

# NO CHALLENGE MILITARISM

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE  
FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM





*In order to promote the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources, the Security Council shall be responsible for formulating, with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee referred to in Article 47, plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments.*

Art. 26, UN Charter

## CHALLENGE MILITARISM

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## INTRODUCTION

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Since the United Nations (UN) was founded almost 70 years ago, international arms control and disarmament agreements have been developed and advocated by states, individuals and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Article 26 of the UN Charter clearly states that it is the Security Council's task to advocate for disarmament and international arms control, yet military expenditures continues to increase every year. Statistics from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) show that total global military expenditure in 2008 amounted to 1464 billion USD, approximately 2.4 % of the world's total GDP.

Whilst military capacity is exposed every day to be a terminally ineffective method of assuring security given the nature of modern threats, militaries the world over consume ever-increasing amounts of the world's human and economic resources. Despite this realization, we keep spending more money on more weapons - and by doing so invest in brutal and destructive conflicts. This publication will provide an insight to the misguided nature of prevailing priorities with regard to security demonstrating their real costs and consequences.

# MILITARISM AND GENDER

Militarism takes many forms and is an expression of an aggressive and violent political ideology based on certain assumptions about how human beings and our societies are constituted. One assumption which is of particularly grave importance is that military action, or the threat of it can solve problems and conflicts; another is that human security is dependent on weapons. For a long time, feminists have tried to draw attention to gender constructions as a contributory explanation to such political convictions. Gender, the social construction of the biological sex, is seen as a primary cause to both values and prioritisations within today's security policies. Assumptions about masculinity have had particular impact on policies regarding armament and disarmament. Violence and military strategies are strongly connected to a masculine identity, and possession of weapons is associated with manhood and masculinity. Men are ascribed the role of "protectors" and "guardians", roles that are understood to require violence as well as the possession of weapons. Women, on the other hand, have been cast in the role of "the caretaker", a safe place in society and for the family. It is assumptions like these that make it impossible to speak about violence and military means without considering gender relations.



## Gender

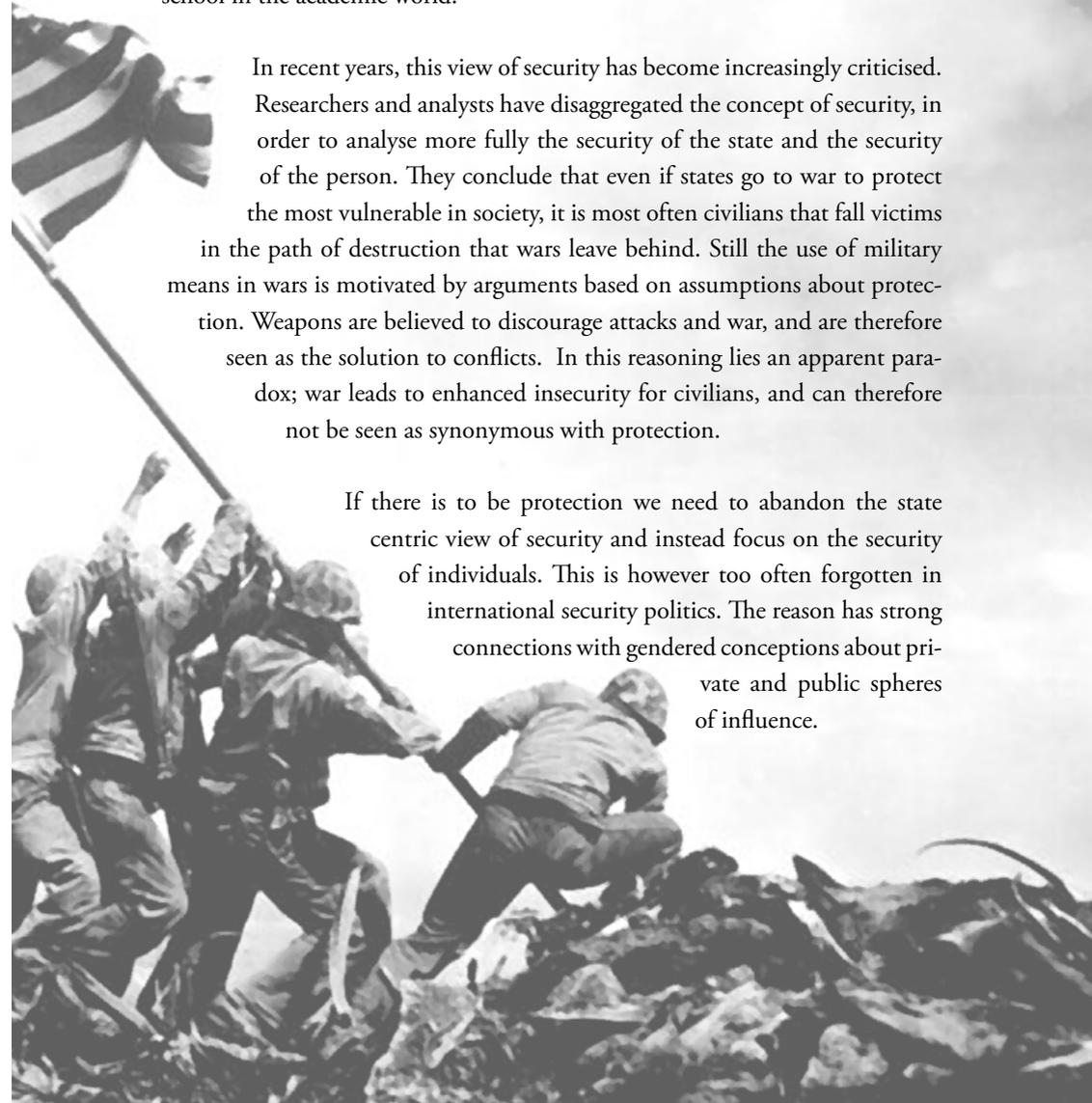
*Gender, as opposed to the biological sex, refers to what people perceive as masculine and feminine. We are shaped into socially constructed roles, and we are shown how to act like girls/women and boys/men, in accordance with societies' expectations. Gender thus refers to the social attributes associated with the biological sex and determines what is socially accepted for a woman or a man. This is referred to as gender constructions – we create and maintain an expected behaviour.*

## WAR, STATES AND SECURITY

Military investment is underpinned by a belief that states' security can be guaranteed by threats of violence. Military investment is investment in war, and states believe that they can deter threats, prevent hostile attacks and protect the state's territory from invasion. This is the vision of security that is referred to as the realistic school in the academic world.

In recent years, this view of security has become increasingly criticised. Researchers and analysts have disaggregated the concept of security, in order to analyse more fully the security of the state and the security of the person. They conclude that even if states go to war to protect the most vulnerable in society, it is most often civilians that fall victims in the path of destruction that wars leave behind. Still the use of military means in wars is motivated by arguments based on assumptions about protection. Weapons are believed to discourage attacks and war, and are therefore seen as the solution to conflicts. In this reasoning lies an apparent paradox; war leads to enhanced insecurity for civilians, and can therefore not be seen as synonymous with protection.

If there is to be protection we need to abandon the state centric view of security and instead focus on the security of individuals. This is however too often forgotten in international security politics. The reason has strong connections with gendered conceptions about private and public spheres of influence.



## THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

Gender analysis shows that the division between the public and the private sphere is essential when it comes to matters of war, states and security. It is this division that leads to a male dominance in state and public affairs, and women's key responsibility for the home and children.

The same division also has political consequences as women are excluded from decision-making processes out-

side of the home. This in turn creates normative values about what is important. In the hierarchy of society, men's activities are often ascribed a higher value than women's. It is therefore not just a horizontal division between what men and women do, but also a vertical and hierarchical valuation of men's and women's activities and experiences.

## MASCULINITY AND THE MYTH ABOUT PROTECTION

Relations between states are in the same way an expression of the structures in society based on the division of the private and the public. To be a successful state, and to encourage soldiers to go to war, the conception of brave masculine men and weak feminine women in need of protection needs to be deeply embedded in people's minds. States need to make an effort to keep excluding women from the public, to be able to maintain a discrepancy between the public and the private and to be able to reconstruct these spheres. The division between the public and the private leads to a masculinisation of the public sphere. Women become the abnormal, something for men to mirror themselves in and to put their masculinity in relation to.

Although the myth of protection builds on the idea that men are supposed to protect women, military activity is not automatically a masculine activity. Even if soldiers in the world's collected armies in most cases are men, there is nothing that implies that men as such are more bellicose or that it is the same men that participate in wars that create them. Women's genetics do not stop them from firing a missile or handle a computer for military purposes, just as it is not a man's nature that commands him to kill. However, military activity is based on the ideals about the heroic hero – the masculine myth about protection.

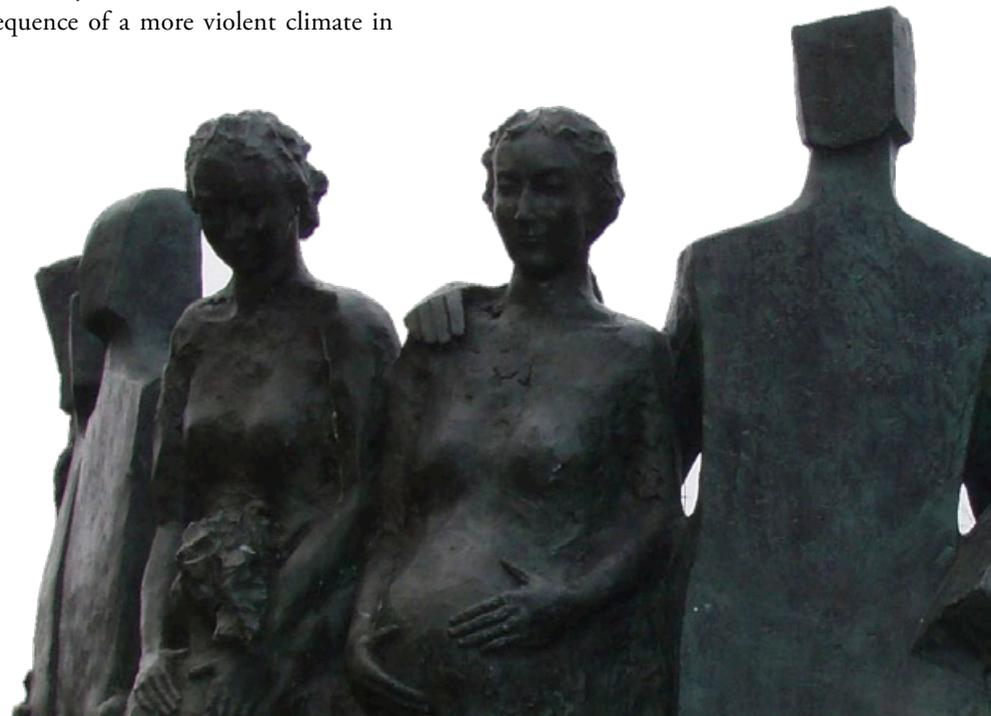
## GENDER, WOMEN AND VULNERABILITY

War and conflicts always come with enormous suffering for the whole population, but violence affects men and women differently. The reason is the deeply embedded ideas about gender that permeate our ways of perceiving the world.

Women's role as a nurturer is enhanced in times of war and the responsibility for the home becomes complete when the men's absence turns them into sole providers. The nurturer's responsibility becomes a heavy burden as instances of injury increases in a society. Some military strategies hit women exceptionally hard, such as sexual violence and rape, tactics that are used to control and degrade the enemies. Sexual violence rises in society as a whole as a direct consequence of a more violent climate in

society. Rape, sexual torture, sterilisation, forced abortion and genital mutilation are some of the forms of sexual violence that women are exposed to in peacetime, but that increase drastically in connection to violent conflicts.

Men and boys are also systematically exposed to violence as a direct result of the dominant gender constructions. The most dangerous conception about masculinity is the one that defines men as protectors. This conception makes unarmed men and boys seem like potential threats against enemies and they therefore run a much higher risk of being killed. Boys are also the group that runs the highest risk of being recruited as child soldiers, one of our times worst atrocities.



# INVESTMENTS IN WAR

Military activity is based on masculine values that bring negative consequences for both women and men. Despite of this fact the world's military expenditures break new records on a yearly basis. Even though military means cannot fix the global or individual security threats that people face today, we keep investing enormous amounts of economic resources into wars and conflicts.



*Ever since 1915, WILPF has been working for the elimination of the root causes of war and conflict. With nearly 40 sections around the world we work for a common global security.*



*Approximately 70 % of the world's poorest are women.*



*There are more than 300 000 child soldiers in the world today.*



*Today, there are more than 30 ongoing armed conflicts in the world.*

## MILITARY EXPENDITURE

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SI-PRI) compile, in their yearbook and in a web based computer system, information about the world's military expenditure. Their data shows that the world's joint military expenditure has consistently increased in the latest years. In 2008 they reached record high 1464 billion USD, of which the US stands for 42 %. In relation to the negative consequences of military activity on human lives the number is huge. It is important to highlight that the price-tag for arms and other direct military expenses are not the only costs that society has to pay in order to maintain militarism. In the report "Politics for global weapon development" for the Swedish Peace and Arbitration Society, Rolf Lindahl writes that there are great costs connected to military armament that are often overlooked. According to Lindahl (2009: 12) "[h]uman resources such as scientists and engineers[...] [h]ealth costs for health care and long-term rehabilitation of people that have been injured by weapons[...] [n]egative effects on the environments due to the use and destruction of weapons and the environmental effects of unexploded leavings of war, such as landmines[...] [c]osts for destruction of weapons and systems for implementation of conventions and regimes of arms control are just some examples of great costs that are not included in the statistics." (translated by editor)



## NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The nuclear weapon is the most powerful weapon ever invented, and is built on the release of an enormous amount of energy that holds atomic cores together. The weapon's primary effects are explosions, enormous heat, firestorms and radioactive radiation. Nuclear weapons also create consequences for future generations, because of long-lived radioactive poisoning. Due to the severe consequences for mankind, nuclear weapons are regulated through international law through the non-proliferation treaty (NPT).

## CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Chemical weapons, like mustard gas, are not just lethal but also cause extreme agony for those who have been exposed and survived. Biological weapons differ from chemical weapons in that they originate from living organisms, like the extremely contagious anthrax bacteria. The lethality of chemical and biological weapons has led to the signing of a number of conventions to ban the development, use and production of such weapons.

## RADIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Radiological weapons, also known as “dirty bombs” spread radioactive material that is harmful for both humans and the environment. Even though these weapons can cause extreme destruction, the largest effect is psychological, as they can be used to create economic and social disintegration. There is a growing concern that nuclear power plants can be used as radiological weapons, as an attack could release large amounts of radioactive material.

## LARGER CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

Larger conventional weapon systems refer to weapons larger than what any single person or smaller group can handle, such as tanks, attack helicopters and missiles. Enormous amounts of money are spent yearly on these weapons and the international arms trade maintains the tensions and nurture conflicts between states. The presence of conventional weapons has shown to prolong and intensify conflicts.

## ARMS TRADE

Even though many states promote themselves as advocates for international peace, justice and security, and claim to promote international disarmament, the same states are sometimes strong actors in the international arms trade. Sweden, for example, has agreements on military cooperation with around 40 countries, of which many are poor developing countries, and also has an extensive arms export.

Due to faulty statistics and biased focus on trade with larger weapons it is hard to know how many weapons circulate in the world today. It is clear that the global arms production has increased since 2005, and the transaction of major conventional weapons keeps increasing and amounted to 51.5 billion USD in 2007. The weapons included in this category are among others; airplanes and helicopters, armed vehicles, heavy firearms, missiles and ships designated for battle. Small arms, light weapons and ammunition that can be handled by one or a small group of people are not included. Between 2000 and 2006 the global trade with light weapons is estimated to have grown with 28% to the amount of 2.9 billion USD.

Light weapons are one of the biggest threats to human security today and someone dies every minute as a result of these weapons. Out of the 800 million light weapons that exist, 75% end up in the hands of civilians. The majority of light weapons that exist are sold, owned and fired by men. This category of weapons hit exceptionally hard against women, who often become victims of guns used in their own home. While men who come up against light weapons often meet an unknown perpetrator, a woman is most often shot by someone she knows.

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## LANDMINES AND CLUSTER BOMBS

Even though they are categorised as conventional weapons, landmines and cluster bombs are treated as a separate category due to their horrifying consequences. Cluster bombs are released from airplanes and contain several smaller bombs that are spread over a large area. Many bombs do not detonate and remain on the ground for long periods. Cluster bombs and landmines constitute a constant threat against civilians in the area long after a conflict has ended and many of those affected are women and children.

## SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS

The majority of armed violence in the world is committed with these kinds of weapons and many claim that due to the high death rate it is possible to talk about light weapons as weapons of mass destruction. Small arms refer to guns being carried by a single person. Light weapons on the other hand refer to guns being manoeuvred by two or three people. The proliferation of small arms and light weapons promotes conflicts and undermines peace initiatives.

## CASE STUDY: THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR IN SUDAN

In June 2007, Sudan had been in conflict for nearly 50 years. The conflict in the Darfur region attracted attention from all over the world; here, a war coincided with an environmental disaster leaving three million people dead and more than 15 million affected. During Sudan's history, minor conflicts have struck the entire country and up to 60% of the population has been affected. The last 30 years, however, the conflict has been concentrated to the southwest and eastern parts of the country with continually increased violence. At the core, the conflict has been a result of increased population growth and difficulties with access to water. In 1956 there was an average of three people per square kilometre in the Darfur region. In 2003 the number had increased to 18 people per square kilometre. The influx of small arms to the region also contributed to more violent confrontations. Until 2003, the armed conflicts were mainly local and between competitive societies, but eventually war broke out in the entire area. The war was preceded by a long period of militias burning down great forested areas and villages, which left between 200,000 and 500,000 people as internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Years of conflicts in Sudan have led to large mined areas that to this date still cause mutilations and death, burnt down villages and forests, increased access to small arms in the region, destroyed natural resources and oil spillage, and the extinction of wildlife and flora in the area.



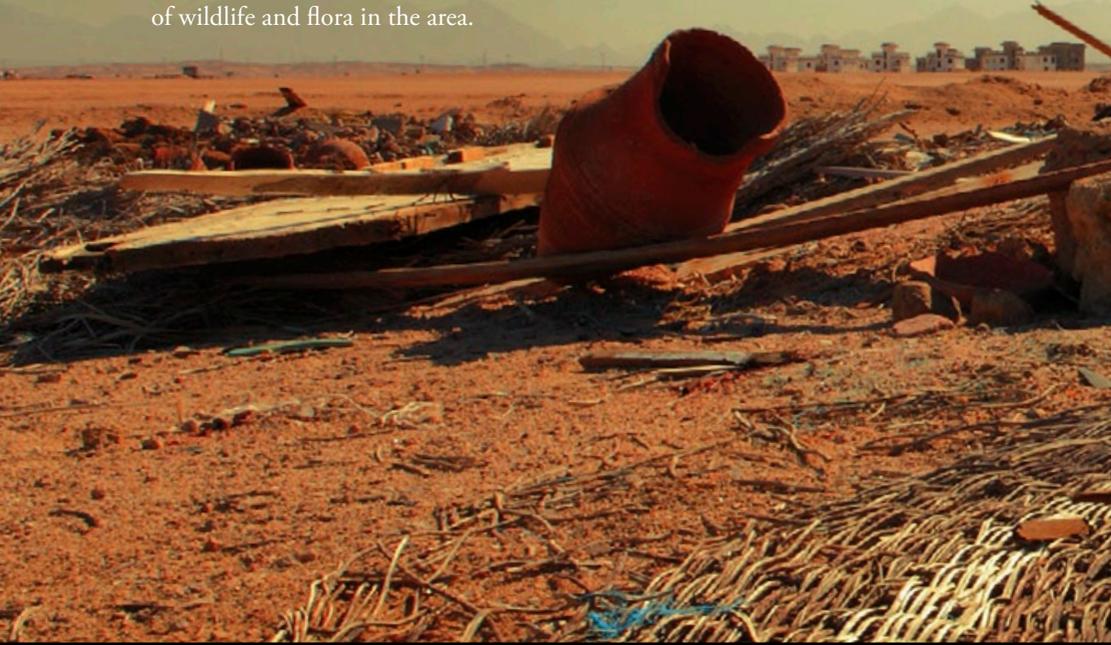
## MILITARISM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Militarism does not only bring about large societal costs but also leads to negative impacts on the environment. For example, toxic substances contained in weapons pollute the ground, water and air, while the access and accessibility to land in a region is affected by military activity and facilities.

The military's environmental effects have been known for a long time. Particularly great attention has been directed towards the toxic substances that influence people's lives long after wars have ended. It can therefore be argued that armed conflicts last long after a peace agreement has been signed. One example of such substances is napalm, which was used in Vietnam.

Environmental effects do not only imply toxic waste in the environment. During conflicts, information channels such as radio and Internet are cut out of people's everyday life through restraints and bombs that knock out the central supply, the energy supply is affected, and roads are made inoperable, which further complicates refugees' movements and food distribution to the civilian population.

In non-belligerent countries, military facilities can still affect the region by obtaining valuable agricultural or common lands, which the civilian population has had access to earlier. By closing off wooded areas where military facilities are located, possibilities for recreation are lost for people outside of the military personnel. In the long-term, knowledge about nature and traditions may be lost.





## CASE STUDY: CONSEQUENCES OF THE WARS IN IRAQ

### Depleted Uranium

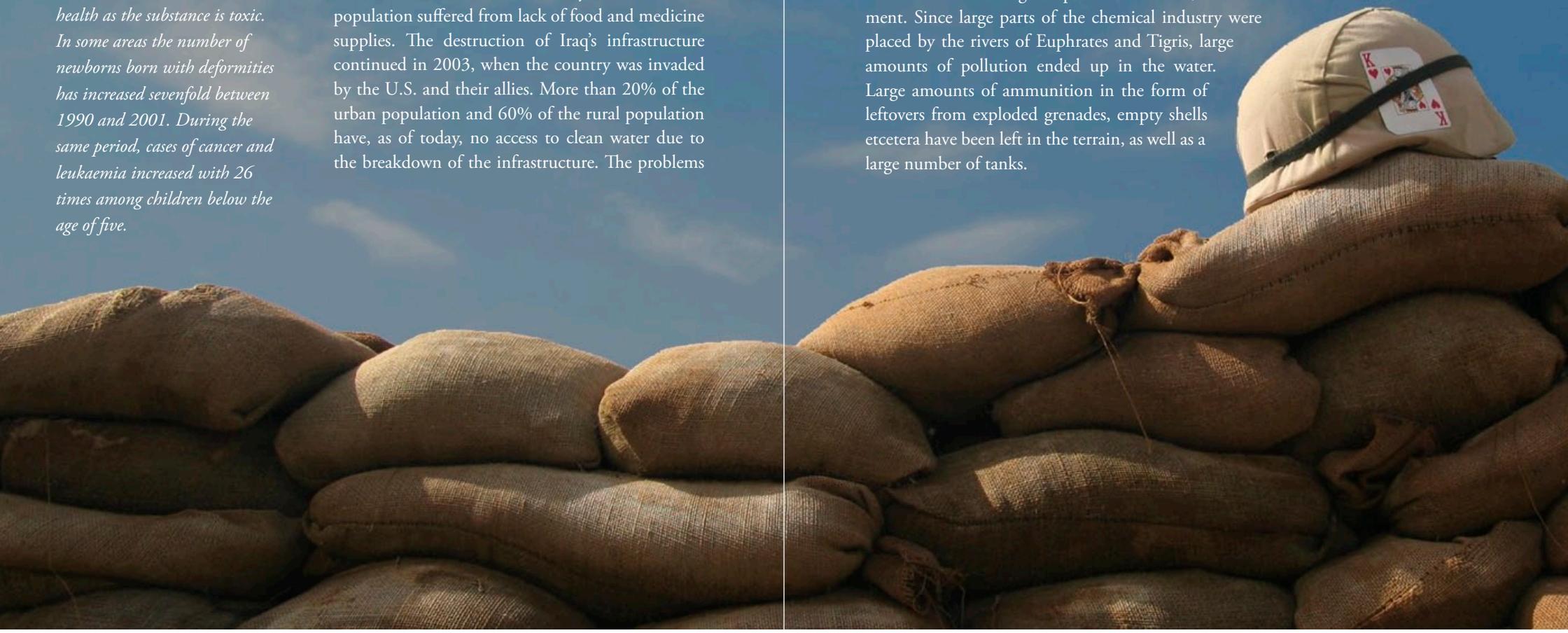
*The U.S.'s and United Kingdom's use of ammunition with depleted uranium has struck hard against Iraq. Depleted uranium is used mainly as armour-piercing ammunition and has big implications on people's health as the substance is toxic. In some areas the number of newborns born with deformities has increased sevenfold between 1990 and 2001. During the same period, cases of cancer and leukaemia increased with 26 times among children below the age of five.*

Since 1980, three wars have taken place in Iraq. The three wars and long periods of sanctions have had devastating consequences for the people of Iraq. During the first war against Iran in 1980, a large number of people were killed, buildings were destroyed and oil tanks were set on fire, which caused extensive damages to the flora and wildlife in the Persian Gulf. During the Gulf war, around ten years later, the infrastructure was severely affected and the population suffered from lack of food and medicine supplies. The destruction of Iraq's infrastructure continued in 2003, when the country was invaded by the U.S. and their allies. More than 20% of the urban population and 60% of the rural population have, as of today, no access to clean water due to the breakdown of the infrastructure. The problems

have also affected other areas, such as health care, energy supplies and the police department.

UNICEF estimated in a report from 2005 that approximately 6,880 children below the age of five die every year in Iraq, with a mortality rate at 125 per 1000 live births. Furthermore, the mortality rates among Iraqi women during pregnancies and childbirth have reached a level which is three times the number reported during the period of 1989-2002.

Years of conflicts have also caused poor sanitary conditions – not least because of the deliberate bombings of the infrastructure – as well as lack of clean water. Sinking and leaking oil tanks have polluted the Persian Gulf during the Gulf war and during the war in 2003. Several energy production facilities have been bombed, which has contributed to a reduction of production capacity of 75%. Long term effects of the bombings are pollutions of land, water and sediment. Since large parts of the chemical industry were placed by the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris, large amounts of pollution ended up in the water. Large amounts of ammunition in the form of leftovers from exploded grenades, empty shells etcetera have been left in the terrain, as well as a large number of tanks.



## NUCLEAR WEAPONS - EXTREME COSTS

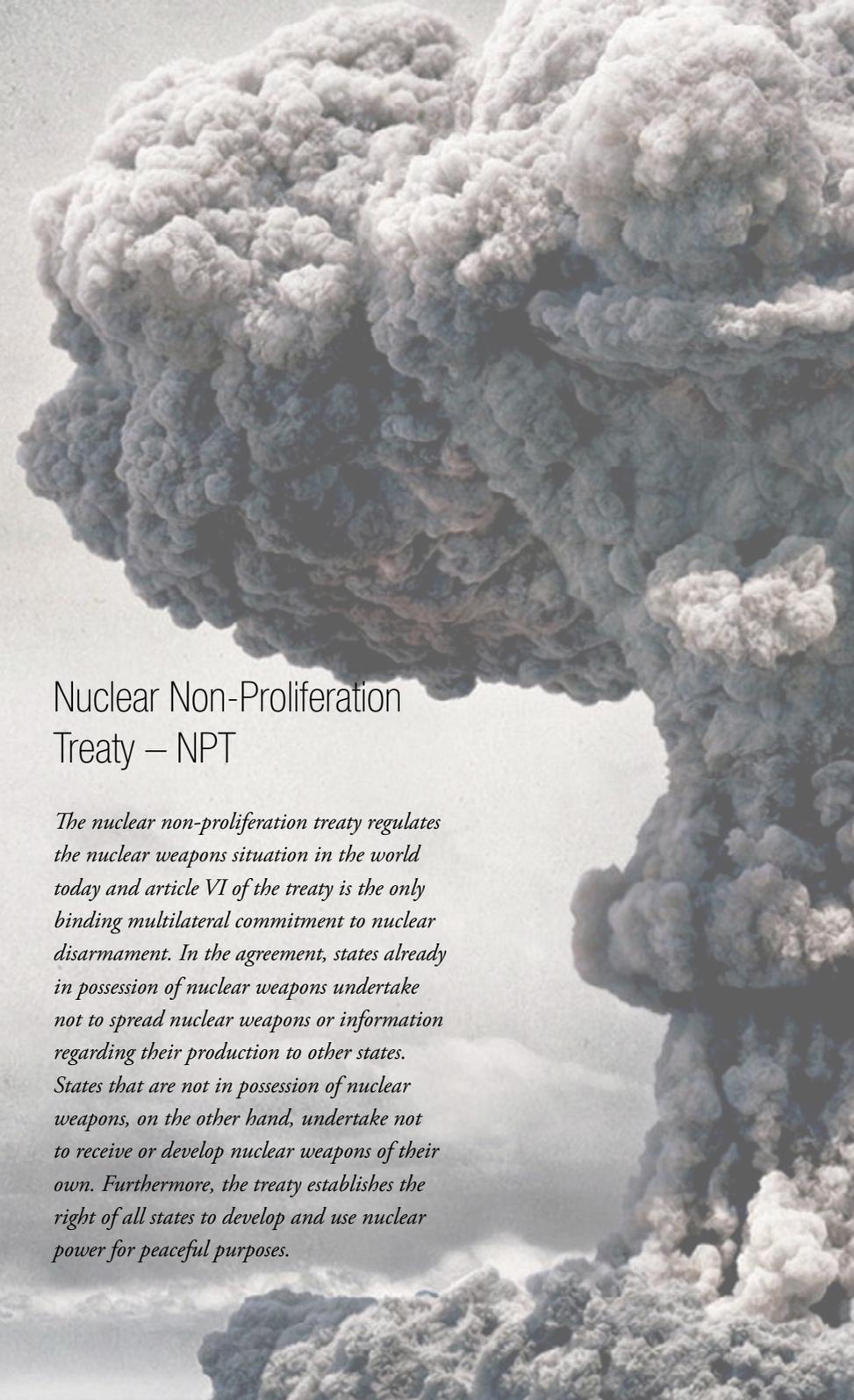
The world's nuclear weapon arsenals have continued to grow ever since the weapons were first used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the Second World War. Despite the fact that article VI of the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) binds nuclear states to disarm their existing arsenals, there are still more than 20,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Due to secrecy and lack of transparency, it is difficult to know exactly how much these arsenals cost. We do however know with absolute certainty that huge amounts are spent every year on maintenance and modernisation of one of the largest threats against humanity today – nuclear weapons.

According to figures from the Swedish Physicians against Nuclear Weapons' (SLMK) information website "Learn about Nuclear Weapons", the most reliable information about costs today come from the U.S. where 54 billion USD was spent during 2006 on activities related to nuclear weapons. Great Britain spends approximately 3.7 billion USD each year on their current submarine system Trident, and France spent on average 2.7 billions USD per year on their nuclear weapon activities between 2002 and 2008. Combined, these three states spent more than 65 billion USD on nuclear weapons during 2006. In total numbers, the U.S. is responsible for just over half of the world's combined nuclear weapons expenditures. Even though the exact amounts invested in nuclear weapons are contestable, we do know with certainty that the reported figures only amount to a part of the total cost. Just as there are hidden costs connected to conventional weapons, a number of nuclear related activities are not included in official statistics. Ben Cramer (2009: 7) writes that "[t]here are many other prices to be paid by states (and their populations) once they embark on the path to a nuclear arsenal: damage to the environment, to democracy, to the health of citizens, to international cooperation, and ultimately to our fundamental values". These costs cannot always be measured in money, but affect societies and individuals all over the world negatively.

The language used in connection to nuclear weapons is so clinical and technical that the human aspect and the damage they cause are often disregarded. The language is also extremely sexualised and nuclear weapons have several times been likened with phallic symbols. By using a language that distances us from the fact that human beings are being hurt, that the environment is being destroyed and all the other consequences of nuclear weapons, the weapons become neutralised and legitimised and associated with terminology that is attractive for decision makers; power, potency and strength. Nuclear weapons can consequently be seen as the ultimate measurement of political and masculine power.

## Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty – NPT

*The nuclear non-proliferation treaty regulates the nuclear weapons situation in the world today and article VI of the treaty is the only binding multilateral commitment to nuclear disarmament. In the agreement, states already in possession of nuclear weapons undertake not to spread nuclear weapons or information regarding their production to other states. States that are not in possession of nuclear weapons, on the other hand, undertake not to receive or develop nuclear weapons of their own. Furthermore, the treaty establishes the right of all states to develop and use nuclear power for peaceful purposes.*



# INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT

Despite the fact that the statistics clearly shows that the world's combined military expenses are insanely high, there are international regulations that seek to control weapons. According to article 11, 26 and 47 of the UN Charter both the General Assembly and the Security Council work with issues of disarmament.

Many of the international agreements that exist today have been developed within the UN. The non-proliferation treaty, the convention that prohibits biological weapons and the convention against chemical weapons are just a few examples. In recent years however, different forms of disarmament initiatives have been made outside the UN. The work during the 1990's to ban landmines and in the 2000's to ban cluster weapons was initiated by civil society organisations with support from a number of states. Today, both of these weapon systems are regulated by conventions and are part of international law.

The UN system is heavily dependent on how much money states invest in the collective budget. However, the states' eagerness to finance the common organisation leaves much to wish for. The world's combined military expenses for one year would be enough to cover 700 years of the UN's regular budget and a mere 20% of the world's yearly military expenses would be enough to fulfil the UN's millennium development goals on gender equality.

## **UNODA**

The UN department for disarmament, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), works for disarmament in general, and has the function to provide material and organisational support for the disarmament organs that have been established by the General Assembly and the Security Council. UNODA's website (<http://www.un.org/disarmament>) provides regularly updated information on issues of disarmament.

## **The General Assembly**

The General Assembly's First Committee is one of the most important committees in the General Assembly. It deals with all of the items on the Assembly's agenda that have to do with disarmament and international security. Among other things, they formulate documents, keep records and set forth reports for processing.

## **The Conference on Disarmament**

The Conference on Disarmament is the only multilateral disarmament body there is, with the possibility to reach decision making through consensus. The Conference meets in Geneva and reports to and receives recommendations from the General Assembly.

## **UNIDIR**

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) is an independent institution within the framework of the UN and undertakes independent research on disarmament and security issues. UNIDIR has its headquarter in Geneva.

## HIGH COSTS FOR WHAT BENEFIT?

Statistics speaks clearly and shows that states continue to invest huge amounts of resources in military means. At the same time as the world's states invest their money in military means, wars and conflicts rage all around the world, wars that are dependent on and fuelled by investments in militarism.

Wars and conflicts are not the only security threats that people face. In the world today, there are approximately 1.2 billion people living in what is known as extreme poverty, i.e. living on less than 1.25 USD per day. 70% of these are women. In addition, 30,000 children die every year because of poverty. All the time, all over the world, women and girls are being discriminated against; they earn less money than men and suffer the worst consequences of poverty, lack of education and lack of political rights.

Despite the fact that the Millennium Development Goals, established in 2000, state that poverty in the world is to be halved by 2015, enough efforts are not being made to reach these goals. The World Bank estimates that it would take between 35 and 76 billion USD per year until 2015 for the world community to be able to live up to the Millennium Development Goals.



### AK-47

*AK-47, also called Kalashnikov, has been manufactured in more than 100 million copies and has been used in more wars than any other modern weapon.*



### B2 Stealthbomber

*The total development and production cost for the B-2 programme amounted to almost 45 billion USD in 2004.*



### 600 USD = 64 fruit trees

*For people living on the brink of starvation, the possibility to grow their own food often makes the difference between life and death.*



### 1 billion USD = 270 000 schools

*Today, 80 million children in the world's poorest countries are denied the opportunity to go to school.*

Comparing these amounts to those spent by Great Britain, France and the U.S. on nuclear weapons during the year of 2006 – 65 billion USD – it becomes evident that it is not impossible to reach the Millennium Development Goals within a foreseeable future if states would only change their priorities.

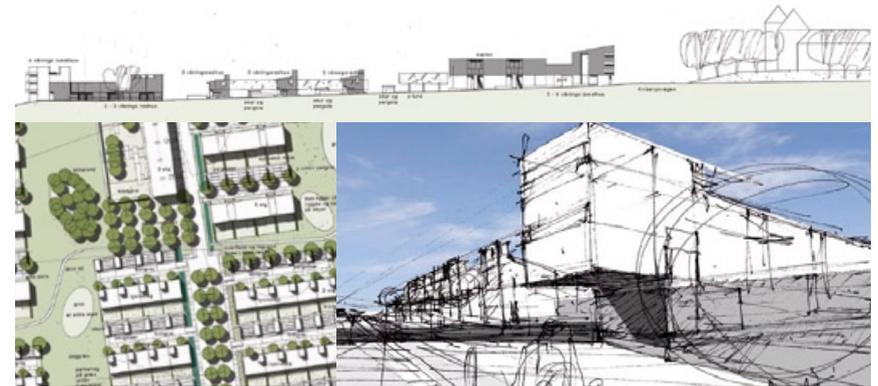
The money spent on one single weapon could instead be used to save lives. According to “Share the World’s Resources”, one AK-47 Kalashnikov costs 600 USD. This amount would cover the cost of planting 64 fruit trees, which would provide food for several families. People’s security is also dependent on access to health care and education. About half a million women die every year due to pregnancies. Each day, 8000 people die from AIDS and approximately 12,000 people are infected by the virus every day. The group that faces the biggest risk of being infected with HIV/AIDS is women and girls. Of those infected, three out of four are denied the health care they need. 80 million children in the world’s poorest countries, of which 60% are girls, are denied the opportunity to go to elementary school. The amount of money needed to buy a B-2 Stealth Bomber – 1 billion USD – could finance more than 270,000 fully equipped schools. It is simply a matter of choosing what makes our children secure. All people, both women and men,

are affected by today's security politics, and it will take some serious re-prioritisation for the world to stop investing in war and instead start investing in peace. Despite enormous needs of poverty reduction, better health care and increased access to education, huge amounts are invested in military activities. The amounts spent on military means could be put to much better use. By using a gender perspective when studying security politics it becomes evident that the masculinised ideas about strength and military power do not protect people, but rather the opposite.

It is time to choose what the world needs.



## CASE STUDY: KVIBERG – FROM MILITARY FACILITY TO PEACE PROJECT



Kviberg in Sweden started to be used as a military facility in the 1890s. The whole area was closed for the public for almost 100 years. It was therefore never built on and instead served a delimiting function for the surrounding districts of Utby, Gamlestaden, Kortedala and Bergsjön.

The regimental area was taken over by the municipality of Gothenburg in 1994, when the military activity was closed down. The municipality is today striving to remake it into an area for recreation and sports activities. They are also planning to build 1500 new houses. Hence, there is an effort to create an area with different sorts of activities, such as sports, recreation, nature experiences and cultural values, to establish a meeting point in the city. The area is today very centrally located with short travel distances to the centre of Gothenburg.

The area surrounding Kviberg is of great importance. The Säve river is a “Natura 2000” area, which means that specific consideration is to be taken if exploiting it since it is a shore protected area. The Säve river contains salmon, trout, asp and miller's thumb. There is broad-leaved deciduous forest, different sorts of water plants and birds such as the kingfisher. However, the ground still suffers from different forms of pollutions from military exercises. Oil leakage and metals, such as lead, have been found especially around the shooting ranges and the area for vehicle garages.

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