

#FREEZEWEAPONS DECLARATION

Propelled by the devastating impact of the COVID-19 coronavirus globally, the SCRAP Weapons team at SOAS University of London is building on the United Nations Secretary General's call for a Global Ceasefire in all corners of the world, by calling on all States and corporations to FREEZE the production and supply of Weapons.

In these unprecedented times, States and corporations must harness the potential of diverting military modernization, procurement and operational budgets as necessary complementary measures towards the delay, containment and eradication of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

We suggest that States and corporations, individually and in cooperation, implement moratoria on weapons production and supply. The COVID-19 pandemic exposes that governments all over the world have failed to sufficiently invest in public health infrastructure to face such a crisis.

As extensive research into military spending has proven, higher military spending negatively impacts health expenditures, and therefore is an important risk factor for population's health and individual well-being. More precisely, the evidence suggests that, a 1% increase in military spending results in a 0.62% decrease in health spending in developed countries, and a 0.962% decrease in health spending in developing countries.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the normal practice of excessive spending on military modernization, procurement and operations are impractical, undesirable and harmful. Therefore, freezing these activities is necessary, if we are to free up the scarce resources required to delay, contain and eradicate the COVID-19 coronavirus.

We strongly urge concerned parties to consider providing or declaring moratoria, within or outside the UN system through resolutions, treaties or even by unilateral acts of declaration. These moratoria can be self-selecting, synergistic and mutually supporting.

While there may not be a simple solution to the eradication of the virus, there is clear room for improvement and continued innovation in a number of areas, and this is one of them. We have the opportunity to transform our economies in a manner that will result in greater investment in health, safety and social security, in existing institutions and in new mechanisms, that protect public goods, address humanitarian needs and strengthen international cooperation and leadership to address the common threats to human security.

We all have a role to play in demanding greater accountability and direct public engagement on matters of security priorities, especially in relation to military spending. We support the United Nations Secretary General's call for a Global Ceasefire in all corners of the world and We commend the SCRAP Weapons team at SOAS University of London for proposing the freeze the production and supply of weapons.

We strongly urge our governments and concerned parties to support the Global Ceasefire and implement moratoria to freeze the production and supply of weapons, to free up resources to tackle COVID-19.

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