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I fully support the nonviolent disarmament action that took place in Sweden on March 22, 2009, against a Gripen military aircraft.

During the struggle against apartheid in South Africa we often used civil disobedience and other nonviolent methods. These methods are equally relevant when it comes to the struggle against weapons export, and especially the export of Saab's Gripen fighter from Sweden to South Africa, a deal fraught with bribes and coercion.

What South Africa needs is not military aircrafts or other military equipment from Sweden or any other country. What South Africa needs is teachers, books, clean water and clinics. Sweden supported us in our freedom struggle, for which we are very grateful. But Swedish parliamentarians could have continued to be our friends by encouraging stability in our civil society, a viable economy and peaceful conflict resolution in the region. Not by coercing us to buy arms or airplanes that we never needed.

The campaign Avrusta (Disarm), of the Swedish antimilitaristic network Ofog, and its peaceful disarmament action against the Gripen is a great support to South Africa. When Swedish, or South African politicians, don't take their public responsibility seriously, it is a beacon light of hope that individuals like Annika Spalde, Pelle Strindlund and Martin Smedjeback, intervene. I hope we can together, by parliamentary as well as extra-parliamentary means, end all unethical production and export of military equipment, such as the Gripen fighter to South Africa.

God bless you.

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu