

A GLOBAL CALL TO ACTION: **FOR DEMOCRACY THAT DELIVERS PEACE AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL**

28 July 2025



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FOR DEMOCRACY THAT DELIVERS PEACE AND PROSPERITY FOR ALL

As we approach the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we, the undersigned organisations, call on governments and international institutions to reaffirm their commitment to a world free from nuclear weapons, honouring the demand of the *hibakusha* and 2024 Nobel Peace laureate Nihon Hidankyo,¹ and to prioritize sustainable development over militarism.

As organisations from the peace, labour, economic justice, and climate movements, we share the belief that collective security can only be ensured through solidarity, by meeting the basic needs of all people.

THE BILLIONAIRE COUP: AN EXISTENTIAL THREAT TO DEMOCRACY, PEACE, AND SECURITY

Unfortunately, today we face a growing threat to our collective security from the concentration of power and wealth in the hands of an unholy alliance of billionaires and far-right political forces. This billionaire coup against democracy is already capturing governments and subverting multilateral institutions. A small group of the wealthiest individuals and corporations has successfully reshaped policies, economies, and democracies to serve their interests, undermining the common good. This elite's influence is driving the rise of authoritarian regimes, robbing the

people of collective power, accelerating military build-up and climate change, and diverting resources away from human development and peacebuilding.

The economic consequences of this concentration of wealth are staggering. In 2024, the wealthiest 1% of the global population held more wealth than the bottom 95% of the world's population combined.² These extreme inequalities perpetuate a cycle of poverty, social unrest, and political instability, contributing to rising authoritarianism. The impact of this billionaire coup is felt across the globe, with governments on every continent prioritizing military expansion over social protection or sustainable development, undermining workers' rights, and inflating the cost of living while cutting essential social programmes.

ESCALATING MILITARISM

Militarism is the natural consequence of this profit-at-all-costs political economy. Military expenditures have surged globally, with governments around the world committing \$2.718 trillion to military spending in 2024, a 9.4% increase in real terms from the previous year.³ The weapons industry, alongside a growing network of arms traders and military contractors, increasingly dictates state priorities. As militarism takes centre stage, resources that could address the urgent challenges of climate change, poverty, and inequality are diverted into weapons systems, expanding arms races, and dangerous geopolitical standoffs.

¹ <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/2024/nihon-hidankyo/lecture/>

² <https://www.oxfam.org/en/press-releases/worlds-top-1-own-more-wealth-95-humanity-shadow-global-oligarchy-hangs-over-un>

³ <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2025/unprecedented-rise-global-military-expenditure-european-and-middle-east-spending-surges>

This militarisation is both fueled by and further encourages the rise of authoritarian regimes, where leaders consolidate power by warping democratic processes, curtailing civil liberties, and viciously suppressing dissent. The weakening of democratic structures at work, in society, and in global institutions undermines the ability of citizens to hold their employers and governments accountable and to demand investments in their well-being and the planet's.

HUMAN, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS

The human cost of militarism and unchecked wealth concentration is almost unimaginable. Military conflicts uproot millions, with over 100 million people worldwide currently displaced due to conflict or persecution. The economic cost is also astonishing. The Global South, in particular, bears the brunt. In 2022, low- and middle-income countries accounted for 35% of global military expenditures despite facing the greatest challenges in meeting the basic needs of their populations.⁴

Furthermore, militarism exacerbates environmental degradation. The legacy of nuclear testing, deforestation caused by military operations, and pollution from the use of heavy weapons and mines pose significant threats to the environment. When combined and compared to countries, the world's militaries have the fourth largest carbon footprint, following only China, the United States, and India.⁵ This increases dramatically during times of heightened conflict as we are seeing today.

A CALL FOR COMMON SECURITY AND SOLIDARITY

In response to these pressing issues, we advocate for a transformative shift in how governments conceive of security. We call for common security and solidarity, in which human development, environmental sustainability, democracy, and multilateralism take precedence over military might. Immediate action can be taken by governments this year to change course, including but not limited to:

- 1. Universal ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).** The catastrophic potential of nuclear weapons is incompatible with the principles of international human rights and humanitarian law and poses an existential threat to humanity and the planet. We urge all nuclear-armed states to engage in full-scale disarmament processes, and for all states to reaffirm their commitment to non-proliferation.
- 2. Adoption of progressive tax policies that ensure the wealthiest individuals and corporations pay their fair share, including support for a UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation.** The current global tax regime disproportionately benefits the richest, while funding for essential services is cut. Tax justice promotes social stability and reduces economic inequality. A fairer and coordinated global tax system will allow governments to reinvest in public infrastructure, social programs, a Just

⁴ <https://unsdg.un.org/latest/stories/massive-investment-and-financial-reform-needed-rescue-sdgs>

⁵ <https://ceobs.org/new-estimate-global-military-is-responsible-for-more-emissions-than-russia/>

Transition, and poverty reduction efforts without fear of corporate retaliation.

3. Implementation of living wages for all workers. Fair compensation is central to ensuring economic and social stability and protecting the rights and dignity of workers worldwide. As workers endure unprecedented industrial and technological transitions amid growing inequality, societies risk fracture and conflict. Governments must guarantee decent work, enforce labor rights, and support union organising and collective bargaining to ensure better wages and working conditions.

4. Redirect military expenditures toward the urgent needs of human development, climate action, and global health, including reducing bloated defense budgets. A "peace dividend" from these modest reductions can fund investments in education, healthcare, clean energy, and poverty alleviation. Disarmament also helps to foster trust and reestablish relations between nations and peoples.

5. Create a United Nations Fair Conversion mechanism, providing financial and technical support to countries transitioning from military-dependent economies to those focused on social welfare, sustainable industries, and clean energy. A key aspect of common security is ensuring that militarised economies are restructured toward peaceful

and sustainable industries, with social dialogue and worker participation driving decision-making, guided by principles of fairness, justice, and democracy.

6. Global expansion of social protection systems to ensure that all people have access to healthcare, education, unemployment benefits, pensions, and other essential services. Every individual, regardless of their circumstances or where they live, deserves access to basic services, social protection, and a dignified life. This includes especially those often left out of existing protections and most egregiously harmed by conflict: women, migrant workers, and those working in the informal economy who are demanding formalisation. Universal social protection is a cornerstone of democratic governance and common security, fostering equality and social cohesion.

7. Integrate disarmament and sustainability into climate action plans, ensuring that military industries reduce their carbon footprints and contribute to global climate goals. Militarism exacerbates the climate crisis. The environmental costs of military activities including pollution; greenhouse gas emissions; nuclear weapons testing, production, and development; and the destruction of ecosystems, cannot be ignored. Such a Just Transition must include unions and civil society at the decision-making table.

THE TIME IS NOW

In the months ahead, many of the same governments that will commemorate 80 years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki will also send delegations to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, the 2nd World Summit on Social Development in Doha, the G20 Summit in Johannesburg, and COP 30 in Belém. At each of these, social movements will be represented and their demands articulated. It's time for governments to listen:

- The 80th anniversary of the United Nations presents a moment for these governments to reaffirm the UN's founding principles: peace, security, and human rights. We urge all UN member states to embrace multilateralism; democratize, reform and strengthen the UN system; prioritize sustainable development over militarism; and make tangible commitments to disarmament and social justice.
- The first World Social Summit in 30 years provides an opportunity to address the interlinked crises of poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, all worsened by war. We call for governments to adopt a new social contract that ensures economic justice and human development, addressing the root causes of instability and military conflict.
- The G20 summit in South Africa, with a focus on "Solidarity, Equality, and Sustainability" offers a critical opportunity for the world's largest economies to align their economic priorities with the values of peace, common security through solidarity, and shared prosperity. We urge the G20 to commit to reducing military expenditures and investing in policies that foster human development and climate mitigation and adaptation.
- Hosted in the Amazon, COP30 is a key moment for governments to ensure that investments in peace and sustainability are at the heart of the global response to the climate crisis.

As we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the nuclear bombings, too many world leaders are forgetting the lessons of 1945. We call on them to learn from, not repeat, the past and build a better world where the threat of nuclear weapons is eradicated, where democracy delivers peace and prosperity for all people, and where common security is guaranteed through solidarity and sustainable development.

ANCHOR SIGNATORIES:

International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
 Greenpeace International
 International Peace Bureau (IPB)
 International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)
 Oxfam
 350.org