

CLIMATE COLLATERAL

Why the military's impact on climate change can no longer be ignored

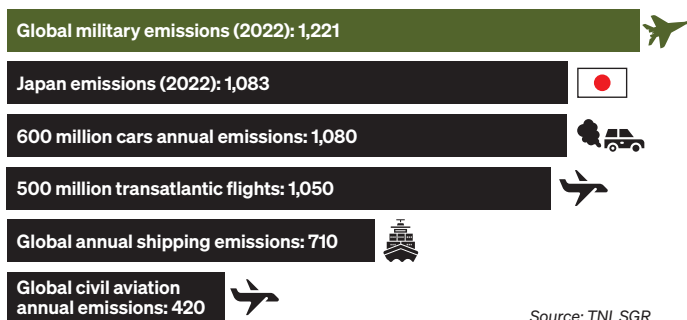
The struggle for climate justice in 2024 is being overshadowed by the wars in Gaza, Ukraine, Yemen, Sudan and Myanmar. Meanwhile 2023 saw the hottest month in 100,000 years. States that should be working together to invest in urgent climate action are instead reaching new military spending records (over \$2.4 trillion in 2023). This spending produces huge emissions, drains resources from climate action, and escalates geopolitical tensions that make multilateral climate action more difficult.

Just a 5% shift in this spending would raise \$110.4 billion, more than enough to meet the repeatedly-missed global climate finance target of \$100 billion. The IPCC is clear: we must reduce emissions by 43% by 2030 if we hope to hold global temperature increases below 1.5 degrees Celsius. We are in a tiny window for bold emergency action, and it is being closed by war, conflict, and rivalry.

Military emissions are significant contributors to climate change

The world's military is estimated to produce at least 5.5% of total greenhouse gas emissions. This is more than the total emissions of Japan and double that of the worldwide civil aviation sector, yet **no country is required to provide data on their military emissions.**

Military emissions in perspective (in million metric tonnes of CO₂ equivalent)



Source: TNI, SGR

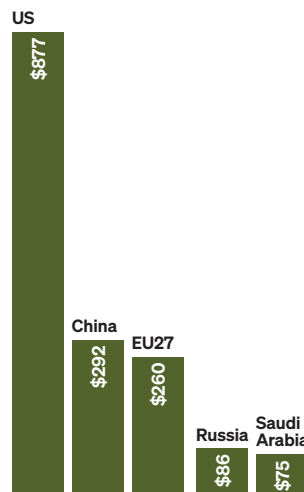
The estimates for global military GHG emissions are based on the calculations done for the report 'Climate Crossfire' (TNI, 2023).

The biggest climate polluters are also the biggest military spenders

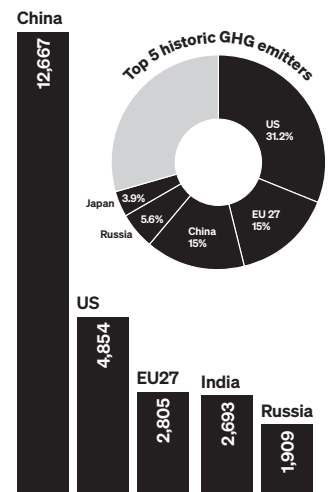
The biggest greenhouse gas emitters – today and historically – are also the biggest military spenders. This is not an accident but is integral to the way fossil fuel development and expansion has always been tied to military expansion. Military infrastructure by major powers is developed to maintain or leverage access to strategic resources.

Military Spenders and Major Emitters

Top 5 military spenders
(in billions of dollars 2022)



Top 5 GHG emitters
(in million tCO₂e 2022)

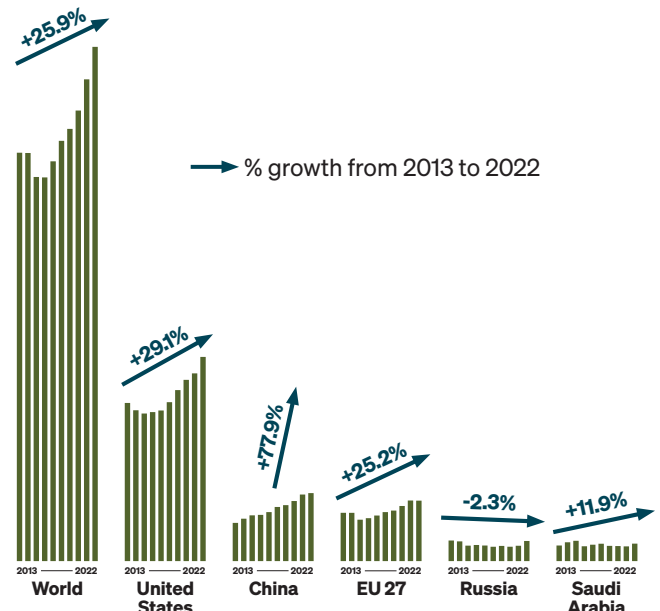


Source: SIPRI

Military spending is predicted to grow dramatically and increase emissions

Military spending has grown by 25.9% in the last decade. Meanwhile attempts to mobilize climate finance as well as funds for loss and damage have faltered. The promise by developed countries (Annex II) to provide \$100 billion a year in climate finance by 2020 to developing countries, has still not been met, yet the same countries spend 30 times as much on their militaries each year.

Military spending growth, 2013–2022 (in current prices)



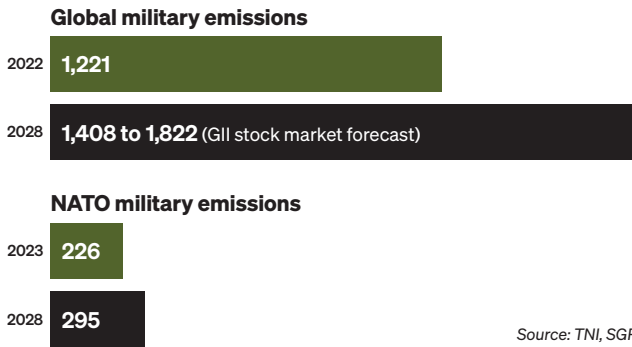
→ % growth from 2013 to 2022

Market analysts expect an annual growth rate of global military spending of between 4.2% and 6.9% up to 2030. NATO has also tried to lock in this growth by committing all its members to reaching the goal of spending 2% of GDP on the military. Meeting this goal would lead to an additional \$2.57 trillion of expenditure by 2028 and an additional estimated 467 million tonnes of emissions.

Projected growth of military emissions

Military emissions (in million metric tonnes of CO₂ equivalent)

■ Current ■ Projected



Source: TNI, SGR

Military spending is diverting money from climate finance

Climate change is the most serious threat facing all of us. Yet military action is prioritised over climate action in state spending, diverting political attention. Every dollar spent on military expansion is a dollar not spent on a rapid and just green transition. Policymakers also consistently seek to exempt the military – and the accompanying arms trade – from any binding climate and environmental regulations.

Climate finance in perspective

(in \$ USD)

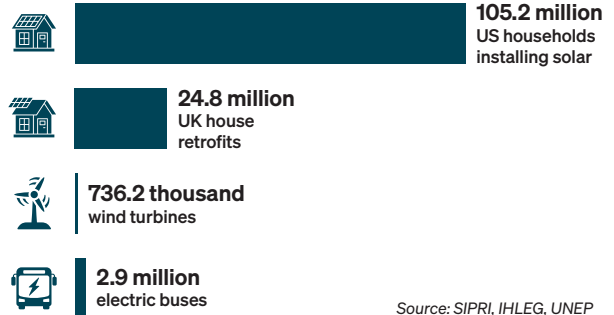


Source: SIPRI, IHLEG, UNEP

Investing even a portion of this military spending in climate action could substantially reduce emissions.

Climate finance in perspective

Global military spending (\$2208 billion) could pay for (either/or):



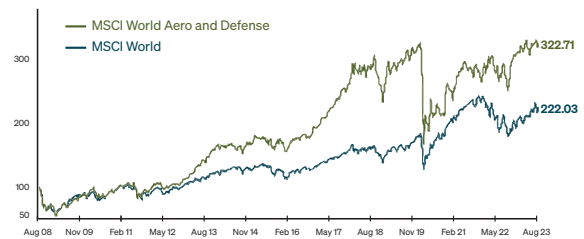
Source: SIPRI, IHLEG, UNEP

Winners and losers of the global arms race

The principal winners of military spending are the arms companies whose profits and stocks have soared, far outperforming the average growth of many other industrial sectors.

Arms industry stocks compared to global stocks

Cumulative index performance – price returns (USD), 2008 – 2023



Source: MSCI

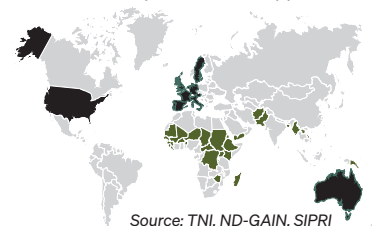
Leading global arms companies



The richest countries (Annex II) export to all 40 of the world's most climate vulnerable countries. Rather than providing money to cope with the impacts of climate change, the richest countries are providing weapons that will fuel conflicts in regions such as the Sahel and increase vulnerability of those on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

Arms exports by Annex II countries to climate vulnerable countries

■ Climate vulnerable countries that receive arms
■ Most important arms suppliers



Source: TNI, ND-GAIN, SIPRI

SOURCES/RESOURCES

TNI: Climate collateral: How military spending accelerates climate breakdown (2022): <https://www.tni.org/climatecollateral>

TNI: Climate crossfire: How NATO's 2% military spending targets contribute to climate breakdown (2023): <https://www.tni.org/climatecrossfire>

SGR/CEOS: Estimating the military's global greenhouse gas emissions: <https://www.sgr.org.uk/publications/estimating-military-s-global-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

The Military Emissions Gap: <https://militaryemissions.org/>

Arms, Militarism and Climate Justice Working Group: <https://climatemilitarism.org/>

This brief has been produced with the input of researchers from Transnational Institute, Stop Wapenhandel and Tipping Point North South/Transform Defence Project.