



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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13 September 2024

Dear Prime Minister

Moving your government's international policy away from military confrontation

In 2016 the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF UK) welcomed the establishment of a shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament by the Labour Party.

This seemed to send a message that the Labour Party wished peace to be high on their future governmental agenda.

Fabian Hamilton was appointed and carried out the role with distinction. Not only did he build links between the Labour Party and civil society working on issues around militarism, peace and disarmament, but he also engaged with the United Nations on issues including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This indicated that future Labour policy would be firmly rooted in international law and negotiated solutions to conflicts.

Without a dedicated voice for peace and disarmament in the Foreign Office team there is a real danger of losing focus on non-proliferation and arms controls that are necessary to address Britain's genuine human security needs: enabling people to live without poverty, in decent housing, with adequate food, with good health and education services.

Having a Labour Prime Minister as well as a London Labour Mayor also offers a fantastic opportunity for your government to say NO – now and in the future – to London continuing to host arms fairs at Newham ExCeL Centre (and elsewhere around the country) that showcase weapons and tools for wars and armed violence, and for your government to say NO to supporting arms dealers and military personnel from the world's most violent, authoritarian and undemocratic regimes.

As a women's international peace organisation with over one hundred years of experience, WILPF seeks to move our government's international policy away from military confrontation and towards negotiation.

WILPF is writing to you now to ask what was the thinking behind deciding to axe the position of Minister for Peace and Disarmament? What message were you intending to send to the public?

We look forward to hearing from you in the course of time.

Yours in peace

Fiona McOwan, National Secretary, for WILPF UK Executive Committee

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