



Women in Black
London

**Women in Black London, C/o The Maypole Fund
PO Box 14072
London N16 5WB**

17 September, 2009

Dear David Miliband

As you may know, Women in Black is a world-wide network of women committed to peace with justice and actively opposed to injustice, war, militarism and other forms of violence. Every Wednesday in central London we have a demonstration - a silent vigil - on a chosen theme [<http://www.womeninblack.org/en/London>].

We would be grateful if you could help us to be clear on British foreign policy on Afghanistan and to answer some of the questions that people who come to Women in Black vigils are asking about UK foreign policy in relation to Afghanistan.

The key questions we would welcome your help with are:

- What is the UK Government hoping to achieve by military intervention in Afghanistan – what are the criteria for success for the engagement?
- How long is the British operation in Afghanistan intended to last?
- Are all British troops in Afghanistan part of the UN mandated NATO force?

In your speech on NATO's mission in Afghanistan (27.7.09) you mention that 'over a 1000 service personnel have been lost in ISAF or Operation Enduring Freedom' – have you made any estimate of the number of Afghan lives lost during these actions?

Could you also confirm that the cost of UK military operations in Afghanistan has risen to £2.6 billion in 2008/9^[1], while 'development and stabilisation' spending was £207 million during the same period?

We look forward to your response, as it will help us to answer some of the questions that we are being asked – and are asking ourselves.

Many thanks,

Sue Finch and Liz Khan on behalf of Women in Black London