

# Media Factsheet

## About Rethinking Security

Short description – *Rethinking Security is a network of peace and security experts.*

Long description – *Rethinking Security is a network of organisations, academics and activists working together for security based on justice, co-operation and sustainability.*

Our goal is that the UK has an approach to – and policies for – security and international relations that work in solidarity with others to tackle underlying drivers of insecurity and build a more just and peaceful world for all.

## Key facts and statistics

The world is becoming less peaceful

- The level of peace across the world has deteriorated by 0.27 in the past year of recording, the fourth successive year of deterioration<sup>1</sup>
- Deaths from violent conflict reached at least 157,000 in 2017, more than double the number recorded ten years previously<sup>2</sup>
- Over 7,100 civilians were killed in Syria in 2018.<sup>3</sup>

The UK arms trade is a contributor to violent conflict

- On a ten-year basis, the UK is the second largest arms exporter in the world<sup>4</sup>
- Arms deals worth an estimated £39bn were approved between 2008 and 2017, £12bn of which went to states included on the FCO's human rights priority countries list<sup>5</sup>
- UK sales of arms and military kit to Saudi Arabia were £1.1bn in the first half of 2017.<sup>6</sup> The UK has licensed £4.6 billion worth of arms sales to Saudi Arabia since the start of its military intervention in Yemen.<sup>7</sup>

Climate change drives insecurity, and the situation will only worsen

- Almost half of the world's population are unlikely to have reliable access to clean water by 2050<sup>8</sup>
- By 2050, food production will have to increase by around 50% (from a 2012 baseline) if the demands of the world's population are to be met<sup>9</sup>
- Future forecasts vary from 25 million to 1 billion migrants as a result of environmental changes by 2050.<sup>10</sup>

Economic inequality and lack of democracy drive insecurity, and progress is slow for many

- 1% of the world's population now owns almost half its wealth<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Economics and Peace (2018), Global Peace Index

<sup>2</sup> International Institute for Strategic Studies (2017) Armed Conflict Survey

<sup>3</sup> ReliefWeb (2018), Armed Conflict Location and Events Dataset

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Defence (2017), UK Defence and Security Exports

<sup>5</sup> Action on Armed Violence (2018)

<sup>6</sup> Department for International Trade (2017), Strategic Export Controls: Country Pivot Report

<sup>7</sup> Campaign Against Arms Trade

<sup>8</sup> UN, (2017), The United Nations World Water Development Report, Wastewater: The Untapped Resource

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Defence (2018) Global Strategic Trends

<sup>10</sup> Institute for Environment and Human Security, United Nations University (2015)

<sup>11</sup> Credit Suisse (2018) Global Wealth Report

- One in three people worldwide continue to live in low levels of human development<sup>12</sup>
- Less than half the world's population live in some form of democracy, with only 4.5% classified as living in a full democracy.<sup>13</sup>

The UK public does not support the Government's security approach

- 63% of Brits oppose the sale of weapons to Saudi Arabia<sup>14</sup>
- 52% of Brits oppose military intervention overseas and 21% 'didn't know'<sup>15</sup>
- 60 per cent of people agree that the UK Government should invest more in peacebuilding, only 10% disagree.<sup>16</sup>

## The problem

The UK's approach to security is disconnected from the needs of people and communities, in the UK and elsewhere. It is preoccupied with economic and military power and prioritises offensive military capabilities to achieve this. It takes a short-term view of security risks, overlooking systemic causes of insecurity, such as climate change and economic inequality.

## The solution - how to end the UK's contribution to worldwide insecurity and violence

- Re-set arms export policy, introducing a presumption of denial when considering applications from repressive governments and states with human rights violations and violent conflict
- Combat global militarisation, releasing policymakers from NATO's arbitrary 2% spending target
- Review nuclear weapons policy, facilitating nuclear disarmament initiatives and reassess the renewal of Trident
- End the Department for International Development's involvement in Countering / Preventing Violent Extremism programmes, allowing it to refocus aid on peacebuilding, human rights, governance reform and development
- End 'securitised' approaches to forced migration, adopting responses that address their social, political and economic causes.

## Rethinking Security member organisations

- |                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Campaign Against Arms Trade       | Campaign For Nuclear Disarmament |
| • Conciliation Resources            | Forces Watch                     |
| • International Alert               | Oxford Research Group            |
| • Peace Direct                      | Quaker Peace and Social Witness  |
| • Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network | Saferworld                       |
| • War on Want                       | United Nations Association-UK    |

Our work also benefits substantially from the active participation of academics from the universities of Bradford, Coventry, Kent and Oxford Brookes.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Development Programme (2016), Human Development Report

<sup>13</sup> Economist Intelligence Unit (2018) Democracy Index 2018: Me too? Political participation, protest and democracy

<sup>14</sup> YouGov/Save the Children/Avaaz (2018)

<sup>15</sup> YouGov (2018)

<sup>16</sup> Populus/Conciliation Resources/Alliance for Peacebuilding (2018)