

Embargoed for: Friday 4 March

## **'COUNT ME OUT' CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED AGAINST 2011 CENSUS**

- Activists launch campaign against Lockheed Martin's involvement in 2011 census
- Office for National Statistics will be targeted with an action this Friday at 8.30am.
- Photo opportunity on 04/03/2011 at 8.30am outside the London office of the ONS (1 Myddelton Street, London, EC1R 1UW)

This Friday, individuals will be targeting the Office for National Statistics with an action that will launch the campaign 'Count Me Out: Action against the 2011 census'.

Count Me Out is bringing together individuals and groups taking action against the 2011 census and raise awareness about the Lockheed Martin UK's involvement in the census. Its website ([www.countmeout.me.uk](http://www.countmeout.me.uk)) will be launched on Monday 8 March. The website will expose the links between the census and the arms trade, as well as highlighting actions being taken against it and bringing together different voices against the 2011 census.

The ongoing controversy over UK and American arms sales to Middle Eastern states such as Bahrain (whose regime is one of Lockheed Martin's customers) has called into question the government's awarding of a £150 million contract to conduct the census to America's largest arms manufacturer.

Rights activists will also be highlighting the government's choice to use an extra page in the census to collect data on immigration instead of disability or poverty statistics. The UK census is one of the few which does not record household income or include adequate disability questions, rendering many groups invisible in the official statistics. Count Me Out contends that the census data will be used to cut public services rather than increase their efficiency, coming as it does at a time when the government is attempting to privatise many vital services such as the NHS.

There is growing anger against the 2011 census and many people across the UK will be taking action against it, through boycotts, census-spoiling and targeting the Office for National Statistics and their MPs.

Chris Browne, a member of Count Me Out, commented on one of the reasons for a campaign against the census:

"The arms trade is an industry which bases its existence on the proliferation of weapons systems and war. As such it is entirely illegitimate. The awarding of a £150 million contract for the 2011 census to Lockheed is completely unacceptable, as it will be giving credibility to a company that deserves none. Count Me Out has been set up to raise awareness over the arms trade's involvement in this census, and highlight action being taken against it."

Sam Lias from Count Me Out spoke on the aims of the Friday action:

"There are lots of reasons why people are saying "count me out". Friday's protest is kick starting the campaign in an energetic and creative way, but it will be by no means the only

action people are going to take against the census. It is our aim to bring the issues into the media spotlight and generate public debate. This demonstration is a vital first step.”

*ENDS*

#### **Notes for editors**

1. 14 January 2011 press release from 2011 Census: [2011mc.census.gov.uk/index.php?module=d...](http://2011mc.census.gov.uk/index.php?module=d...)
2. Campaign Against Arms Trade: [www.caat.org.uk/resources/facts-figures...](http://www.caat.org.uk/resources/facts-figures...)
3. Campaign Against Arms Trade, Source: SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) Yearbook 2010 Table 6A.1 [www.caat.org.uk/resources/facts-figures...](http://www.caat.org.uk/resources/facts-figures...)
4. Census Alert website: [http://censusalert.org.uk/lockheed\\_martin.html](http://censusalert.org.uk/lockheed_martin.html)
5. House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee: Official Statistics: 2011 Census Questions [www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/memo...](http://www.parliament.uk/documents/upload/memo...)
6. Lockheed Martin is the world's second largest arms manufacturer, producing F-16 fighter jets, cluster bombs, and the Trident nuclear missile system.

Count Me Out logo available in jpg format on request. Website [countmeout.me.uk](http://countmeout.me.uk) is going live on 07/03/11.

For further information or an interview, contact 07597 622047 / [countmeout2011@gmail.com](mailto:countmeout2011@gmail.com).