

G7 Summit: Clock is ticking on the global military fulfilling its responsibility in reaching net-zero

Friday 4 June, 2021

Academics, NGOs, activists and creatives support a call for G7 militaries to come clean on their carbon emissions ahead of COP 26 in Glasgow.

Tipping Point North South's *Transform Defence* project today published an Open Letter to United Kingdom Prime Minister Boris Johnson, as host of the G7 Summit in Cornwall.

The 26 signatories comprise an international list from academia, international development, environment, peace and the arts.

The Open Letter calls for G7 commitment to come clean on its collective military emissions ahead of COP and to take account of the letter's recommendations (see *Notes*) as an urgent roadmap for action on this all too hidden aspect of the climate-emergency.

Military carbon emissions

The world must cut global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by *at least* 50% by 2030 if we are to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C – we have less than nine years.^[1] Yet while all aspects of human activity are required to urgently decarbonise, one sector remains out of view: the global military.

The global military has been a significant contributor to climate change over decades. Its emissions are estimated to be several percent of total global carbon emissions and are comparable with the carbon emissions of civilian aviation.^[2]

Modern militaries are completely dependent on fossil fuels and are among the biggest institutional consumers of oil in the world, with no sign of realistic or practical net-zero plans to offset their carbon emissions.

The public are in the dark

The G7 countries (UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the USA) are all in the top 20 military spending nations and currently, the global military is exempt from compulsory reporting of GHG emissions to the UN/IPCC. Some countries, including the USA, the UK and Germany, *voluntarily* report, but this is a bare-minimum disclosure as the IPCC template and codes have only a handful of items mentioning domestic military-related activities.

This means the public and policy makers are unable to obtain an accurate picture of the global military's overall contribution to climate heating ? from its massive fossil fuel consumption both domestically and overseas to its military exercises and expeditions; from the impacts of conflict and war to GHG emissions arising from post-conflict reconstruction or nation re-building.^[3]

Critical relationship to the SDGs

Calculating and addressing the carbon burden of conflict and war means acknowledging the impact of military activity on conflict-driven poverty and displacement. It also means addressing the untold billions of dollars in military spending that is spent unnecessarily — as a consequence of waste, fraud and abuse — on many nations' military spending and which should now be part of all discussions concerning funding sources to plug the significant SDGs funding gap.

Integral to all social and environmental justice issues

The eyes of the world are on the UK for this hugely important G7 meeting. The climate change related concerns of civil society must not be side-lined. In a climate-changed world that urgently needs to get to net-zero, this is yet one more challenging social and environmental justice issue for the G7 of 2021 which can no longer be swept under the carpet.

Full text of the Open Letter and supporting signatories [here](https://transformdefence.org/g7-open-letter-2021/) (<https://transformdefence.org/g7-open-letter-2021/>).

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Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits ::
Environment & Nature ::
Government ::

Related Keywords:

g7 Summit :: Climate Change ::
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Glasgow :: Carbon Footprint ::

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NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Open Letter Recommendations in brief (expanded in Open Letter)

- An IPCC Task Force for decarbonisation of militaries and military technology industries
- An IPCC Special Report on the role of the global militaries and military technology industries in contributing to climate change
- Compulsory submissions to the IPCC/UNFCCC of full GHG military emissions reporting by all nations
- Nationally determined contributions (NDCs): all countries must include their militaries and military technology industries in their GHG emission reduction plans and targets

2. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change. The main objective of the Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories is to develop and refine a methodology for the calculation and reporting of national greenhouse gas emissions and removals.

3. There have been a number of recent reports quantifying the carbon contribution of the global military to climate change.³

4. Tipping Point North South's (TPNS) [Transform Defence for Sustainable Human Safety](#) initiative launched in December 2020 with two reports detailing the staggering cost of military spending to people and the planet: [Indefensible: The true cost of the global military to our climate and human security](#) assesses the impact of the global military on climate change, human security and development and [Global military spending, sustainable human safety and value for money](#) makes the case for modernising defence and security thinking and spending. TPNS was founded by former senior Christian Aid trade, tax and climate justice campaigners.

Supporting Signatories

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Christine Allen, CAFOD (UK/Int'l)

~~Documentary Filmmaker~~
Doreen Armitage (UK)

~~Research Co-ordinator~~
Rick Buijs Co-ordinator, The Transnational Institute (Netherlands/Int'l)

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Professor C. Gordon of the Department Political Science, Boston University and
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[1] <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

[2] Ho-Chih Lin and Deborah Burton, 'Indefensible: The true cost of the global military to our climate and human security,' Transform Defence, 2020, <https://transformdefence.org/publication/indefensible/>; Various reports by Stuart Parkinson and colleagues, Scientists for Global Responsibility, <https://www.sgr.org.uk/projects/climate-change-military-main-outputs>.

[3] Ho-Chih Lin and Deborah Burton, 'Indefensible: The true cost of the global military to our climate and human security,' Transform Defence, 2020, <https://transformdefence.org/publication/indefensible/>; Neta C. Crawford, "Pentagon Fuel Use, Climate Change, and the Costs of War," Costs of War Project, 2019, <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/papers/ClimateChangeandCostofWar>; Oliver Belcher, Patrick Bigger, Ben Neimark, and Cara Kennelly, "Hidden Carbon Costs of the 'everywhere war': Logistics, Geopolitical Ecology, and the Carbon Boot-print of the US Military," 2019, <https://rgs-ibg.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/tran.12319>; Various reports by Stuart Parkinson and colleagues, Scientists for Global Responsibility, <https://www.sgr.org.uk/projects/climate-change-military-main-outputs>.

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