



# *Peace Movement Aotearoa*

PO Box 9314, Wellington 6141, Aotearoa New Zealand. Tel +64 4 382 8129

Email [icanz@xtra.co.nz](mailto:icanz@xtra.co.nz) Web site [www.converge.org.nz/pma](http://www.converge.org.nz/pma)

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**Election 2020: Welfare or warfare?**

**Let's get disarmament on the agenda**

What would good policy look like?  
What should you ask the candidates?  
What do the political parties say?

 **Peace Movement Aotearoa, [www.disarm.org.nz](http://www.disarm.org.nz)  
[www.facebook.com/PeaceMovementAotearoa](https://www.facebook.com/PeaceMovementAotearoa)**

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated lives and livelihoods around the world, highlighted and exacerbated systemic social, economic and political inequities, and exposed the flaws in government spending and other priorities, including the folly of maintaining armed forces in a constant state of combat readiness when there are so many other more pressing needs.

The critical need for cooperation at every level - local, national, regional and global - to find solutions to the issues that affect us all is perhaps clearer than ever before, as is the need to promote alternative and better ways forward from what we have now.

Humanitarian disarmament - which prioritises care for peoples and the planet, the prevention of harm, and global cooperation for the common good - provides a pathway for a better future, and we need your help to get disarmament on the agenda for this year's election so that it becomes a higher priority for the next government and those that follow.

Whether you are concerned about the failing health system, lack of affordable housing, levels of poverty and social inequities, environmental degradation, declining biodiversity, or inadequate attention to climate justice, disarmament has something positive to offer.

If you value the welfare of peoples and the planet above endless harmful preparations for war, please use and share this resource and the links at <http://disarm.org.nz> - thank you.

Our Election 2020 disarmament resource has four sections:

- A) What would good disarmament policy look like?
- B) What the political parties say about disarmament;
- C) Disarmament questions for candidates; and
- D) Where you can get more information.

### **A) What would good disarmament policy look like?**

This section has an overview of our minimum requirements for a good disarmament policy:

#### **Uphold existing standards**

- uphold the legislation prohibiting biological, chemical, nuclear, and indiscriminate weapons, landmines and cluster munitions
- uphold the controls on the export of weapons and military technology
- continue the Disarmament and Arms Control Ministerial portfolio
- ensure any military activity is fully consistent with disarmament, human rights and humanitarian law

#### **Develop new standards**

- enact legislation to ban the development, production, deployment and use of fully autonomous weapon systems in Aotearoa New Zealand. (Fully autonomous weapon systems, also known as killer robots, are robotic weapon systems with the ability to select targets and attack on their own, without any meaningful human control)

#### **Increase disarmament diplomacy**

- increase the level of resourcing for disarmament diplomacy
- promote global implementation of existing disarmament treaties
- promote the development of new disarmament law, for example, to ensure human control over the use of force and to prohibit killer robots
- promote the development of new disarmament standards, for example, around the use of explosive weapons in populated areas

#### **Promote welfare, not warfare**

- reduce the level of annual military spending
- cancel the planned \$20 billion spend on military equipment
- transition from armed forces to civilian agencies for fisheries and resource protection, search and rescue, and humanitarian assistance
- focus foreign policy on promoting sustainable peace

## **B) What the political parties say about disarmament**

On 24 August 2020, we sent five questions to all of the political parties with candidates in Election 2020 asking about their policies on disarmament, fully autonomous weapon systems and military expenditure. This was necessary because none of the political parties have a coherent disarmament policy available in a single document (although the Green and Labour parties have some disarmament elements in their foreign affairs policy and elsewhere).

To date, we have received replies from seven: the Greens and Labour sent substantive replies; National sent the name of their disarmament spokesperson; the Māori Party asked for more time; TOP and Vision NZ said they do not yet have a disarmament policy; and the Aotearoa Legalise Cannabis Party answered each question with reference to their sole focus, legalising cannabis. All of the replies are available at <http://disarm.org.nz>

From the replies received, the Green Party has the most points in common with our recommendations of what good disarmament policy should look like, and they share Peace Movement Aotearoa's commitment to using non-violent means to resolve conflict.

Labour's reply has few points in common with our recommendations of what good disarmament policy should look like, although Labour did reinstate the Disarmament and Arms Control portfolio after the 2017 election in keeping with its manifesto, even if it took some time to do so (see, for example, 'Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control reinstated', [www.facebook.com/PeaceMovementAotearoa/posts/1617938474920182](http://www.facebook.com/PeaceMovementAotearoa/posts/1617938474920182) )

Labour's policy does not seem to have been updated since the 2014 election: it includes a reference to "*working with like-minded countries to outlaw nuclear weapons, including through a Nuclear Arms Convention*" just below references to the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which does exactly that, and which the current government ratified in July 2018.

Labour's replies to the general questions refer only to nuclear disarmament, somewhat surprising given the role the fifth Labour government played in negotiating the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions, including hosting the second to last negotiating conference in Wellington in February 2008, and the range of disarmament issues it has promoted while in government since 2017.

Labour's position on fully autonomous weapon systems is disappointing, as is their focus on maintaining combat ready armed forces regardless of the cost.

## **C) Disarmament questions for candidates**

Here are some suggestions for questions to help get disarmament on the agenda in 2020:

### **Disarmament policy**

- Does your party have a disarmament policy?
- Does your party have a disarmament spokesperson?

### **Ban fully autonomous weapon systems**

- Does your party support a global ban on fully autonomous weapon systems? Does your party support a national ban on killer robots? (Fully autonomous weapon systems, also known as killer robots, are robotic weapon systems with the ability to select targets and attack on their own, without any meaningful human control)

### **Increase disarmament diplomacy**

- Does your party support an increase in the level of resourcing for disarmament diplomacy?

### **Promote welfare, not warfare**

- Does your party support a reduction in annual military spending? (Budget 2020 allocation = \$88+ million per week)
- Does your party support the planned \$20 billion spend on military equipment over the next decade?
- Does your party support a shift in foreign policy to focus on promoting sustainable peace?
- Does your party support a transition from armed forces to a civilian coastguard and other agencies for fisheries and resource protection, search and rescue, and humanitarian assistance?

It would be really helpful if you can let us know about any replies you receive, who the reply was from, and the date - please email to Peace Movement Aotearoa, [icanz@xtra.co.nz](mailto:icanz@xtra.co.nz)

### **D) Where you can get more information**

- ‘Election 2020: Let’s get disarmament on the agenda’ resources and links, including images to share, documents formatted for printing, and links to disarmament campaigns and peace projects in Aotearoa New Zealand, <http://www.disarm.org.nz>
- ‘Welfare or warfare? Military spending in Budget 2020’, Peace Movement Aotearoa, 13 May 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/notes/peace-movement-aotearoa/welfare-or-warfare-military-spending-in-budget-2020/2932383820142301>
- Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign on Military Spending, <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/gdams.htm>

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