
UK: cuts in aid to poor countries, increased military spending. CAFOD and Christian Aid criticise Government

“Spending another £11 billion (€12.5 billion) on the military over the next five years, when millions face famine in East Africa is unforgivable”, said Neil Thorns, spokesman for CAFOD, the Agency for Overseas Development of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, harshly criticising the latest UK budget, presented to Parliament this week by the Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt. The new budget, which includes tax incentives to encourage retired individuals to return to work and also business tax breaks, significantly increases military spending to nearly 2.25 per cent of GDP. By contrast, aid spending in support of developing countries was cut by 21% from 2020 to 2021, when, for the first time, the UK failed to meet the United Nations target of 0.7% of GDP. Even Christian Aid, the ecumenical Christian charity supporting developing countries, has criticised the new budget, saying that “not only has the aid pot been stunted and raided by other government departments, but it has also lost its focus on tackling poverty and its causes”. The remarks follow a letter to the Government from 13 MPs close to CAFOD, which calls on the UK Government to intervene in East Africa.

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