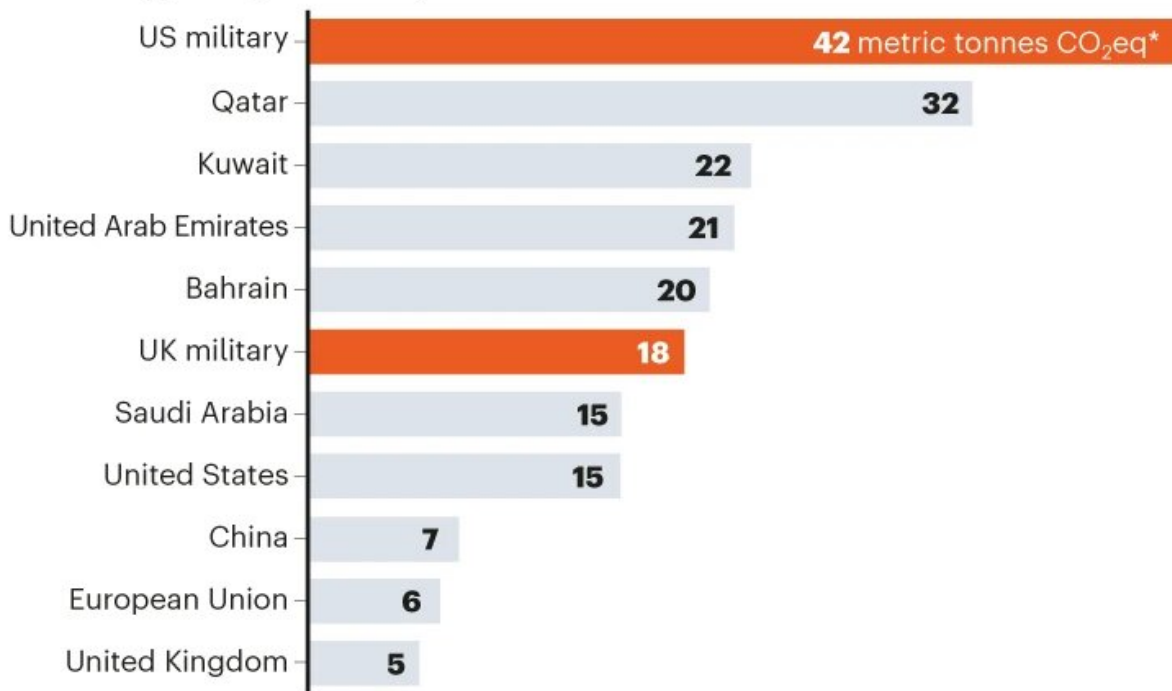


# Decarbonize the military: Researchers urge armed forces to report emissions

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## MILITARY EMISSIONS

Fuel-use data show that US and UK armed forces emit as much CO<sub>2</sub> per capita as many carbon-intensive countries.



\*Per capita or per military personnel.  
Country-level data are from the World Bank and are from 2018.  
See the Supplementary spreadsheet for further calculations.

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Credit: *Nature* (2022). DOI: 10.1038/d41586-022-03444-7

Ahead of COP27, researchers are calling for the "massive" carbon

footprint of the world's armed forces to be measured and managed, in an article published today in *Nature*.

The new publication highlights that UK and US [armed forces](#) emit as much carbon dioxide per person as many carbon-intensive countries, and the American military alone (the world's largest in terms of expenditure) emits more [greenhouse gases](#) than many entire countries—including Peru, Singapore and Switzerland. If it were a nation, the US military would have the highest per-capita emissions in the world (at 42 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per staff member).

Researchers also warn that a current lack of accurate ways to calculate emissions from military activities means these figures may be even higher, as estimates can increase dramatically when factoring in other energy supplies, [raw materials](#), supply chains and equipment manufacturing—not to mention the carbon emissions from warfare itself.

The military sector's share of global greenhouse-gas emissions is estimated to be around five percent—comparable to emissions from the aviation and shipping industries. However, militaries have been left out of international agreements to declare emissions since the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, on the basis of preserving national security. A lack of published data makes it hard to estimate totals, and only a handful of forces (including those of the UK and US) have published strategy documents on climate action.

One of the article's authors is Dr. Benjamin Neimark, Senior Lecturer and Fellow at Queen Mary University of London, who's currently leading the Concrete Impacts research project to map the environmental footprint of the US military in Iraq.

Dr. Neimark commented that "we need robust independent research to

properly calculate military [carbon emissions](#), so we can fully understand how [armed conflicts](#) affect the climate and start developing low-carbon recovery pathways."

"It's particularly apt, with the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) starting this weekend, that we should call on militaries and researchers to join forces in reporting and reducing the carbon footprint of the armed forces. If the military doesn't act on this issue, it simply won't be able to uphold obligations of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change."

**More information:** Mohammad Ali Rajaeifar et al, Decarbonize the military—mandate emissions reporting, *Nature* (2022). [DOI: 10.1038/d41586-022-03444-7](#)

Provided by Queen Mary, University of London

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