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U.S. National - AFP

Activists urge tax payers to withhold money to protest Iraq



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Thu Apr 15, 6:01 PM ET

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NEW YORK (AFP) - US pacifists took to the streets Thursday -- the deadline for filing federal income tax returns -- urging taxpayers to withhold their taxes, saying too much revenue was going toward military expenditure in Iraq ([news](#) - [web sites](#)).



AFP Photo

In New York, a dozen militants were out distributing fliers in front of the main Internal Revenue Service ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) (IRS) office in Manhattan, asking passersby not to pay their taxes, regardless of how little they owed.

Protesters wore signs that read, "Lost in Iraq: 4 billion dollars a month," "War - Who wins? Halliburton, Bechtel, Dyncorp. Who loses? soldiers, civilians, taxpayers".



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Similar demonstrations were held in California, Portland, Oregon, New Orleans, Tucson, Arizona, Boulder, Colorado, Washington, DC, and 30 other cities.

"I filled out my tax form, and I'll send a letter saying that's why I refuse to pay," said Ruth Benn, head of the National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee (NWTRCC).

Benn decided in 1987 to pay no more federal taxes, saying the IRS barked, but never bit.

"I do get a lot of letters, some of them

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frightening." she told would-be nonpayers. "But you're not going to go to jail."

The NWTRCC, an umbrella group of around 50 diverse associations, was formed in 1982 to protest the arms race and then president Ronald Reagan ([news](#) - [web sites](#))'s military programs.

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"If people didn't pay, the government would be forced to reckon with that," said Melissa Jameson, 42, a social worker.

"With the war in Iraq, people are more open to our message," she said.

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