

¹ SIPRI Factsheet 'Trends in world military expenditure, 2013', 14 April 2014, available at www.sipri.org and www.converge.org.nz/pma/sipri-facts2014.pdf