

Rethinking Security is a network of organisations, academics and activists who share a concern about the current approach to 'national security' in the UK and beyond. We believe that this approach is a significant barrier to progress on a range of progressive agendas for peace, justice and ecological sustainability.

How to get involved

Find out more and sign up to our newsletter on the website. This has many resources that can help you change the conversation on what security means.

- Learn more about human and ecological security by following and sharing our blog.
- Use our How to Guides to take action locally
- Use our policy briefings to bring your concerns to your MP.
- Take action by following our members' campaigns and advocacy work.

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Rethinking Security



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www.rethinkingsecurity.org.uk

Contact us on info@rethinkingsecurity.org.uk

Our members include: BASIC, Campaign Against Arms Trade, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Conciliation Resources, Forces Watch, International Alert, Medact, Movement for the Abolition of War, Northern Friends Peace Board, Peace Direct, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network, Saferworld, Scientists for Global Responsibility, Secure Scotland, United Nations Association UK, War on Want, plus academics and local groups across the UK

Cover image: Chloe Skinner

It's time to *Rethink Security*



Security matters to everyone but much that governments do in our name is making us all less safe, at home and around the world.

With wars causing untold devastation, worsening impacts of climate breakdown, and staggering levels of global inequality, it's time for a rethink.

Rethinking Security is working for an approach to security that meets everyone's needs – from local to global.

Rethinking Security

for a just and peaceful world

National security or human security?

Do you feel safe and secure in your everyday life? Do you feel that your concerns about you, your family's and community's security are addressed by the government's approach to security?

The UK is one of the world's richest countries and is among its top six military spenders, yet many UK citizens face growing insecurity as inequality and under-resourced public services push many people into homelessness, hunger and debt.

Our research found that 75% of people in the UK would prioritise human security concerns – economic safety, access to food, health care, education, strong communities – before national security concerns, like being a strong military power.

The current UK security strategy

As a post-imperial power, Britain is focused on global status and influence pursued largely through military means, with a shrinking role for diplomacy and aid. Where aid is given, it is increasingly used to further UK interests. The UK prides itself on its special relationship with the US, its permanent position on the UN Security Council, and its prominence within NATO and other international institutions. Ignoring the UN treaty that bans nuclear weapons, it retains and has pledged to increase its nuclear arsenal. Its substantial military industries and arms exports fuel conflict around the world.

Military solutions to perceived threats are failing. After decades of catastrophic military interventions and support for autocratic regimes, the world has seen the failure of Western 'security' policy across the Middle East and North Africa. Meanwhile, Ukrainians are bearing the devastating impacts of a return to interstate conflict in Europe. Many recognise that the indefinite expansion of NATO and its members' military budgets is not the answer to insecurity on the continent.

The United Nations defines human security as "the right of people to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair"; this right is not addressed by a predominantly military national security policy.

National interest or international cooperation?

Total global military expenditure exceeded \$2.4 trillion in 2023, the highest annual total ever. Yet, few would judge the world to be a safer place. The real causes of insecurity affecting the majority of the world's citizens – ecological destruction, climate change, disease, poverty, inequality, repression and militarism – must be resolved through international cooperation at all levels. The Coronavirus pandemic and the climate and nature crises have highlighted the global interdependence of our species and of all life on the planet. Failure to recognise this reality has brought us to the multiple crises we currently face. A human security approach would build sustainable security for people and the planet.

A vision for change



Our vision is of:

- global relationships based on cooperation rather than domination;
- a global economy which serves the needs of all, rather than the greed of the few;
- flourishing, inclusive societies where the voices of all are heard and each person's well-being is valued and respected;
- protection for our planet from looming catastrophe so the next generation and beyond have a viable future.

We work across public, policy, and academic spaces to generate big conversations about what an approach to security that includes the voices of the public and grassroots groups, and that prioritises people and planet could look like.

Help us generate a national conversation to rethink existing assumptions about security policy and explores new ways of doing things together.