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# Newsletter

January 2016

## **IPB nominates Marshall Islands former Foreign Minister for 2016 Nobel Peace Prize**



The IPB is pleased to announce its nomination for the 2016 Prize of former Foreign Minister Tony de Brum and the legal team appointed by the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) to handle its nuclear weapons cases. On April 24, 2014, the RMI filed landmark lawsuits against the nine nuclear-armed nations for failing to comply with their obligations under international law to pursue negotiations for the worldwide elimination of nuclear weapons. As the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation underlines: *"The Republic of the Marshall Islands acts for the seven billion of us who live on this planet to end the nuclear weapons threat hanging over all humanity. Everyone has a stake in this."*...De Brum has played the key political role in gaining support and approval for this initiative. He in turn has been supported by a highly effective legal team. De Brum and RMI have already received at least two important international prizes for their action.

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## Military Spending



### Japan signs off biggest ever defence budget as Senkaku tensions rise

Japan has now approved its largest ever defence budget, as it attempts to counter growing Chinese influence in the region and push through an unpopular move to relocate a US military base on Okinawa. On 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015 the cabinet approved plans to spend 5.05tn yen (£28bn) on defence for the year beginning next April, with a focus on protecting a string of remote islands in its southernmost reaches, including those claimed by Beijing. In September 2015, the conservative prime minister Shinzo Abe pushed through security bills that could lead to Japanese troops fighting abroad for the first time since the end of the second world war. The new security laws reinterpret Japan's "pacifist" constitution to allow Japanese troops to exercise the right to collective self-defence, or coming to the aid of an ally – most likely the US – overseas.

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### Amid falling oil price, the Middle Eastern arms race led by Saudi Arabia is expected to slow down

As Middle Eastern nations look to build up their weaponry amid regional civil wars, that arms race is now at risk of grinding to a halt. The price of oil has kept sliding, past the point where the oil-based economies in the region are able to balance their budgets, in particular, Saudi Arabia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Their funds set aside for defense will almost certainly have to be slashed as well, said energy and defense experts, who predict a ripple effect on the U.S. military industrial complex with major orders being scrapped as cash reserves become scarce.

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### More on Military Spending

**Germany weighs upping defense spending**

**Ex-minister says Russia will cut defense budget in 2-3 years**

**2016 Global aerospace and defense sector outlook (Deloitte report)**

**Francois Hollande places the army on all fronts to fight against ISIS**

## Arms Trade



### Belgium rules out arms sales to Saudi Arabia

Belgium has decided against supplying arms to Saudi Arabia citing mass executions carried out on January 2, 2016 and the nation's role in the Yemeni conflict. "We have rejected the request (for military shipment to Saudi Arabia)," RTBF broadcaster cited Belgium's Flanders Minister-President Geert Bourgeois as saying to the Flemish Parliament Wednesday. European states can now find themselves under closer scrutiny, with Germany reviewing its future arms export to Saudi Arabia (see. [Germany to review all future arms exports to Saudi Arabia](#)) and the British government being legally challenged by the Campaign Against Arms Trade (see. [British government and its arm exports to Saudi Arabia legally challenged by Campaign Against Arms Trade](#)). Four different NGOs can be found to oppose the arms trade between Saudi Arabia and Spain with the Directors of Amnesty International, the Peace Foundation (Fundipau), Greenpeace and Oxfam Intermón sending an open letter to Navantia and the acting Spanish Prime Minister expressing their opposition to the imminent signature of an agreement between Navantia and Saudi Arabia to build five Avante 2200 frigates for the Saudi navy (see. [NGOs oppose the export by Navantia to Saudi Arabia of five corvettes as it breaches International law](#)).

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### Tax evasion and weapon production: Letterbox arms companies in the Netherlands

The financial foundations that are provided through taxes are now being discussed in the Netherlands in relation to weapons production, where diverse routes to tax evasion are explored. In the report, Stop Wapenhandel publishes its findings resulting from a search through the Dutch Chamber of Commerce, where a large number of arms producing companies with shell companies established in the Netherlands have been found. The report accounts for the presence of a large number of arms manufacturers and major international defense companies, where the presence of major western arms producing countries; the United States, United Kingdom, France and Germany, have been found. The top-100 global arms companies have been used as the starting point for this research, where almost US\$ 450 billion are spent annually for defense production, where the top-100 companies are responsible for around US\$ 205 billion. Out of the first ten largest arms companies, seven have legal structures in the Netherlands. And one-third of the hundred biggest defense companies turned out to have one or more holdings in the Netherlands. There they can be found to shuffle money and rearrange prices and production costs in order to pay minimal taxes and thus profit in all possible ways from public money.

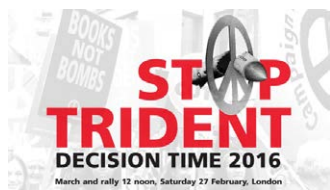
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### More on Arms Trade

[UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia found to violate the ATT](#)

[Publication on arms traffic in Latin America - Latin America battles to stem illegal arms flows](#)

# Nuclear



## Support the Stop Trident Demonstration: 27 February, London

IPB supports the CND call for a national demonstration to protest against Britain's nuclear weapons system: Trident. **"Join CND** to say No to government plans to buy a new system at a cost of £100 billion. Parliament will be voting on this in 2016. The majority of the British people, including the Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and other parliamentary party leaders, oppose nuclear weapons. They are weapons of mass destruction that can kill millions. Let's get the message out loud and clear: we don't want Trident and we don't want a new Trident". This is a vital moment in the campaign. IPB encourages all members outside the UK to join the international delegation in London and also to put pressure on UK representatives abroad.

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## Champion of treaty banning nuclear weapons honored for tireless advocacy

Prominent ICAN supporter Setsuko Thurlow was named **Arms Control Person of the Year for 2015** on January 8, 2016, in recognition of her tireless work to free the world of nuclear weapons. She shares the prestigious award with all other survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The survivors, known in Japanese as *hibakusha*, were nominated "for their unyielding dedication to sharing first-hand accounts of the catastrophic and inhumane effects of nuclear weapons", said the Arms Control Association, which confers the honour each year after a popular vote. Setsuko Thurlow has also been nominated by the IPB for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize, along with the *hibakusha*.

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## More on Nuclear Weapons

**Reframing the narrative on nuclear weapons: insights & findings report**

**PICAT – A Public Interest Case Against Trident, co-ordinated by Trident Ploughshares**

# Impacts



## Iraq conflict: UN documents 'staggering'

### violence

The UN states that the violence suffered by civilians in Iraq "remains staggering", with at least 18,800 killed between 1 January 2014 and 31 October 2015. Some 3.2 million people have also been displaced internally over the same period, **according to a new UN Human Rights report**. The UN accuses the Islamic State (ISIS), which controls large parts of Iraq, of systematic violence amounting to crimes against humanity and possibly genocide. However alleged abuses by troops, militiamen and Kurdish forces have also been recorded. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said the report "starkly illustrates what Iraqi refugees are attempting to escape when they flee to Europe and other regions. This is the horror they face in their homelands".

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## Explosive Weapons and the Protection of Civilians

*Briefing paper by the International Network on Explosive Weapons ahead of the UN Security Council Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians, 19 January 2016.* In recent years, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas has been a key cause of harm to civilians and one that requires urgent international attention. Over 32,000 civilians were reported killed or injured in 2014 by explosive weapons, according to Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), a founding member of INEW, a number that has been increasing year on year for the last four years. AOAV also found that where explosive weapons were used in populated areas, 92% of the casualties were civilian. The bombardment of towns and cities has continued to cause widespread civilian casualties, displacement, and destruction of infrastructure. Conflicts in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere also provide clear illustrations of the persistent pattern of harm.

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## More on Impacts

**Fire and oil: The collateral environmental damage of airstrikes on ISIS oil facilities**

**Why is the US military still burning its explosive waste in the open air?**

**Military conflicts threaten to undermine battle against rural poverty**

## Miscellaneous



### A Peace initiative for Cyprus promoted by IPB

*IPB Secretary-General Colin Archer writes:* In early December 2015 I received a surprise invitation to visit Cyprus. It came from Panos Trigazis, an old friend of the IPB who runs the Observatory of International Organisations and Globalisation (PADOP) in Athens, an IPB member organisation. He helped organise the IPB's 2003 international conference, held in Athens and Olympia. The reason for the Cyprus visit at this particular time was to support the very **encouraging moves towards a peace settlement** that have been seen in recent weeks.

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### Nominate a child for the International Children's Peace Prize 2016!

KidsRights calls upon individuals and organizations across the globe to nominate eligible children. KidsRights

Foundation each year awards this prestigious prize to a brave boy or girl, regardless of race, place of birth or social standing, who has demonstrated the skill and determination necessary to personally improve the rights of children. These children deserve world-wide recognition for their work. The deadline for entries is **March 14th 2016**.

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## More Miscellaneous

**Exclusive-South Sudan needs arms embargo; leaders killing civilians-U.N. Panel**

**10 Conflicts to Watch in 2016**



## Resources



**UN peacekeeping: A good deal or a waste of money? - New IPB study by Research & Publications intern Lea Perekrests.**

The paper *UN PEACEKEEPING: A GOOD DEAL OR A WASTE OF MONEY?* looks into whether or not investing in UN peacekeeping is a beneficial deal for the advancement of peace or not. It does so by reviewing a diverse selection of facts, definitions, decision-making procedures, funding processes, allocation of funds for missions and reforms that are currently being discussed. Perekrests ultimately concludes that if the new proposals are adopted, peacekeeping operations could be a highly effective and more cost-efficient way of supporting peace. The study is based on an original text by Roberta Daveri.

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**Afri (Ireland) 40 years of peace work**

One of the longest-standing and most active IPB member organizations in Ireland Afri, who work in a holistic way on many issues, both in Ireland and abroad, have now published an exciting and inspiring summary report of their continuous work since 1975. In the report one can find fine photographs of renowned activists and influential people.

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### More Resources

**Afri - 2015 a year of action for justice, peace, human rights and sustainability**

**What happens when soldiers stop believing in war? New book 'War is not a game'**

**#HumanizeNotMilitarize Art Exhibit**

**New book 'War Against the People: Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification'**



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