



## 2025 JOINT MEDIA PROJET REPORT



## CREDITS

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Cover: Atomic bombed Agnes of Urakami, displayed at United Nations Headquarters. Credit: Katsuhiro Asagiri, President of INPS Japan.

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## PREFACE

*By Katsuhiro Asagiri,  
President, International Press Syndicate Japan*



This Report represents the latest installment of the Joint Media Project conducted by International Press Syndicate Japan ([INPS Japan](#)) in partnership with Soka Gakkai International ([SGI](#)), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

Covering the period from April 2024 to March

2025, this marks the 16th year of this collaborative initiative. This compilation includes 33 in-depth and independent articles originally published by Inter Press Service North America, London Post, Nepali Times, and other like-minded news agencies and journalists. The selected articles, whether produced directly for this project or included for their strong relevance, reflect our shared commitment to advancing global awareness and action toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

All articles were first published on INPS Japan's dedicated website, [Toward A Nuclear Free World](#) — a platform launched in 2009 that serves both as a knowledge database and an advocacy tool. The platform promotes awareness of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, highlights the voices of the voiceless — the Global Hibakusha — and

stresses the urgent need for their complete abolition. It remains freely accessible, 24/7, year-round, offering an open resource for all committed to peace and disarmament. This year's articles explore key developments across governmental, intergovernmental, and civil society levels in the fight against nuclear proliferation and in support of disarmament. Notably, nuclear-armed states continue to oppose the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), despite its entry into force. These states argue that the TPNW ignores their security concerns, yet the global momentum for nuclear abolition continues to build. Moving forward, achieving a world free of nuclear weapons will require sustained commitment and broad solidarity among states, international organizations, and civil society. The international security environment during 2024–2025 has grown increasingly volatile.

The ongoing war in Ukraine, rising tensions between India and Pakistan, and renewed nuclear threats on the Korean Peninsula have heightened the risk of nuclear escalation. Most significantly, in June 2025, the United States launched airstrikes on Iran's nuclear facilities in Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan in direct support of Israel's military campaign — marking a historic and perilous shift in Middle East dynamics. The use of stealth bombers and the scale of the attack have raised fears of regional retaliation and a broader conflict. At the same time, the spread of AI-powered weapons and propaganda-driven hatred is steadily eroding the logic of nuclear deterrence. In this context, advancing disarmament under the TPNW framework is more urgent than ever. To maximize the project's global reach, all articles have been translated into Japanese and many into Arabic, Spanish, German, Turkish, Italian, Hindi, Norwegian,

Swedish, Indonesian, Thai, Malay, Chinese, Korean, and Russian.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to Soka Gakkai International (SGI) for their sustained partnership with us in jointly pursuing this vital goal. Our correspondents around the world are greatly encouraged to know that among our engaged readers are many SGI members whose deep interest in this theme is inspired by one of SGI's fundamental precepts, known as "Dōku" — literally meaning “shared suffering” or “empathetic resonance” — which underscores the importance of standing in solidarity with those affected by the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Finally, I extend heartfelt thanks to our correspondents for their invaluable contributions; to Dr. Manpreet Sethi, *Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Air Power Studies and Senior Research*

*Advisor to the Asia Pacific Leadership Network*, for her forward; and to Ms. Anna Ikeada, *Program Coordinator for Disarmament at the United Nations Office of Soka Gakkai International*, for her message of support.

It is my hope that this compilation will inspire further dialogue, deepen understanding, and strengthen collective action among states, civil society, and youth advocates toward a nuclear-weapon-free world.



## MESSAGE

*By Anna Ikeda*

*Representative to the UN, Soka Gakkai International*

*Program Coordinator for Disarmament, SGI Office for UN Affairs*



In a recent workshop exploring nuclear weapons through the perspective of nonviolence, participants discussed what lies at the core of violence, whose most extreme form is represented by nuclear weapons. What emerged from the conversation was fascinating—it is fear, we agreed. Nuclear deterrence, which implies readiness to destroy the lives of millions of people in retaliation, is driven by such deep fear. If one sees the world through this lens, larger capacity for

violence would seem to be the natural response to perceived threats. This is reflected in the excessive amount of resources spent to develop, maintain and modernize the world's nuclear arsenals every year, totalling \$91.4 billion in 2023, equivalent to \$2,898 a second. Yet nuclear deterrence also invites escalated arms race, where a country's defensive capacity would be interpreted as a threat to its opponent. As a result, there are still approximately 12,000 nuclear weapons, capable of destroying our planet many times over. Ironically, no amount of violence, or nuclear weapons, can eliminate fear, for fear resides within us. Perhaps it is for this reason that Mahatma Gandhi proclaimed that nonviolence is the only thing the atomic bomb would not be able to destroy. Echoing this spirit, Daisaku Ikeda, late president of the Soka Gakkai International, stated in his essay about Gandhi: "Nonviolence is the highest form of humility; it is supreme courage." It takes courage to face the "other", to resolve conflicts and disputes through dialogue and diplomacy. It also takes perseverance to build sustainable peace. Yet such courage is needed especially now, when the Doomsday Clock is set at 89 seconds to midnight, to save humanity from the brink of total annihilation. As informed citizens, we must urge the world's leaders to take decisive actions, to prevent any use of nuclear war and to open a path toward nuclear

disarmament. We need courageous leadership.

This year marks 80 years since nuclear weapons were exploded for the first time in history, starting with the Trinity Test in New Mexico, and their wartime use in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Since then, more than 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted around the world, negatively impacting the lives of far too many, in the name of national security. Survivors of nuclear violence—including those affected by uranium mining and nuclear weapons production, as well as waste disposal—continue to remind us that nuclear weapons threaten our security. They cause unending pain, damaging people's health, costing lives, and destructing the environment. The survivors' relentless dedication to share their personal testimonies, despite their struggle, is the true embodiment of courage. We must make this year one not only to honor and remember their courage, but make it our own, to turn it into action, as we move toward 2026.

Despite the challenging times, there have been some encouraging

developments as well. For instance, during the most recent Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Kyrgyzstan announced its intention to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). SGI has worked with other partners to advocate for Central Asian states' participation and engagement in the TPNW, particularly highlighting the voices of those affected by the nuclear testing at the Semipalatinsk Test Site through the production of a documentary "[I Want to Live On.](#)"

This media project was established with the aim of raising and strengthening public awareness of the urgent need for non-proliferation and ushering in a world free of nuclear weapons. Stories and voices of those who working on the goal, in particular, offer inspiration. I hope the stories give the readers some fuel to continue the work, as well the courage to proclaim that a world without nuclear weapons is possible.

## FORWARD

*By Manpreet Sethi*

*Distinguished Fellow, Centre for Air Power Studies, and Senior Research Advisor, Asia Pacific Leadership Network*



### ***Stop Pushing the Nuclear Envelope:***

It is a sad reflection of the contemporary reality that in this 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the use of nuclear weapons in 1945, the world is so precariously poised. Nations seem to be mindlessly pushing the nuclear envelope on use of language, behaviour and actions on the nuclear front.

Gone is the earlier sense of restraint in language when one referred to nuclear

weapons. They were seen as 'extraordinary and special' for the kind of damage that they could cause, and hence treated with deference. This, however, has now been replaced by references that are far more casual with a tendency to think of them as only a bit more lethal than conventional weapons. This engenders loose talk about their possible use in an expanding list of scenarios.

Casual references to nuclear use are also contributing to a growing acceptability of the idea that 'limited' nuclear wars can be managed. This is ironical given that it was only in 2022 that the P-5 had jointly re-committed to the Reagan-Gorbachev statement that nuclear wars cannot be won and should not be fought. Pushing this aside, the current chatter is around 'tactical' use of low yield nuclear weapons in regional theatres. Indeed, a new kind of pushing of the conceptual nuclear envelope.

Meanwhile, there is also a greater acceptance

of nuclear risks. In fact, some of the nuclear possessor nations are deliberately adopting risky strategies, convinced that these enhance deterrence. Ambiguous postures leaning towards launch readiness and deployment of dual use delivery systems and command control architectures are, therefore, in vogue. New redlines are being breached on other frontiers too. It may be recalled that NATO's annual nuclear training exercise *Steadfast Noon* took place for two weeks in October 2024 just about the time that Russia's *Grom* exercise, involving the full nuclear triad and with the explicitly stated purpose of practicing delivery of a "massive nuclear strike by strategic offensive forces in response to a nuclear strike by the enemy", was on. And both of these happened even as the Russia - Ukraine war raged. Such actions should have been unthinkable given their potential for misperceptions and miscalculations. But few protested what is seemingly the 'new' normal.

Even more alarming is the fact that such pushing of the envelope is taking place at a time when nuclear-armed nations are not talking to each other. Strategic dialogues that can enable an understanding of the drivers and motivations for nuclear actions are at a standstill. Instead, each country seems to be responding to harshly worded documents and statements that are demonising the other, leaving little room for empathy and understanding.

Lastly, as nuclear-armed states forge ahead on nuclear modernisation and expansion in a bid to achieve their version of credible nuclear deterrence, none of them is constrained by any bilateral or multilateral arms control agreements. The US-Russia New START treaty is theoretically still in existence. But it actually stands suspended and there are apprehensions on whether the numerical constraints will last given new threat perceptions. Meanwhile, the emerging

technologies are without any guardrails at this moment. There is recognition of the potentially disruptive implications of these technologies, but there is no apparent willingness to do anything about it. So, more capable ballistic missile defences, hypersonic delivery systems, cyber offensive technologies, autonomous weapons and a more pervasive use of artificial intelligence are on the anvil, all at the same time.

Amidst all this the salience of nuclear weapons is rising. More and more nations, including those that presently are non-nuclear weapon states signatories to the NPT, could be looking afresh at their role as providers of national security. So, there is more than chatter-on-the-margins in countries like South Korea and Japan. Iran has held up until now. But the dynamics in West Asia and possible maximum pressure policy of President Trump could prove to be the last straw on the camel's back.

Luck as much as some good sense has gotten us this far. Can we afford to mindlessly keep pushing the nuclear envelope? The biggest problem appears to be a lack of leadership on nuclear issues. No major nuclear power seems to have the inclination or courage to arrest the negative trends that are taking us into disastrous territory of nuclear marshlands. Perhaps, countries like Japan and India can team up to offer a new initiative since most of the new trends mentioned above will have implications for their security. Both should, therefore, find ways and means of opening nuclear dialogues amongst nuclear weapon possessors, building bridges with non-nuclear states, help create a shared sense of risks, and foster a desire for risk mitigation *en route* to eventual nuclear disarmament. The journey will be arduous and long but it will have to be taken one step at a time.



# Nagasaki's Continuous Martyrdom: From the Hidden Church to the Atomic Bomb

BY Victor Gaetan



*Author and Father Renzo de Luca in front of the 26 Martyrs Museum in Nagasaki, Japan. The museum was built 1962 to commemorate the 26 Christians who got executed for preaching Christianity on the Nishizaka hill in 1597. Photo: Katsuhiro Asagiri, President of INPS Japan.*

‘After Christ’s example, I forgive my persecutors. I do not hate them. I ask God to have pity on all, and I hope my blood will fall on my fellow men as a fruitful rain.’

**NAGASAKI, Japan (National Catholic Register)** — High above the city of Nagasaki, I walk a Way of the Cross in the steps of St.

Maximilian Kolbe, who founded a monastery here in 1931. The lush mountainous area is marked by a grotto reminiscent of Lourdes, built by the Polish Franciscan saint to honor the Blessed Mother and sanctify the place where he lived for five years, until called back to Poland.

Americans associate Nagasaki with the atomic bomb, dropped by a U.S. B-29 on Aug. 9, 1945. In Japan, however, the region is also synonymous with Catholicism. Missionaries brought the faith to Japan’s southern ports in the mid-1600s. Nagasaki’s Christian community grew so quickly it was known as “Little Rome” among traders at the time.

A visit to Nagasaki is an immersion in Japan’s Catholic story — at once, brutal, mystical, and still very alive. It is also the tragic history of a continuous martyrdom.

## New Souls and New Martyrs

Jesuit missionary St. Francis Xavier, became intrigued by Japan just a few years after Portuguese merchants, blown off course, washed up on the archipelago’s southern tip, “discovering” a beautiful land riven by belligerent warlords — who were most intrigued by



Franciscus de Xabier Credit: Public Domain.

the guns on board with the foreigners.

In the two years (1549-51) Xavier lived in Japan, he brought close to 1,000 souls to Christianity. Over the next 30 years, some 200,000 Japanese converted.

One of those was Paul Miki, baptized as a child when his wealthy, powerful family accepted the new religion sweeping southern Japan. He entered the country's first Jesuit seminary as civil authorities began unfolding an increasingly brutal persecution. Fearing that Europeans intended to conquer Japan through the Church, the imperial government banished Catholic missionaries in 1587. Many went underground.

Nagasaki remained a major Catholic center because it was the chief port for international trade controlled by a Christian lord, who used harbor dues to pay Jesuits to run schools, poor houses, and churches. Then an incident involving a Spanish galleon that ran aground, carrying treasure and clergy, infuriated a dictatorial imperial minister. He ordered guards to round up Catholic missionaries and believers, parade them through the imperial city of Kyoto, then march them to Nagasaki — a monthlong journey in mid-winter — for public execution.



Photo: 26 Martyrs started their journey to Nagasaki from here in Kyoto. Credit: Katsuhiro Asagiri, President of INPS

His objective was a horrifying public spectacle to paralyze conversions.

Miki, age 33, was one of three Japanese Jesuit catechists corralled by imperial guards together with six Franciscan foreign missionaries, and 17 lay

Catholics, including three altar boys. A gifted preacher, Miki proclaimed the Gospel message along the length of their via dolorosa despite being mutilated (ear lobes sliced off), tortured, starved and jeered en route.

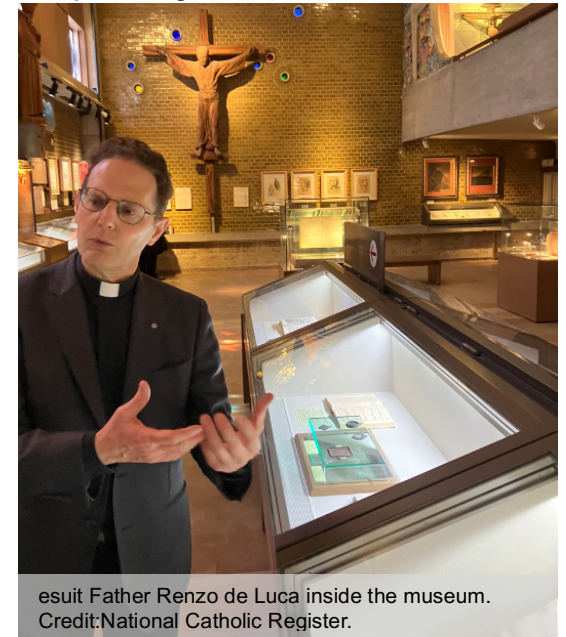
When the condemned men and boys reached Nagasaki, they were brought to a prominent hill where 26 crosses were ready, and thousands of citizens assembled. Hoisted on the wood with ropes and iron clamps, the martyrs sang and prayed until each was painfully executed by bamboo lances thrust up through their bodies.

Miki's final words exemplified his holy spirit:

"After Christ's example, I forgive my persecutors. I do not hate them. I ask God to have pity on all, and I hope my blood will fall on my fellow men as a fruitful rain."

"But the executions failed because they did not eliminate faith," explains Jesuit Father Renzo de Luca, director of Nagasaki's Twenty Six Martyr's Museum. "People were extremely moved by what they witnessed, and that deepened devotion."

Believers collected relics, including blood-soaked scarves, displayed at the museum, which was established in 1962 to mark the centennial



Jesuit Father Renzo de Luca inside the museum. Credit: National Catholic Register.



of Pope Pius IX's canonization of St. Paul Miki and his companions.

### **Hidden Christians**

When high profile executions proved ineffective against believers, authorities tried more individual approaches, especially once Christianity was banned outright in 1614. Bounties were offered for information on Christians; a higher price was put on the head of a priest (as reflected in Martin Scorsese's film *Silence* based on Shūsaku Endō's historical novel.) Households were required to register with Buddhist temples.

To test whether someone was secretly devout, individuals were required to step on images of Jesus or Mary. These *efumi-e* are often beautiful bronze images, smoothed by countless feet. In Nagasaki, this was an annual test implemented from 1629 to 1856.

When Catholics were ferreted out, often by their own devotion, torture was extreme: They were boiled alive in hot springs; drowned slowly while tied to stakes; wrapped in mats and burned over fire; lowered upside down into vats of excrement. Execution for Christianity was only canceled in 1805.

Repression drove faith underground. Catholic images and sacramentals were either well hidden, in walls for example, or concealed in plain sight: Small white Buddhist statues of Kannon, the Merciful One, became stand-ins for Mother Mary, known as Maria Kannon, venerated in secret.

Kakure Kirishitan, Hidden Christians, passed faith down from one generation to the next without priests. Baptism was the sole regular sacrament.

Some 50,000 visitors a year visit the Martyrs Museum —

increasingly, pilgrims from Korea. According to Father de Luca, the respective bishops' conferences of Japan and South Korea made a mutual commitment to increase understanding by encouraging these visits.



Korean pilgrims at 26 Martyrs monument

### **Kolbe and Mugenzai No Sono**

Polish Catholics seeking places touched by St. Maximilian Kolbe also come.

Amazingly, within a month of his arrival in 1930, Conventual Franciscan Father Kolbe was already printing a Japanese edition of his magazine, *Knight of the Immaculate* (*Knight of Mary-Without-Sin* in

local translation), the country's first Catholic magazine.

At first, Kolbe stayed near Nagasaki's Oura Cathedral, founded by French missionary priests in 1864, to serve a growing community of foreign merchants as Japan reopened to overseas trade.

Father Kolbe was moved by the church's extraordinary connection to the Hidden Christians: Soon after Oura's dedication, Father Bernard Petitjean was visited by a group of believers from the Urakami district, descendants of Catholics who maintained the faith for over 250 years. They were farmers, fisherfolk, artisans, and women who recognized the church's cross — and asked to see a statue of Mary as proof that they shared the same faith.

As a builder of communities, Father Kolbe was determined to start a Franciscan monastery, which he did at Mugenzai No Sono, in the



Photo: Oura Cathedral in Nagasaki.  
Credit: Katsuhiko Asagiri, President of  
INPS Japan.

mountainous hills on the outskirts of Nagasaki, where I walked. In this remote place he created a new center of evangelization: Between 1831-36, the number of missionaries grew from five to 20. Circulation of the magazine increased to 70,000; it continues to this day in both Poland and Japan. All this time, Father Kolbe suffered from tuberculosis and was often ill.

The big wooden desk used by the saint is a prominent attraction

at the monastery's small museum — especially since Pope John Paul II sat at this desk when he visited the modest cell.

Georgetown University Professor Kevin Doak, a specialist in modern Japanese history, notes that the saint's ascetic life in Japan helped prepare him for his martyrdom at Auschwitz.

When the atomic bomb detonated over Nagasaki at 11:02 a.m., miles from any military target, it was directly over the Urakami district, where three priests in Asia's largest Catholic cathedral were hearing confession. It spared St. Maximilian's sanctuary as it was protected by mountains.

### **At Ground Zero Stand the Saints**

In Peace Park, Nagasaki's open-air memorial to the atomic bomb's



Image: Urakami Cathedral by Shigeo Hayashi, courtesy of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum

hypocenter, stands a lonely external pillar, topped by saintly figures,





Photo: Author at the ground zero in Nagasaki. Credit: Katsuhiro Asagiri, President of INPS Japan.

which was part of Urakami Cathedral. The church had been constructed brick by brick between 1895-1917 by the Hidden Christian community when they were finally free. Its presence signifies the centrality of Catholic understanding of the disaster.

Of the citizens immediately erased by the fire ball, heat, and radiation generated by the explosion, 8,500 were Catholic. People like Midori Nagai, a 17th-generation Hidden Christian descendant, burned alive with a rosary in her hand. Only

some of Midori's bones were left — found together with fused beads, a cross, and chain.

By the end of 1945, some 74,000 were dead and 75,000 injured, almost all civilians, as a direct result of this nuclear attack of dubious strategic value.

### Preventing Another Nagasaki

"Nagasaki must be the last place exposed to an atomic bomb," declared Hiroshi Nose, director of the city's Atomic Bomb Museum, as he tells me how the museum, established in 1955, has evolved.

St. Teresa of Calcutta toured the museum and concluded: All world



Photo: Mr. Hiroshi Nose, director of Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum explaining the impact of Atom Bomb to the author. Credit: Katsuhiro Asagiri, President of INPS Japan.

leaders should see it, because it effectively conveys the massive destructive scope of nuclear weapons and the resulting havoc on human life.

Visiting the Nagasaki headquarters of a Buddhist-inspired cultural organization, Soka Gakkai, I saw a timeline on the wall charting progress toward signatories on a 2017 U.N. convention, the Treaty to Prevent Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), now affirmed by 70 states, including the Holy See.

This treaty is more powerful than the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty but so far, neither Japan nor the United States support it. (Soka Gakkai and Japan's Association of Shinto Shrines will attend a meeting hosted by the Catholic lay organization Sant'Egidio in Paris in September, where this treaty is on the agenda.)

“Even when tensions between nations are high, citizen diplomacy is crucial. We should expand networks of trust among people,” local Soka Gakkai leader Naotaka Miura told me. Asked his profession he responded simply, “Peace activist.”

Victor Gaetan Victor Gaetan is a senior correspondent for the National Catholic Register, focusing on international issues. He also writes for Foreign Affairs magazine, The American Spectator and the Washington Examiner. He contributed to Catholic News Service for several years. The Catholic Press Association of North America has given his articles four first place awards, including Individual Excellence, over the last five years. Gaetan received a license (B.A.) in Ottoman and Byzantine Studies from Sorbonne University in Paris, an M.A. from the Fletcher School of International Law and Diplomacy, and a Ph.D. in Ideology in Literature from Tufts University. His book God's Diplomats: Pope Francis, Vatican Diplomacy, and America's Armageddon was published by Rowman & Littlefield in July 2021. Visit his website at VictorGaetan.org. This article was republished with permission from the National Catholic Register.

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A group photo including Author and Mr Takako Kawasaki(extreme right) at Soka Gakkai Nagasaki Peace Center.



# Nuclear Terrorism: “Most Immediate and Extreme Threat to Global Security”

BY Aurora Weiss

Nuclear terrorism and political violence are an extreme threat to global security

**Vienna (INPS Japan)** — For nearly eight decades, the world has been navigating the dangers of the nuclear age. Despite Cold War tensions and the rise of global terrorism, nuclear weapons have not been used in conflict since Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Efforts such as strategic deterrence, arms control and non-proliferation agreements, and the global counterterrorism have helped to keep nuclear incidents at bay. However, the nation’s success to date in countering nuclear terrorism does not come with a guarantee, success often carries the risk that other challenges will siphon away attention and resources and can lead to the perception that the threat no longer exists. There is more than one way to cause terror with radioactivity. It can take at least four forms: detonation of an intact nuclear weapon, an improvised nuclear device, a radiation-dispersal device or “dirty bomb”; or



Credit: American security project

the release of radioactivity. Leader in this field is United Nations Office for Drugs and Crimes in Vienna, Austria. For nearly two decades, UNODC promotes universalization and effective implementation of the counter-terrorism international legal instruments, including The International convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism (ICSANT). The risk of nuclear and other radioactive material falling into the wrong hands and being used for terrorist or other criminal purposes is one of the biggest concerns of our time.



Maria Lorenzo Sobrado CBRN Terrorism Prevention Programme at UNODC. Credit: Ecuadorian Foreign Ministry (Roman Yanushevsky)

Maria Lorenzo Sobrado serves as UNODC’s focal point for UNSCR

1540 and she is the Head of the CBRN Terrorism Prevention Programme at the Terrorism Prevention Branch of UNODC. The programme promotes the universalization of the international legal framework against CBRN terrorism and assists States with its effective implementation. A lawyer by training, she has a Master’s in Non-proliferation of WMDs and a Diploma in Nuclear Law. The key role played by UNODC in furnishing assistance to Member States to

prevent CBRN terrorism has been recognized by the afore-mentioned UN General Assembly resolution, as well as in a variety of relevant fora. UNODC is a member of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Coordination Compact's Emerging Threats and Critical Infrastructure Protection Working Group, an observer at the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction and a corresponding organization at the Inter-Agency Committee on Radiological and Nuclear Emergencies, among others. UNODC has been providing a wide range of support in that regard, including outreach through national, regional and global workshops, legislative assistance, and capacity building for criminal justice officials and has developed a number of tools including a mock trial, eLearning courses, webinars and a manual on ICSANT-related fictional cases.

### **The latest developments in the field of nuclear terrorism**

The past month brought a range of developments in nuclear security around the

world, from the launch by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of a new Regulatory Infrastructure Development Project for Asia and the Pacific to strengthen radiation safety and nuclear security in the region to the guilty plea entered by a Japanese criminal leader at his trial for trafficking nuclear material sourced from Myanmar. In other news, drones flying over nuclear power plants in Minnesota and Louisiana are worrying local leaders and law enforcement officials. While the former head of the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration launched a study of the proliferation risks of the High Assay Low Enriched Uranium (HALEU) fuel that advanced nuclear reactors under development will use, it is unclear how that study will play out under the new administration. The Trump administration has indicated a significant interest in emerging technology, however, and a partnership has already been announced between the U.S. National Laboratories and OpenAI for scientific research and nuclear weapons security, including "securing nuclear materials and weapons worldwide." The public call to

nuclear terrorism act by USA President Donald Trump in which he called on Israel to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities is extremely disturbing. We should not forget about the Russian military attack on the nuclear reactor of the Zaporizhzhia power plant in 2022. The potential disaster was prevented by the prompt reaction and intervention of the IAEA agency headed by its director, General Rafael Grossi.

Big credit to the DEA agents in stopping nuclear materials to end up in the wrong hands

The case of Takeshi Ebisawa shows why the effective investment in law enforcement and prosecution training provided by UNODC is of key importance for security and prevention in protection against nuclear terrorism.

Takeshi Ebisawa, 60, of Japan, pleaded guilty in Manhattan, New York, on the January 8, 2025 to conspiring with a network of associates to traffic nuclear materials, including uranium and weapons-grade plutonium, from Burma to other countries, as well as to international narcotics trafficking and weapons charges. Takeshi Ebisawa admitted that he brazenly trafficked nuclear



material, including weapons-grade plutonium, out of Burma.

According to the court documents and evidence presented at court, since at least in or about 2019, the DEA investigated Ebisawa in connection with large-scale narcotics and weapons trafficking. During the investigation, Ebisawa unwittingly introduced an undercover DEA agent, posing as a narcotics and weapons trafficker, to Ebisawa's international network of criminal associates, which spanned Japan, Thailand, Burma, Sri Lanka, and the United States, among other places, for the purpose of arranging large-scale narcotics and weapons transactions.

In early 2020 Ebisawa told two undercover agents that he had access to a "large quantity" of nuclear materials he wished to sell, and sent a series of photos of rocky substances next to Geiger counters that measured radiation levels.

One of the undercover agents told Ebisawa they had an interested buyer who they claimed was an Iranian general. Ebisawa further engaged with the undercover

agent as he expressed an interest in buying other military-grade weapons such as surface-to-air missiles that he said could be used by an insurgent group inside Burma. The arrangement resulted in a swap of sorts, with unnamed co-conspirators allegedly supporting Ebisawa telling the undercover they "had available more than 2,000 kilograms of Thorium-232 and more than 100 kilograms of uranium in the form of U3O8." – which the co-conspirators said "could produce as much as five tons of nuclear materials in Burma." The compound U3O8 is commonly known as "yellowcake," which is a name familiar to anyone who lived through the lead-up to the Iraq War in 2003.

In a meeting arranged by Ebisawa with the undercover agents in Southeast Asia, one of Ebisawa's co-conspirators brought the undercover into a hotel room and allegedly showed him two plastic containers with samples of the nuclear materials. Thai authorities then assisted in the seizure of the materials which were handed over to U.S. law enforcement, which subsequently tested the samples and confirmed they contained

uranium, thorium and plutonium. Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the DEA's Special Operations Division, the career national security prosecutors of this Office, and the cooperation of our law enforcement partners in Indonesia, Japan, and Thailand, that Ebisawa's plot was detected and stopped.

『INPS Japan』

# “Building Bridges: How the Abraham Accords Are Shaping Middle East Diplomacy”

BY Roman Yanushevsky



Map of Middle East

In September 2020 Israel with the US mediation signed bilateral agreements of normalization with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Later they were joined by Sudan (although unratified by Khartoum authorities until now) and Morocco. These revolutionary agreements were called "Abraham Accords" to show the common religious ground between Judaism and Islam, both seeing prophet Abraham as their forefather.

**Jerusalem (INPS Japan)** – Within the framework of the Abraham Accords, Arab

states have recognized Israel's sovereignty. It enabled the establishment of full diplomatic relations between them.

In fact, there are more Arab and Muslim states willing to improve their ties with Israel, and in the coming years we will see more countries joining the Abraham Accords. But due to certain domestic and regional issues they are not ready to shed light on their aspirations.

In practice the Arab-Israel alliance against Iran emerged by the end of 2017. Iran's animosity towards the Jewish state and moderate Sunni states as well, Iranian nuclear ambitions and the Iranian support of various militant groups in the region, caused rapprochement between the enemies of the Islamic state.

## **Common enemy creates common grounds**

Close unadvertised cooperation on the political and military level based on mutual regional interests between some Muslim



by РОМАН ЯНУШЕВСКИЙ (Roman Yanushevsky)

states and Israel existed for many years. But the rise of a regional superpower of Iran with aggressive ambitions threw them in the arms of each other due to a common threat. In fact, the Abraham Accords helped to facilitate this communication and opened new ways of both secret and undisguised cooperation on different levels and in various spheres. One of these Arab-Jewish dialogues is related to nuclear technologies.

Israel is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons since the 1960s, while its nuclear stockpile is between 80 to 400 warheads

according to different estimates.

Nevertheless, the Jewish states traditionally maintain a policy of nuclear ambiguity neither denying nor admitting the possession of nuclear weapons.

One of the reasons to do it was not to cause a nuclear arms race in the region. But Iran's nuclear ambitions raise serious concerns and make this arms race almost inevitable.

### **Israel is ready to share with friends**

In September 2022 Moshe Edri, director-general of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission (the atomic chief), declared that Israel could share different aspects of its nuclear technology and knowledge with Arab states that became a part of the Abraham Accords.

"We are hopeful that the new spirit in our region, as demonstrated in the Abraham Accords, will mark a path forward for meaningful, direct dialogue within our region, including in the nuclear fora," he said.

<https://twitter.com/rafaelmgrossi/status/1575067941644931072>

"Israel's state-of-the-art technology provides us with significant levels of knowledge and

capabilities, which we are ready to share with others... under the IAEA umbrella," he said in a speech to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Austria.

In general we can see a coordinated and determined effort in the region to counter the Iranian threat to the region both regarding its support of terrorist organizations and its nuclear program. It has all been enhanced in recent months.

### **The wind of change**

Since Donald Trump's return to the White house the nuclear dialogue with Iran has sharpened. We can see an American ultimatum to Iran to start negotiations on the curtailment of its nuclear program and the exchange of threats.

Although Iran's positions weakened in the war with Israel, while main Iranian proxies suffered a serious blow to their capacities, some of these proxies are still causing devastation. For example, Houthis in Yemen, who are fomenting violence and havoc.

Iranians refused to lead direct talks with the US, but are willing to negotiate in an indirect way. If these negotiations fail, we might see a

new regional war when Iran and its nuclear program are faced with an international coalition led by the US with Israel and moderate Gulf states. The basis for this coalition was laid by the Abraham accords, and was tested twice in April and October 2024 when Iran tried to retaliate against Israel and fired hundreds of missiles, the majority of them intercepted due to the common regional effort.

『INPS Japan』

# Nuclear Testing in Kazakhstan Documentary Showcases Urgent Need for Nuclear Abolition

BY Naureen Hassain



The 3rd Meeting of State Parties on the TPNW Treaty of the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons watched a 40-minute documentary, 'I Want to Live On: The Untold Stories of the Polygon,' on the impact of nuclear testing on the community of Kazakhstan's Semey region. Credit: Katsuhiro Asagiri

**UNITED NATIONS (IPS)** – The documentary I Want to Live On: The Untold Stories of the Polygon exposes the lifelong impacts of nuclear testing in Kazakhstan's Semey region.

As a third-generation survivor born in Semey, international relations legal expert based in New York, Togzhan Yessenbayeva said she was

aware of the “profound impact” that nuclear testing has had on her community and environment. She remarked that the tests in Semipalatinsk have left a “legacy of challenges” that people must deal with to this day.

“I think that attention from the United Nations... is not just important; it is essential. In general, a global acknowledgment of nuclear weapons and an urgent need to address it,” she said. “As we can see from this movie, it is a very hard topic to talk about. But I believe that the Third Meeting of State Parties serves as a global platform for international organizations and experts to highlight the necessity of nuclear disarmament.”

Yessenbayeva continued, “I think it's crucial to work together to be free of nuclear threats, and we have to say this [at] a global platform. It is our national tragedy. I am calling it a tragedy because for our Kazakh people, not only for the Semey region or east Kazakhstan, but everyone has to know our tragedy.”

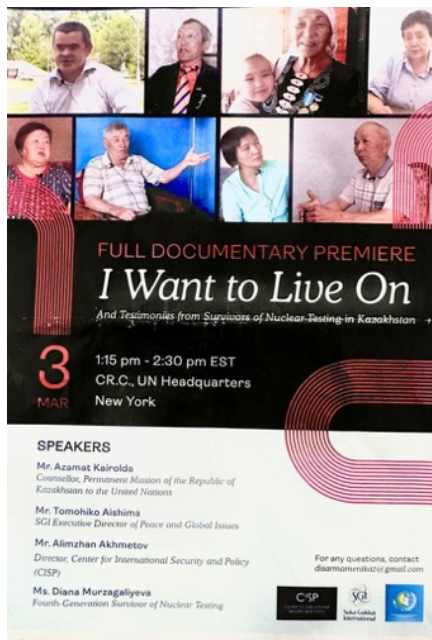
I Want to Live On held its very first premiere at the United Nations during the 2nd Meeting of State Parties on the Treaty of the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2023. The 20-minute cut



Togzhan Yessenbayeva  
Photo: Katsuhiro Asagiri,  
President of INPS Japan.



of the film was well received in raising awareness of the impact of the tests conducted in the Semipalatinsk Centre on local communities in east Kazakhstan.



This year's 3rd Meeting of State Parties on the TPNW also hosted the first-ever screening of the full 40-minute cut of the documentary on March 3, in a premiere organized by the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan, the Center for International Security and Policy (CISP), and Soka Gakkai International (SGI).

The documentary prominently centers on interviews with second- and third-generation survivors from the town of Semey and neighboring areas, who faced and lived with the consequences of the Semipalatinsk nuclear testing site, also known as the Polygon.

CISP founder Alimzhan Akmetov, who also directed the film, said at the screening that building trust with the interviewees was a critical process, and it was only once that could be established that they agreed to sit down with him and his team. He noted that there were people they approached who refused to get involved. He says such behavior is, in part, due to a sense of frustration with past experiences where their stories were shared before, but nothing came of it.

CISP and SGI decided to screen both versions of the documentary in the UN to ensure that the issue of nuclear disarmament is pushed to the forefront of awareness, Akmetov told IPS.

"We thought, as I personally believe, the disarmament forum, in particular the TPNW conference, is the best place to show a film about the consequences of testing in Kazakhstan," Akmetov said.

"Because people who are involved in the disarmament issues... they can share it wider, further. In the UN, many countries participate in the disarmament forum. So it could be disseminated more effectively than if I showed it only in Kazakhstan or only in Japan," he said.

Since the 2023 premiere, Akmetov and his partners have since screened the 20-minute version in other countries, including Germany and Ireland, at these states' invitation. The 40-minute version will soon be screened in Kazakhstan and Japan with the support of SGI.

As the film's sponsor, SGI's involvement is in line with one of their key missions to advocate for a culture of peace, doing so through building a coalition for nuclear abolition, according to their Executive Director of Peace and Global Issues, Tomohiko Aishima. They



Tomohiko Aishima, Executive Director of Peace and Global Issues, SGI. Photo: Katsuhiro Asagiri, President of INPS Japan.

have done so by spotlighting the global impact of nuclear weapons, especially in countries where nuclear testing was conducted. SGI has worked towards providing nuclear survivors platforms to share their experiences beyond their region and onto the global stage.

In the documentary, the survivors share the challenges their community has faced due to the Polygon. Health issues ranging from speech and vision impairment to cancer have plagued the community, as the survivors spoke of watching friends and family members suffer through physical maladies. Cancer rates are high in the communities, with children and adolescents suffering from leukemia.

The documentary also touches on the psychological toll that the tests and prolonged radiation exposure had on the community, through the high suicide rate of suicides during the testing period. It was particularly high among children and adolescents. While the cause behind the suicides is not stated, and research into the phenomenon from that era is severely limited, several survivors attributed it to the nuclear tests.

“Hanging was called the disease of the Polygon,” one interviewee said.

Compared to the 20-minute version, the 40-minute film features additional testimonies from second- and third-generation survivors. Interspersed with these testimonies is archival footage of the tests and the immediate environmental impact. They stand in stark contrast to

the reality that the survivors lived through. The archival footage clips show what was being said at the time about the tests, including claims made that radiation levels in the soil and water would eventually fall to safe levels.

One clip shows scientists testing the radiation levels of Chagan Lake located in the Abai region, and the narrator claiming that radiation fell to safe levels after fifty days. To this day, the Chagan Lake is highly radioactive, also being referred to as the ‘Atomic Lake.’



The 20-minute version of I Want to Live On can be watched on YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0upM\\_XrEw3c&t=1s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0upM_XrEw3c&t=1s)

『INPS Japan/ IPS UN Bureau Report』



## Treaty of Tlatelolco celebrates 58 years in a context where international cooperation and diplomacy face constant questioning

BY Guillermo Ayala Alanis

58 years after the creation of the world's first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, the 33 States of Latin America and the Caribbean reaffirm their commitment to contribute to the global effort to rid the world of this weapon of mass destruction.

**Mexico City (INPS Japan)** - Fifty-eight years ago, the world's first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone emerged in Latin America and the Caribbean as a response to one of the most frightening episodes of the Cold War: the 'missile crisis' that in 1962 almost triggered a nuclear conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union.

In view of the precedent, at the initiative of Mexico, diplomats from Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Ecuador worked together to create the world's first Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ). After several years of negotiation, on 14 February 1967, the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, was signed, guaranteeing that no nuclear weapons would



Image: Jose Luis Rodriguez and Elizabeth Mendenhall Source: OPANAL

be developed, produced, stockpiled, possessed or used in the region. The diplomatic and multilateral efforts of that time have left a legacy of regional security that is now enjoyed by 657 million people living in Latin America and the Caribbean, according to World Bank data.

At a commemorative event marking the 58th anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, OPANAL Secretary General Ambassador Flávio Roberto Bonzanini emphasised that this year's commemoration is relevant in the face of scepticism about working together 'where international cooperation, multilateral instruments and diplomacy face constant questioning'. At a ceremony held at OPANAL headquarters in Mexico City, Ambassador Bonzanini also said that it should not be forgotten that 'our treaty, as well as the Latin

American and Caribbean Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone emerged in a context of high tension... so we reaffirm our commitment to keep our region free of Nuclear Weapons and even more to contribute to the

global effort to rid the world of this weapon of mass destruction’.

Eduardo Jaramillo, in his capacity as current chair of the OPANAL Council of Member States, stressed the importance of the Latin American and Caribbean NWFZ to serve as an example and inspiration for the creation of four other similar regions in the world, in addition to Mongolia’s commitment.



Image: Eduardo Jaramillo X:  
@ejaramillonAsagiri, President of  
INPS Japan.

On behalf of the 33 OPANAL member states, Jaramillo also reiterated concern about the international situation in the face of the ‘growing threat, explicit or veiled, of the use of nuclear weapons’; he assured that NWFZs promote regional and international peace and security and said that these zones ‘represent a step towards general and complete disarmament under effective international control. They therefore encourage the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones.

OPANAL’s 54th anniversary ceremony also served to announce the winner of the first edition of the ‘Antonio Augusto Cançado Trindade Prize for Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation’.

The winners were Elizabeth Mendenhall and José Luis Rodríguez for their work entitled ‘Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones and the Issue of Maritime Transit in Latin America’ which refers to an investigation on

the impact of the Treaty of Tlatelolco on maritime transit.

In his intervention, José Luis Rodríguez, commented that the interest in the research emerged because they found that the NWFZ of Latin America and the Caribbean does not restrict the maritime transit of nuclear weapons and highlighted that ‘there is growing literature that analyses contributions of developing countries to the global nuclear order’ and said that the article ‘is one more insight to this literature that is growing and, in our view, is improving the explanations we have to understand the contributions of developing countries to the global nuclear order’.

Meanwhile, Elizabeth Mendenhall said the two continue to work on research that ‘can show a way for countries to expand the coverage of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in sea space and, at the same time, investigate the agency and leadership of non-nuclear-weapon states in creating treaties to control them.

The signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco is important to be remembered by the authorities and the people of Mexico and Latin America, an example of which is that on the occasion of its 58th anniversary, a talk entitled ‘The Treaty of Tlatelolco. History and perspectives of the use of nuclear weapons was held in what used to be the headquarters of the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which hosted the signing of the document in 1967.

Tlatelolco is an urban environment located in the north of Mexico City. Since pre-Hispanic times it served as an important commercial center. By the second half of the 19th century it emerged as a model housing center and the seat of Mexican diplomacy, housing the building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Today the building is

administered by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), through the Tlatelolco University Cultural Centre (CCUT), which seeks to be a space that, among other objectives, helps to preserve the cultural and historical wealth of the area.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco is in force in the 33 States that make up Latin America and the Caribbean, and its creation and commitment is a clear example to demonstrate the efficiency that a policy of rejecting the proliferation of nuclear weapons can have as a guarantor of peace in large areas of the planet.

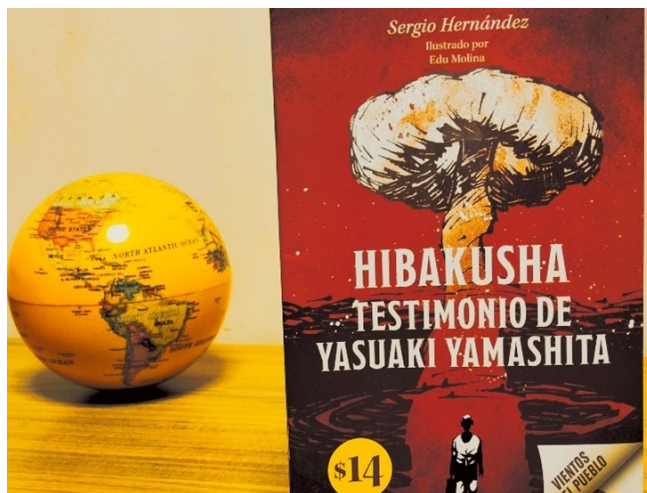
Its main promoter, the Mexican ambassador and 1982 Nobel Peace Prize winner Alfonso García Robles, is still present in Mexico's memory by naming public schools after him, as well as a bookshop in the historic Tlatelolco building.

He can also be remembered in universities with figures in his honour at UNAM and La Salle University, to cite a few examples.

『INPS Japan』

# Hibakusha: Testimony of Yasuaki Yamashita – A Book That Recounts the Tragedy of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Nearly 80 Years Later

BY Guillermo Ayala Alanis



Book: Hibakusha. Testimony of Yasuaki Yamashita. Photo: Guillermo Ayala.

**Mexico City (INPS Japan)** - At just six years old, Yasuaki Yamashita witnessed a tragedy so horrific that even the word hell fails to capture its true horror. For fifty years, he remained silent about his pain, until he finally



Image: Urakami Cathedral by Shugeo Hayashi, courtesy of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum

found solace in sharing his story.

“If we stop

talking about what happened, history can repeat itself anywhere in the world... we don't want anyone to suffer what we suffered.” Nearly 80 years ago, Yasuaki Yamashita survived one of the most terrifying events ever inflicted by humanity—the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. The devastation was so grotesque, so cruel, and so overwhelming that words alone cannot convey the depth of suffering. Yamashita recounts this horror in his book, Hibakusha. Testimony of Yasuaki Yamashita.

## A Collaborative Effort to Preserve Memory

The book was authored by Sergio Hernández, a professor and researcher at Mexico's National Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH). Published in 2021, it captures Yamashita's testimony as a hibakusha—the term used to describe survivors of the atomic bombings in Japan. This project is the result of a decade-long friendship and professional collaboration

between Hernández and Yamashita in Mexico. Their shared mission is to educate people, particularly younger generations,



Sergio Hernández and Yasuaki Yamashita in a presentation. Authors: Guillermo Ayala and Diana Karimmi Corona

about the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons.

“The idea was to provide context in schools—based on my research, my knowledge of Japan's wartime situation and its conflict with the United States, and the consequences of the atomic bomb,” Hernández explained in an interview with INPS Japan. “Yasuaki's part is about sharing



his experience, but more importantly, it's about promoting a culture of peace and advocating against the production of nuclear weapons."

To spread this message, Hernández and Yamashita have presented the book in elementary schools, high schools, and universities across Mexico. They have also taken their advocacy to state congresses, bookstores, and book fairs, ensuring their message reaches a broad audience.

### **A Book That Resonates Across Latin America**

Hibakusha. Testimony of Yasuaki Yamashita was published by Fondo de Cultura Económica (FCE), a leading publishing house with a strong presence in Latin America and Spain. The book is available in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain, Guatemala, Peru, and the United States. It is part of FCE's Vientos del Pueblo (Winds of the People) collection—a series of nearly 100 books designed to make important texts accessible to a wide audience at an affordable price of just \$11 to \$20 pesos (less than \$1 USD).

The book's impact is magnified by its fluid storytelling and the raw, haunting details of Yamashita's account. He describes how the atomic bomb produced a blinding flash equivalent to a thousand lightning bolts and how survivors endured inhuman conditions of sickness and starvation in its aftermath.

### **Illustrations That Bring the Tragedy to Life**

In addition to the powerful narrative, the book features a series of nine evocative illustrations by FCE artist Edu Molina. His drawings emphasize facial expressions of despair, anguish, fear, and sorrow—yet also manage to convey a sense of hope. "I felt the book was very raw, so the illustrations needed to be shocking. But at the same time, there had to be an element of optimism," Molina explained. "Toward the end, there's a sense of hope—a realization that something can be learned from the horrors of World War II."

### **The Artistic Process Amidst Adversity**

In another INPS Japan interview, Molina revealed that he created the illustrations during the COVID-19 pandemic, while also

recovering from a severe arm injury that restricted his ability to draw. However, he turned this challenge into an advantage. "I had a semi-useless hand, but one of the benefits of drawing is its immediacy—you don't need excessive detail or aesthetic distractions," he said. "As they say in martial arts, I used the enemy's strength to my advantage. Every time I look at the book, I see creative virtues that I wouldn't have discovered if I had been completely healthy."

### **A Book in High Demand**

Hibakusha. Testimony of Yasuaki Yamashita has received overwhelming support from readers in Mexico. In fact, it is the only book in the Vientos del Pueblo collection to be reprinted three times, bringing the total number of copies to 40,000—a testament to its powerful message and high demand.

Reflecting on the growing public interest in nuclear disarmament, Sergio Hernández noted:

"The role that society is taking on in this issue is both significant and distressing. It shows that the threat of nuclear weapons is no longer abstract—it is real and pressing,

something that wasn't as strongly felt just a few years ago."

### **Mexico: A New Beginning for Yamashita**

For Yasuaki Yamashita, Mexico has been a place of rebirth. Arriving in the country in 1968, he gradually learned the language, adapted to the culture, and fell in love with his new home.

Yet, it took him five decades before he could finally talk about his experience in Nagasaki. His first public testimony took place at a university in Querétaro, a moment that changed his life.

"As I finished speaking, I realized my pain was fading. For fifty years, I had hidden this terrible suffering inside me. But at that moment, I told myself: This is my therapy. I have to speak to heal the wounds that have consumed me for so long," he recalls in one of the book's excerpts.

### **A Testament to Memory and Hope**

Through his book, his lectures, and his activism, Yamashita continues to ensure that the voices of hibakusha are not forgotten. He and Hernández are not only preserving

history but also inspiring future generations to work toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

『INPS Japan』

# Status of nuclear disarmament is unacceptable, humanity is at big risk!

BY Aurora Weiss

## Vienna (INPS Japan) -

Nuclear weapons were a global threat even before Vladimir Putin began using them as a means of blackmail, before an Israeli general threatened to use them to destroy the Palestinians in Gaza, and before Iran began enriching uranium, which led to the imposition of US sanctions, keeping that Islamic state even more isolated. All threats with nuclear weapons are not only to be taken very seriously, they are also completely unacceptable and irresponsible. Due to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and the great risks of nuclear weapons, we need a paradigm shift. It is clear that nuclear



Nuclear test in Licorne, French Polynesia in 1970. Credit CTBTO.

weapons and nuclear deterrence aren't a guarantee of security.

The nuclear risks are higher than they have been for decades. Europe has been exposed to an alarming degree of nuclear disaster

since the beginning of the Russian aggression against Ukraine. In recent years, it has been afraid of the threats that have come from Russia, but also of a nuclear disaster that could be caused by damage to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine.

Back in 2022, Russian troops set fire to the administrative buildings and the main transformer of the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant, the largest such facility in Europe,

and prohibited firefighters from entering the power plant. After the alarming situation, the power plant is now, fortunately, under the supervision of experts from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

who reacted promptly. Russia and Ukraine accused each other of planning a terrorist attack on that power plant. Alarmed by this situation, “Physicists for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)” called for a ban on military attacks on nuclear power plants. We should know that proper disaster management during war is not possible.

### **The security price of nuclear power countries: It is the question of the time when something will go wrong!**

It is clear if nuclear weapons were to be used, whether through deliberate use, escalation or an error or human or technical mistake, the consequences would be catastrophic. We are not just talking about the immediate destruction and loss of innocent life. We must also be aware of the impact on the economy and on refugee movements, for example through mass panic. Even a limited nuclear conflict could lead to a massive nuclear winter with a collapse of the global food supply. The consequences would be terrible, so prevention is the only option. But prevention can only succeed if there is a total ban of

these weapons. The new technologies, such as artificial intelligence or vulnerability to cyber attacks, also contribute to nuclear risks. For this reason, the 150+ states that do not have nuclear weapons want to see that risk reduced, and the gold standard would be for states that do have nuclear weapons to completely ban their nuclear weapons. The nine countries that possess nuclear weapons: the United States of America, Russia, France, China, Great Britain, Pakistan, India, Israel and North Korea – do not want that at all. On the contrary, they are working on perfecting weapons of mass destruction and increasing their arsenal. In total, the global nuclear stockpile is estimated at around 13,000 weapons.

### **Iran nuclear talk and race for power in the Middle East**

As a reporter, I have been covering the talks on the Iranian nuclear deal (JCPOA) in Vienna. I could not close my eyes from the fact that American representatives were not allowed to be present at the negotiations with the nuclear superpowers. However, at the end of the day-long negotiations, the Russian

representative on behalf of China and Iran went to the hotel across the street, where representatives of the United States of America were waiting to negotiate the lifting of the imposed sanctions. Proponents of the deal have argued that the JCPOA helps prevent the revival of Iran’s nuclear weapons program and thereby reduces the prospect of conflict between Iran and its regional rivals, including Israel and Saudi Arabia. However, United Nations inspectors reported in early 2023 that Iran had enriched traces of uranium to near-weapon-grade levels, causing international alarm. If Iran could soon officially join the countries with nuclear weapons, it would encourage the development of nuclear weapons in Saudi Arabia and Israel for security reasons and open the possibility of a nuclear conflict in the Middle East.

Despite the risk, the nuclear countries are enriching their arsenal, and those that do not



Credit UN



have it are developing it with great effort despite the rigorous sanctions. Those countries that do not have it want the disarmament of nuclear powers. Are you wondering what is the position of countries without nuclear weapons that are NATO members?

It is unlikely that any member of the NATO alliance will be a signatory to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in the near future. NATO has so far refused to participate constructively in meetings related to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) under the pretext that it is not compatible with the NPT, which is not true.

It is clear that NATO still sees nuclear weapons as a guarantee of security. But, disarmament experts are warning that it is just the question of the time when something will go wrong, caused by human error – intentional or unintentional, technical error, for example, a cyber attack. Possessing and storing such weapons is too big security risk of itself.

**Can we be sure that Donald Trump will not use nuclear weapons? The USA has that**

### **tradition!**

Since taking the USA presidential office on 20th January 2025., Donald Trump has already taken some radical steps, from canceling aid to international humanitarian organizations to the disturbing ambition to take Iceland and Canada and join them to the United States of America. The international community is in an alarming position because they do not know how far Trump's ambitions can go and which tools he is ready to use to achieve them. One tiny wrong move in this globally challenging times could lead to nuclear war. When it comes to the launch of nuclear weapons by America, they have written history with it. Anyone who has watched Oppenheimer movie is struck by the moment when President Harry Truman welcomes the creator of the nuclear bomb into his office and comments that everyone will remember him as the president who dropped the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He was proud to mark history regardless of the consequences. However, he is not the only American president who ordered the dropping of an atomic bomb on the enemy. Many behind him

wanted to repeat it.

We can refer to Daniel Ellsberg and his book "The Doomsday Machine". The legendary whistleblower has published the first insider exposé of America's seventy-year-long nuclear policy. When Ellsberg, a former presidential adviser, released the Pentagon Papers, top-secret memos related to the United States' nuclear program in the 1960s, it was revealed that a drunken Richard Nixon had ordered a nuclear attack on North Korea. Provoked by the downing of an American spy plane, the president spoke on the phone with the military commanders and ordered a tactical nuclear attack with specified targets. Henry Kissinger, Nixon's national security adviser at the time, also talked to the military commanders and got them to agree to wait until Nixon woke up sober the next morning. In the coming years, the president would even send nuclear aeroplane-bombers toward the Soviet Union accompanied by rumors that he was so crazy he might actually start World War III.

Current US policy does not limit the

president's ability to order a nuclear strike for any reason at any time. The military can refuse an order deemed to violate the laws of war, and there are legal concerns about Congress's role in authorizing the use of force, but as a matter of broad understanding, the president can launch nuclear weapons when and if he wants to. Adopting the "No first use" (NFU) policy would reaffirm Congress's constitutional authority to declare war. The Constitution clearly states that no president can start a war on his own, so it makes sense that a president should not be able to start a nuclear war on his own, which is why the adoption of a No First Use (NFU) policy is urgently needed.

『INPS Japan』

# India and Pakistan- Divided by border, united by nuclear legacy

BY Sumayia Ali(India),Sarah Kazmi(Pakistan)



Flag of India and Pakistan.

**Quetta (London Post)** – On 11 May, 1998, India conducted a series of five nuclear explosions, at the end of which its government led by then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced the country as a full-fledged nuclear state.

In response, Pakistan successfully conducted five nuclear tests just a week after it on 28 May.

South Asia became a flashpoint of nuclear capacity. Decades later, what remains unheard is the struggle of people affected by inhabitants near the nuclear test sites in both

nations.

India: Residents near nuclear test site complain of skin irritation, cancer cases, genetic and skin diseases in cattle.

India celebrates 11 May as “National Technology Day”. It held its first nuclear tests in 1974 in Pokhran situated in the northern state of Rajasthan. News website Scroll reports that villagers commonly complain about cancer cases, genetic and skin diseases in cattle.

London Post spoke to Hemant Khetolai, a resident of Pokhran village.

Khetolai says that although the relation of cancer cases and the nuclear test cannot be proved, around 25 people in his social circle have cancer.

Another report by The Caravan underscores the health complications faced by the villagers after the nuclear tests were conducted, such as blood cancer, skin irritation and burning of eyes.

Khetolai adds that only journalists visit the



India conducted five nuclear tests in May 1998 at the Pokhran range in Rajasthan. (Image Credit Hindustan Times)

affected villages, and the government has not come to their rescue.

He shares that the villages which were affected by nuclear test sites remain void of basic services like a functional hospital. Deformity in calves and cows dying of unexplained reasons is common but the impact cannot be proved to be a reason for nuclear radiations, news website The Citizen reports.

The villages in Rajasthan where tests took place are Chacha, Khetolai, Loharki, and Odhaniya.

“There is a general understanding to be

proud and not complain”, Khetolai says.

### **Pakistan: Damaging effect on environment and human life**

By Sarah Kazmi(Quetta)

Pakistan conducted the atomic tests in the remote mountains of Raskoh, Chagai.

Although the achievement brought pride to the nation, it left a scar on the communities near the test site—an issue that remains largely unaddressed to this day.

The term Raskoh originates from the Balochi language: “Ras” meaning “path” and “Koh” meaning “mountain.” The area, often referred to as the “Gateway of the Mountains,” borders Chagai and Kharan districts. Before the tests, Raskoh’s serene environment, lush greenery, and vibrant villages provided a livelihood for over two dozen settlements nestled in this mountainous region.

Following the nuclear explosions, the tranquility was replaced by despair. Radiation effects led to health crises, with locals reporting cancers, kidney failures, and skin diseases. Over 500 deaths have been attributed to these issues. Many residents, unable to bear the adverse conditions,

migrated to nearby urban centers like Kharan, leaving their ancestral lands behind.

Environmental degradation compounded the problem. Fertile lands and water sources, once the backbone of agriculture in the region, turned barren. Natural springs dried up, and the once-thriving orchards and fields of dates, grapes, onions, and wheat became desolate. The impact on agriculture was so severe that traditional farming communities were forced to abandon their homes in search of livelihoods elsewhere.

Despite these sacrifices, the government has largely neglected the affected communities. No hospitals, cancer treatment centers, or even basic healthcare facilities have been established in the region. Residents, many of whom live in extreme poverty, struggle to access treatment, often traveling long distances to Quetta or beyond for inadequate medical care.

The absence of clean drinking water remains a pressing concern. Efforts by private individuals, like a filtration plant installed by an army officer, are the sole lifeline for some villages. However, the majority of the population remains without access to safe

water.

Decades later, the long-term effects of radiation exposure are becoming evident in the form of birth defects and disabilities among children born in the region. However, no official studies or investigations have been conducted to quantify or mitigate these impacts.

Promises of development made at the time of the tests remain unfulfilled. Kharan and Chagai continue to languish in poverty, with minimal government investment in infrastructure, education, or industry. The absence of electricity, functioning schools, and basic roads further isolates these regions.

Raskoh residents have repeatedly called for recognition of their sacrifices. They demand scholarships for their children, modern healthcare facilities, and economic development initiatives. The mountains of Raskoh, home to rich mineral deposits, could serve as a catalyst for the region’s revival if managed responsibly.

The atomic tests brought prestige to Pakistan but left Raskoh’s communities burdened with



health, environmental, and economic challenges. Residents feel their sacrifices have been ignored and their voices silenced. As one local political leader Mr.Parvez Rind put it, “We bore the brunt of this nuclear achievement on our chests, but the government turned its back on us.” Two decades on, the people of Raskoh continue to wait for the acknowledgment and support they deserve. The question remains: Can the state redeem itself and honor the resilience of these forgotten communities?

『INPS Japan/London Post』

# Nuclear Threat: Russia's response to European military aid to Ukraine

BY Guillermo Ayala Alanis

**London (London Post)** -The nuclear shadow does not engulf us all. The war in Ukraine has emerged as one of the defining conflicts of the 21st century, with far-reaching consequences for global stability. European nations' sustained military support to Ukraine has provoked assertive nuclear rhetoric from Russia, highlighting the precarious balance of power in the region. This article critically examines Russia's nuclear posture, European responses, and the broader implications of this volatile situation, enriched by insights from experts Steven Pifer and Heather Williams.

## Background of the Conflict

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 marked the beginning of a protracted conflict that has reshaped international relations. In response to Ukraine's defense needs, European nations, along with the United States and NATO allies, have provided substantial military aid. This assistance has included advanced weapons



London Post

systems such as HIMARS rocket systems, air defense units, tanks, and promises of modern fighter jets. The collective Western support underscores a commitment to upholding Ukraine's sovereignty but has also escalated tensions with Russia.

The Kremlin has consistently framed Western military aid as a direct threat to Russia's national security. Moscow claims that the conflict has shifted from a regional war to a broader proxy battle with NATO. In response,

Russia has ramped up its nuclear rhetoric, raising alarms about potential escalation.

## Russia's Nuclear Posturing: Strategic Bluff or Genuine Threat?

Russia's nuclear strategy has become a cornerstone of its response to Western military aid to Ukraine. President Vladimir Putin has placed Russia's nuclear arsenal on heightened alert, conducted high-profile nuclear drills, and suggested that tactical nuclear weapons could be deployed to Belarus. These measures reflect a deliberate strategy to deter NATO involvement and intimidate European nations.

In November 2024, Putin announced amendments to Russia's nuclear doctrine, reportedly lowering the threshold for nuclear use. This shift has intensified global concern. Dr. Emily Larsson, a nuclear policy expert at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), explains, "Russia's nuclear threats serve dual purposes: deterring further

Western aid to Ukraine and fracturing NATO unity. However, while the likelihood of a nuclear strike remains low, the psychological impact of such rhetoric cannot be underestimated.”

Adding to these concerns, Steven Pifer, a former U.S. negotiator of the Budapest Memorandum, emphasizes that “Russia’s nuclear threats could lead to a new arms race. The erosion of arms control agreements, such as the suspension of the New START treaty, underscores the fragility of global nuclear stability.”

### **European Military Aid and Its Implications**

European nations have responded to Russia’s aggression with unprecedented military aid to Ukraine. Germany, France, and the United Kingdom have committed billions in support, including advanced weaponry and training. Eastern European countries, particularly Poland and the Baltic states, have played a pivotal role in logistical and operational assistance. These efforts underscore a unified stance against Russian aggression.

However, this aid has not been without controversy. The delivery of long-range missiles and plans to supply fighter jets have prompted internal debates within European governments. Moscow has warned that such actions cross “red lines” and risk direct confrontation.

Heather Williams, a scholar at the CSIS Project on Nuclear Issues, observes, “Western efforts to support Ukraine have been effective but come with significant risks. Russia’s nuclear rhetoric highlights the potential for miscalculation, and the international community must remain vigilant to prevent unintended escalation.”

### **Escalation Risks and Global Repercussions**

The escalation of the Ukraine conflict has raised profound concerns about global security. Russia’s threats to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus have heightened tensions along NATO’s eastern flank, putting neighboring countries on high alert. The risks of a nuclear accident or a limited strike remain a critical concern for policymakers. Dr. Michael O’Connor, a former NATO

advisor, warns that “The current situation is fraught with danger. Miscommunication or misinterpretation could trigger a cascade of events, leading to uncontrollable escalation. This underscores the importance of maintaining robust communication channels between NATO and Russia.”

The implications extend beyond Europe. Observers in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa are closely monitoring the West’s response to Russian nuclear threats. A perceived failure to deter Moscow could embolden other nuclear-armed states, such as North Korea or Iran, to adopt similar tactics in regional disputes.

### **The Role of Diplomacy in Preventing Catastrophe**

While military aid is critical to Ukraine’s defense, diplomacy remains indispensable in mitigating the risks of nuclear escalation. The international community must prioritize efforts to reinforce arms control agreements, such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The credibility of these frameworks is essential to curbing the misuse of nuclear arsenals.

Heather Williams underscores the importance of diplomatic engagement: “Preventing nuclear escalation requires sustained dialogue and creative diplomacy. The international community must provide Russia with off-ramps to de-escalate while reaffirming norms against nuclear use.”

### **Conclusion**

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine, fueled by European military aid and Russia’s nuclear rhetoric, underscores the fragility of global security. While Moscow’s threats may primarily serve as a deterrent, they pose significant risks of miscalculation and unintended escalation. Experts like Steven Pifer and Heather Williams highlight the dual necessity of steadfast support for Ukraine and proactive diplomatic efforts to prevent nuclear catastrophe.

As the world faces an uncertain future, a careful balance of military resolve and diplomatic engagement will be essential. Upholding international norms against nuclear threats and fostering dialogue between adversaries are vital to ensuring that

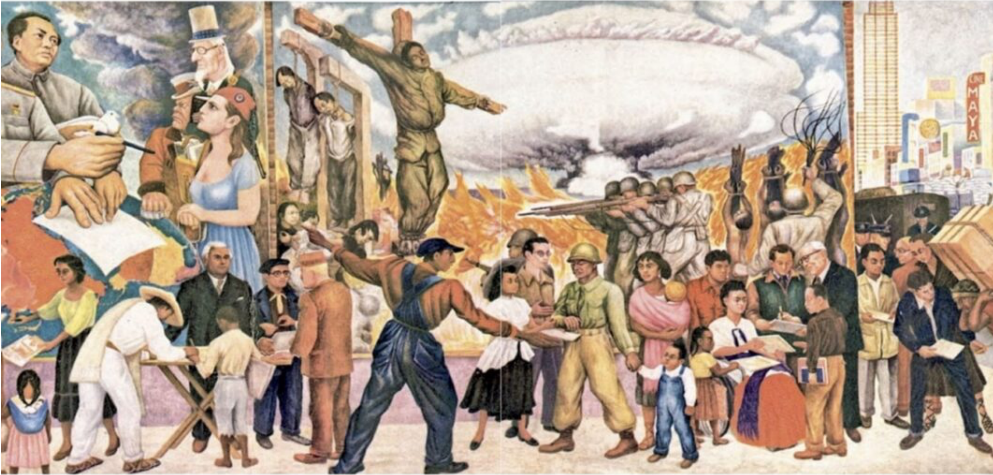
the nuclear shadow does not engulf us all.

『INPS Japan/ London Post』



# Atomic Amnesia, an exhibition that emphasizes the role of art against nuclear weapons

BY Guillermo Ayala Alanis



. Image: Mural Nightmare of war, dream of peace. Realistic fantasy. Facebook: Museo Casa Estudio Diego Rivera y Frida Kahlo.

Past political activism and contemporary concerns about nuclear armament is what brought Diego Rivera together with modern artist Pedro Reyes.

The use of art as a promoter of peace and a generator of awareness of the movement in defense of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons were some of the similarities that sculptor Pedro Reyes found in his work with Diego Rivera, the famous Mexican muralist and pioneer in the fight against nuclear disarmament.

The exhibition Atomic Amnesia by sculptor and activist, Pedro Reyes, was presented at the Diego Rivera Anahuacalli Museum in Mexico City. Twenty sculptures were presented with which the artist invited the audience to social reflection and paid tribute to those who fought

and continue to fight for a world free of the nuclear threat.

Built and decorated with symbolism and art of pre-Hispanic cultures, the Anahuacalli Museum was the ideal place to present Reyes sculptures because it also houses a sketch of a work by Diego Rivera entitled: Pesadilla de guerra, sueño de paz.

Fantasia realista (Nightmare of war, dream of peace. Realistic fantasy) (1952), in which the famed muralist portrayed his and his wife, Frida Kahlo, activism in favor of peace and the extinction of nuclear weapons by making one of the first pictorial representations of the atomic bomb.

“The art of Pedro Reyes and Diego Rivera, has to do with this conjugation that through art we can generate messages or communicative ideas that transform the mentality of society for the sake of peace, for the sake of a better society and remember that in our past we can improve our present and of course improve our future”, commented Rodolfo Cadena Labrada, Head of Media at the Diego Rivera Anahuacalli Museum, in an interview for INPS Japan. Meanwhile, one of the visitors, Joselyn Trujillo, highlighted that with



Photo: Pedro Reyes. Credit: Instagram Pedro Reyes.

the exhibition “one is left with a little more awareness.... and that it reminds us that this exists and that it is there and maybe we could do something about it”.

Among the works exhibited by Pedro Reyes was Zero Nukes, an inflatable sculpture, nine meters high, representing a nuclear mushroom whose dome highlights the strong message of “zero nuclear weapons”. The prayer is written in the eight languages of the countries that possess this type of arsenal (China, France, India, Israel North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, United Kingdom and United States). “I particularly liked the big globe... I think that nuclear weapons are a very big problem that we have to solve”, exclaimed Santiago, another visitor to the exhibition.

The exhibition also displays a series of black and white banners replicating the phrase “Zero Nuclear Weapons” in different languages

such as Spanish and Japanese.

Pax Atomica (2023), a sculpture that was first presented to the public, became another work that attracted attention. The figure is a bird cage that has the exact shape and measurements of Little Boy, the nuclear bomb that was used to devastate the city of Hiroshima and its population the 6th of August, 1945. “It impresses you because you cannot conceive that a material object of such dimensions could have caused so much damage and by making this symbiosis with a bird cage is a



little bit the message that Pedro Reyes wants to communicate of where is our peace or our freedom if it is caged,” said Rodolfo Cadena Labrada, Head of Media of the Diego Rivera Anahuacalli Museum.

Also exhibited was Tregua (2024), a sculpture made of white marble and volcanic enclosure in which a hand resembles the shape of a white dove.

The piece symbolizes the hand as an allegory of work that, transmuted into a bird, refers to the effort required to bring peace to the world.

Mexico’s historic diplomatic work in favor of the proscription of nuclear weapons was also present in the exhibition. The work Vestido (Dress) integrated anti-nuclear slogans and graphics on clothing that function as portable banners and recalled the Treaty of Tlatelolco, a document that guarantees that no nuclear weapons will be manufactured, tested, stored or circulated in Latin America. The document, drafted in 1967 and promoted by the Mexican Nobel Peace Prize winner (1982), Alfonso García Robles, served as an example for the creation of other Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in the world.

In addition to his sculptures, Pedro Reyes also sought to transmit to visitors part of his role and work as an activist by presenting videos on issues related to nuclear weapons and their dangers. At various points in the exhibition Atomic Amnesia, there are video projections that expose and denounce some of the effects that nuclear testing has had in areas such as the South Pacific islands and New Mexico. Also, there is another that denounces the companies, banks and investment funds that put their capital in projects related to the development and

creation of nuclear weapons.

When presenting the exhibition in August of last year, Pedro Reyes commented that he has been involved in the anti-nuclear movement for a short time; however, his talent has led him to present his work in various places in Mexico and the United States, in addition to working with international organizations such as ICAN. He said, having understood that art can serve as an entry point to knowledge. “I have been in this world of anti-nuclear organizations for about four years and there are about 500 people in the world, it is a tiny cause because it is not very popular... it is more popular to have issues of gender, ecology or other things, energy, social justice, etcetera... However, it is still a very serious problem because trillions of dollars are being invested in renewing nuclear arsenals. The United States alone is investing 1.8 trillion dollars in renewing its nuclear arsenal and no one knows about this and no one covers it, hence the theme of the amnesia exhibition”.

Pedro Reyes' exhibition was on display between September 2024 and January 2025 at the Anahuacalli Museum, located south of Mexico City. However, the sketch of the mural *Pesadilla de guerra, sueño de paz. Fantasía realista* is a permanent piece.

It should be remembered that the mural is a lost work. Presumably it disappeared in the 1950's, after Rivera gave the work to the Chinese government in 1957 to be exhibited in a tour of countries of the former communist bloc. The only thing that remains of the work is the nine-meter-long sketch that is exhibited at the Anahuacalli Museum.

Since its presentation, it has been a controversial and censorship-attempted work due to its content, which shows the political and social

conflicts of its time when the Cold War was just beginning.

Figures such as Iósif Stalin and Mao Zedong appear, as well as caricatured representations of individuals linked

to the United Kingdom, the United States and France.

Also the sketch shows an allusion to the martyrs of the Korean War and a graphic representation of the atomic bomb detonated in the Bikini Islands.

Image: Sketch of the mural *Pesadilla de guerra, sueño de paz. Fantasía realista*. Part of the representation of the nuclear explosion and Korean War.

The lower part of the mural sketch shows Frida Kahlo in a wheelchair and other activists collecting signatures for the Stockholm appeal, the first campaign to ban atomic weapons. Both Diego Rivera and his wife Frida Kahlo were heavily involved in the first worldwide campaign to ban nuclear weapons, in which artists such as Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Pablo Neruda also participated.

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Image: Sketch of the mural *Pesadilla de guerra, sueño de paz. Fantasía realista*. Credit: Guillermo Ayala Alanís



# Israel and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

BY Roman Yanushevsky

It is widely believed that Israel possesses nuclear weapons—hundreds of nuclear warheads. However, it does not officially acknowledge this, maintaining a policy of ambiguity.

**Jerusalem (INPS Japan)** – It is widely believed that Israel has possessed nuclear weapons—hundreds of nuclear warheads—since the late 1960s. Moreover, according to media reports, the Jewish state has all three components of the nuclear triad:

strategic aviation, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and nuclear submarines. Only three other countries—the United States, Russia, and China—are known to possess all three components.

At the same time, Israel is one of five countries that are not parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This treaty was developed and approved by the United Nations General Assembly on June 12, 1968, and opened for signature on July 1, 1968. It entered into force on March 5, 1970. As of the time of writing,



Flag of Israel by Pixabay

190 countries have signed the treaty.

Out of the nine nuclear-armed states that possess this type of weapon of mass destruction, three have neither signed nor ratified this important international legal act: India, Israel, and Pakistan. There is also a fourth state—North Korea—which initially signed the treaty but later withdrew its signature. A fifth country, South Sudan, has not (yet) become a party to the NPT. However, South Sudan does not possess nuclear weapons and is one of the world's youngest nations.

Each of the four nuclear-armed states that are not parties to the NPT has its own reasons for this stance. However, the main reason is their unwillingness to accept the obligations and restrictions associated with participating in the treaty, as well as the risk of sanctions in case of violations.

## **Nuclear Ambiguity**

Officially, Israel neither confirms nor denies the possession of nuclear weapons, referring to this as a policy of nuclear ambiguity. According



to various foreign estimates, Israel may have between 80 and 400 nuclear warheads. Allegedly, these are deployed on Israeli Jericho missiles and can be delivered to their targets by F-15 and F-16 aircraft. It is believed that by 2004, the production of nuclear warheads in Israel was halted.

Israel made the decision to acquire nuclear weapons as a strategic deterrent, often referred to as a “Doomsday Weapon.” This interest led to the establishment of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission in 1952, followed by the creation of two nuclear research centers in the early 1960s: one in Nahal Sorek and the other in Dimona.

Israel’s first nuclear reactor was built in 1963 with the assistance of France during a brief period of very close relations between the two countries. The reactor was later modernized in the 1970s. In the 1980s, Israeli intelligence services were accused of secretly acquiring and stealing nuclear materials from the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and West Germany. Israel admitted to the illegal export of krytrons—a critical component for creating modern nuclear weapons—from the U.S. in the 1980s.

After Iran and several other regional states advanced their missile programs, Israel decided to utilize nuclear submarines to store nuclear warheads. These Dolphin-class submarines were acquired from Germany.

### **Israel: The Regional Nuclear Enforcer**

Israel has reportedly refrained from signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and does not officially acknowledge possessing nuclear weapons to avoid triggering an arms race in the region. Nonetheless, several Middle Eastern states have

attempted to acquire this strategic capability.

Israel’s longstanding strategic concept is to maintain military superiority in the region. Consequently, it has thwarted multiple attempts by hostile states to develop nuclear weapons through military action.

### **1981: Operation Opera**

In 1981, Israeli Air Force jets destroyed a nuclear reactor in Iraq. This project was part of Saddam Hussein’s attempt to achieve regional hegemony. Under his directive, Iraqi physicists began working on a nuclear bomb, and Baghdad expressed interest in acquiring enriched uranium from other nations.

### **2007: Operation Orchard**

In 2007, the Israel Defense Forces bombed a nuclear reactor in Deir ez-Zor, Syria. Both the U.S. and Israel imposed strict censorship on details of the attack, with initial information emerging only seven months later. Israel fully declassified the operation in 2018. A 2009 investigation by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) found traces of uranium and graphite at the site, concluding that it had been an undeclared nuclear reactor.

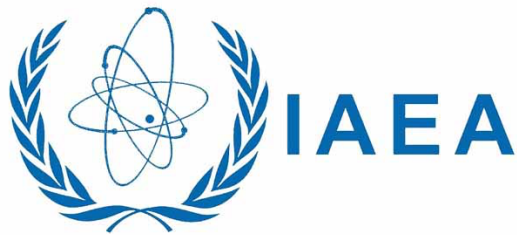
Meanwhile, several countries in the region—such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia—have shown interest in constructing civilian nuclear reactors. However, there is no evidence to suggest that they intend to develop corresponding military nuclear programs.

### **Iran: The Rising “Nuclear Star”**

Currently, Iran stands at an advanced stage of its nuclear program among the states in the region. In 2015, world powers approved the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), commonly known as

the “nuclear deal,” in Vienna.

This agreement was designed to persuade Iran to delay the development of its nuclear program in exchange for partial relief from the sanctions imposed on it. The deal lasted three years until U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the United States to withdraw from the agreement and reinstated full anti-Iranian sanctions. Following this, Iran gradually resumed the development of its nuclear program. Representatives of world powers met with Iranian officials in November and again in January 2025 to discuss the possibility of a new agreement similar to the Vienna deal, but these meetings yielded no results.



IAEA

On December 17, 2024, Rafael Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), declared that the nuclear

deal with Iran was no longer relevant. He stated that Iran is enriching uranium to weapons-grade levels and is rapidly approaching nuclear state status.

### **Growing Tensions with Israel and the U.S.**

Iran remains in open conflict with Israel. High-ranking Iranian officials have repeatedly called for the destruction of the Jewish state, raising significant concerns in Israel and its primary ally, the United States, about Iran's nuclear ambitions. This has the potential to lead to a large-scale military strike on Iranian nuclear facilities.

In response to a massive missile attack on its territory by Iran on October 1, 2024, the Israeli army launched strikes on October 26 against several targets, reportedly setting back Iran's missile program by at least a year. Iran's missile program has been developed in parallel with its nuclear program to create missile carriers capable of delivering nuclear warheads to their targets.

If Iran decides to carry out another attack on Israel, experts predict that Israel's response will likely include strikes on Iranian nuclear infrastructure.

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# The Legacy of Nuclear Testing in the Pacific: Marshall Islands

BY Jack Niedenthal



Jack Niedenthal

**Majuro (London Post)** - The Marshall Islands, a tranquil, remote chain of atolls in the Pacific Ocean, bears the haunting legacy of nuclear testing by the United States. Between 1946 and 1958, the U.S. conducted 67 nuclear and thermonuclear tests on Bikini and Eniwetok Atolls, leaving a profound and lasting impact on our land, our people, and our generations

yet to come. The most infamous test, the 1954 BRAVO hydrogen bomb, exemplifies the catastrophic consequences of these experiments, which persist to this day.

## Historical Context and Immediate Impacts

On March 1, 1954, the people of the Northern Marshall Islands awoke to an unprecedented event: Imagine living on a small, isolated necklace of tropical islands and watching the sun in the morning rise in the east as it always does... and then realizing that there is also a sun rising in the west. The BRAVO hydrogen bomb detonated in the

northwest corner of Bikini Atoll, 1,000 times more powerful than the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima at the end of WWII, vaporized 3 islands, sent the ash 100,000 feet into the atmosphere, and then showered the radioactive fallout over Rongelap, Utrok, and other neighboring atolls in the north. The islanders, unwarned and therefore completely unaware of the danger, had no idea what had just happened. The adults looked skyward in disbelief as the “snow” fell all around them, children played in the deadly ash, they all suffered immediate radiation sickness: burns, nausea, hair loss, and peeling skin.

Despite knowing the direction of the prevailing winds, the U.S. failed to warn the Marshallese even though they told their own personnel in the area –stationed on ships and in fortified concrete bunkers– to go below decks and to stay out of harm’s way. It wasn’t until days later that the inhabitants of Rongelap and Utrok were finally evacuated. Many islanders endured lifelong health problems, especially thyroid cancers, and the fallout spread as far as a Japanese fishing vessel, killing one crew member and leaving others with acute radiation syndrome.

## Environmental Devastation

The nuclear and thermonuclear testing left the environment of the Marshall Islands deeply scarred. Bikini and parts of



Image Credit: Jack Niedenthal

Enewetak Atoll remain contaminated, uninhabitable for the displaced communities. On Enewetak, the U.S. attempted a massive cleanup in the late 1970s, burying highly radioactive debris under the Runit Dome, a concrete structure now imperiled by rising sea levels. The Dome contains plutonium-239 and other toxic materials, a ticking time bomb threatening the Pacific ecosystem.

Desmond Doulatram, Co-Chair for the Liberal Arts Department at the College of the Marshall Islands, highlights the unresolved issues. “Many of our people saw the 70th anniversary of BRAVO last year as a painful reminder of what hasn’t happened. It’s about the restoration of our dignity,” he states, reflecting the enduring environmental and psychological wounds inflicted on the Marshallese.

### **Economic Consequences**

The displacement caused by nuclear testing shattered the traditional livelihoods of the islanders. Forced relocations have left our communities dependent on foreign aid, living in overcrowded conditions often with limited access to resources. Attempts at resettlement, such as the early 1970s return to Bikini Atoll, a move encouraged in 1968 by then US President Lyndon B. Johnson on the front page of the New York Times, failed when it was discovered that the local food supply was highly contaminated with cesium-137. The people of Bikini were evacuated again in 1979, this time indefinitely.

The economic repercussions of these displacements continue to ripple through our island society. Limited infrastructure, inadequate health services, and a reliance on imported goods exacerbate the challenges faced by those displaced and their descendants.

### **Measures Taken: U.S. and Local Responses**

The U.S. government has taken steps to address the legacy of its nuclear testing, though these efforts have been widely criticized as insufficient. Under the first Compact of Free Association (COFA) in the 1980s, \$150 million was allocated for compensation. However, unpaid claims for land damage and personal injuries currently amount to over \$2.2 billion. The Nuclear Claims Tribunal, created to adjudicate these claims, quickly exhausted its funds, leaving victims without recourse in the US courts.

Our leaders have worked tirelessly to seek justice. David Anitok, Senator for Ailuk Atoll and Envoy for Nuclear Justice and Human Rights, expresses the frustration felt by many Marshallese: “For a long time we’ve tried to get the U.S. to acknowledge what they’ve done... but they’ve always come up short of fully acknowledging what we sacrificed for the people of the United States and the world.”

Recent U.S. agreements under COFA III created a \$700 million trust fund for the Marshallese people of 13 atolls for “Extraordinary Needs Disbursements,” yet critics point out that the word “nuclear” is conspicuously absent from the 57-page trust agreement. Jesse Gasper Jr., Senator from Bikini Atoll and Minister of Culture and Internal Affairs, insists that acknowledgment is crucial. “The U.S.



David Anitok, Senator for Ailuk Atoll. Image Credit Jack Niedenthal .



needs to apologize. They need to acknowledge what they've done out here in the Marshall Islands from the office of the President of the United States," he says.



Ariana-Tibon-Kilma, Image Credit: Jack Niedenthal .

### **Health Impacts and Generational Burdens**

The health consequences of the nuclear testing era continue to unfold. Thyroid cancers, birth defects, and other radiation-related illnesses have plagued our population. According to a 2004 National Cancer Institute report, more than 530 cancers can be directly attributed to the testing,

with many cases yet to manifest.

National Nuclear Commission Chairperson Ariana Tibon-Kilma, only 28 years old, represents the younger generation stepping into leadership roles. "I feel strongly that the overall nuclear legacy narrative should change," she says, advocating for a more accurate portrayal of the widespread contamination. She also emphasizes the need for improved healthcare infrastructure, including access to specialists like oncologists and cardiologists. "Prioritizing healthcare is a form of justice that can benefit our entire population."

### **Community Advocacy and Resilience**

Marshallese communities have demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of these challenges. Advocacy for nuclear justice has brought international



Ariana-Tibon-Kilma, Image Credit: Jack Niedenthal .

attention to their plight. Greenpeace, along with figures like Darlene Keju, has played a significant role in amplifying the voices of victims. Keju's husband, journalist Giff Johnson, remains a staunch chronicler of the nuclear legacy, pointing out that "the nuclear testing legacy doesn't magically end at a certain date."

Education is a cornerstone of the Marshallese response. Tibon-Kilma believes that a well-informed population is key to ensuring that the mistakes of the past are not repeated. "The more educated we are, the better choices we will be able to make," she states.

### **The Path Forward**

The road to justice and healing for the Marshallese people is long and fraught with obstacles. Acknowledgment of past wrongs, adequate compensation, and investments in health and environmental rehabilitation are essential steps. Improved healthcare facilities and

environmental cleanups could pave the way for some of our communities to return to their ancestral homelands.

Furthermore, the Marshallese story serves as a powerful reminder of the global need for nuclear disarmament. By sharing their experiences, the Marshallese contribute to the broader movement for a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons.

## **Conclusion**

The Marshall Islands' legacy of nuclear testing is a sobering testament to the human and environmental cost of unchecked militarism. As our people continue their fight for justice, our story reminds the world of the importance of accountability, resilience, and the enduring human spirit. It is a call not only to remember but to act, ensuring that such atrocities are never repeated.

*Author: Jack Niedenthal is the former secretary of Health Services for the Marshall Islands, where he has lived and worked for 44 years. He is the author of "For the Good of Mankind, An Oral History of the People of Bikini," and president of Microwave Films, which has produced six award-winning feature films in the Marshallese language. Send feedback to [jackniedenthal@gmail.com](mailto:jackniedenthal@gmail.com)*

『INPS Japan/London Post』

# Thinking the thinkable

BY Kunda Dixit

Two entwined global threats in 2025: climate breakdown and nuclear catastrophe.

## Kathumandu (Nepali Times) -

Despite countries amassing huge atomic arsenals, one reason deterrence has worked since the end of World War II, according to proponents, is that all-out nuclear war is so unthinkable.

Yet, with no end in sight to fighting in Ukraine and West Asia, a new Cold War that pits US vs Russia and China, and the second coming of an erratic American president, have all made nuclear conflict thinkable in 2025 and beyond.

Russia has repeatedly threatened the use of nuclear weapons against Ukraine and last month fired a new hypersonic intermediate-range ballistic missile at the Dnipro. And it has put into orbit a new prototype satellite that can knock out other satellites with a nuclear explosion in



Photo: WIKIMEDIA

space.

Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu have reportedly spoken about a joint strike on Iranian nuclear installations. North Korea has been testing long range missiles for its nuclear warheads. Tensions remain high between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan.

These dangers come on top of signs of accelerated climate breakdown with weather extremes, record-breaking heat, and rapid melting of

polar icecaps and Himalayan glaciers.

'The world-ending potential of nuclear weapons looms over populations around the world,' writes Cameron Vega in Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. 'Climate change is a slower-moving catastrophe, but it openly threatens every community.'

The Bulletin's Doomsday Clock was reset to 90 seconds before midnight (from 100 seconds) in January this year due to 'ominous





trends that continue to point the world toward global catastrophe'. The minute hand on the Doomsday Clock has been reset 25 times since 1947, and it is most likely be brought forward to less than a minute in 2025.

Both climate breakdown and nuclear war are human induced, but while one is heating up the planet the smoke and dust from explosions of the other will cool it. Either way, both threats are inextricably linked.

Even the tactical use of battlefield nuclear weapons would have a climate impact. And climate-induced disasters, crop failures, water shortage, mass migration and ensuing socio-political unrest could spark wars that go nuclear. This is without even considering the long term effect of radioactive fallout on land, water and sea.

Research at Rutgers University recently projected that even a one-

week nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan would cause the collapse of food systems worldwide, killing 2 billion people from starvation. Prevailing winds would carry the fallout to the Himalaya and Tibetan Plateau, irradiating glaciers that feed into all of Asia's main rivers.

An all-out nuclear war between the United States and Russia would cause a nuclear winter lasting more than 15 years, the study showed, unleashing a global famine that would kill 5 billion people. Anti-nuclear activists now challenge the security paradigm based on nuclear deterrence, and have instead pushed for a ban on nuclear weapons. At a meeting on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the United Nations in New York last December, members declared that the doctrine of deterrence used by nuclear-armed states and their allies was a threat to human security and an obstacle to nuclear disarmament.

The meeting heard that deterrence is an unproven gamble and based on the implicit threat to use nuclear weapons which itself is playing brinkmanship with nuclear annihilation.

"Deterrence is unacceptable," stated Melissa Parke of ICAN ((International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons). "It is based on the threat to wage nuclear war which would kill millions outright and lead to a nuclear winter and mass starvation that would kill billions of people."

ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017 for its activism against the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of atomic weapons, and its work to push the Treaty on the Prohibition of



## Nuclear Weapons.

It has been 50 years since the discussions on a draft of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was first held in Geneva. The NPT entered into force in 1970, and has the membership of 191 States, with mandatory obligations on disarmament and non-proliferation. However, these commitments are now threatened by a new Cold War and increased global tensions. Nine nuclear weapon states have total stockpiles of 14,500 warheads, many of them on missiles ready to be launched. Three countries in Nepal's immediate neighbourhood (China, India, Pakistan) have nuclear weapons, and they do not share good relations.

Of the five regions around the world that have declared themselves nuclear weapons free, three are in Asia: Central Asia, Mongolia and the South Pacific. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific (UNRCPD) is located in Kathmandu and helps countries to meet disarmament goals.

A report titled Nuclear Famine by the group International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War sounds a sobering alarm: even a limited nuclear war using only 100 weapons anywhere in the world would disrupt the global climate and agricultural production, and put 2 billion people at risk of starvation.

Coincidentally, 2 billion is also the number of people who would be affected by the melting of glaciers in the mountains of High Asia, according to the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

Given the twin global threats, climate activism now has to go hand-in-hand with the campaign to abolish nuclear weapons.

『INPS Japan/Nepali Times』

# Nobel Peace Prize Forum Breaks Down Nuclear Risks and Solutions

BY Naureen Hossain



The Nobel Peace Prize Forum with leading experts on global nuclear politics, including three former Nobel laureates, convened to discuss the continued risk of nuclear weapons. Credit: Soka Gakkai

**UNITED NATIONS & OSLO (IPS)** – The existential threat that nuclear weapons present remains as pertinent as ever, even when they have not been deployed in war for nearly 80 years. As some countries seek out nuclear weapons or to upgrade and modernize their existing warheads, global voices in nuclear politics and disarmament warn of the potential risk of a new nuclear arms race amid the weakening of nuclear treaties that prohibit the proliferation and use of nuclear arms. At this year's Nobel Peace Prize Forum in Oslo, Norway, leading experts on global nuclear politics, including three former Nobel

laureates, convened to discuss the risk of growing nuclear arsenals and what must be done to mitigate these risks. The forum 'NUKES: How to Counter the Threat' was hosted on December 11 at University Aula with the support of the city of Oslo, the International Forum for Understanding, and Soka Gakkai International.

The Nobel Institute has awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on 13 occasions to individuals and groups whose work was in service to the argument for the prohibition of nuclear weapons. This was seen up to the present day with Japanese grassroots organization Nihon Hidankyo, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on December 10. When accepting the award, co-chair Terumi Tanaka called for the world to listen to the testimonies of A-bomb survivors and to feel the "deep inhumanity of nuclear weapons."



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpM2jO6PK7s&t=1s>

The Nobel Prize

The forum began with the testimonies from two Hibakusha, survivors of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Keiko Ogura was eight years old in Hiroshima. She recalled the

trauma she carried with her in the aftermath of the bombing, as she saw people die around her, not yet knowing that they were suffering due to radiation. She and other Hibakusha came forward years later to share their experiences and the direct costs of deploying nuclear weapons.

“Before I die, we want to see this planet free of nuclear weapons,” said Ogura. “For us, discounting the number of nuclear weapons is nonsense. A single nuclear weapon means destruction of this world.” Masao Tomonaga was two years old when Nagasaki was bombed, and his memories of that time are based on his mother’s recollections of that day. He followed in his father’s footsteps to become a doctor, who oversaw Hibakusha care at Nagasaki University and conducted research into the medical consequences of radiation from nuclear fallout. In his own research, Tomonaga found that the stem cells in the survivors’ bodies contained genetic abnormalities due to radiation, which made them vulnerable to leukemia and cancer. As one of the few cells that accumulates and survives across generations, he noted, they also accumulate “genetic errors” that could occur randomly across a lifetime. He hypothesized that the Hibakusha likely held pre-cancerous cells within them.

In the past decade, there have been efforts to reduce the number of nuclear warheads among the countries that held them. Yet in recent years, the attitude has started to shift in the opposite direction. Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Mariano Grossi, remarked that this shift is marked by military nuclear doctrines that were previously respected and are now being questioned or overstepped.

“We are seeing a normalization of discourse of use of nuclear weapons,” Grossi warned, remarking on how these doctrines are being revisited to allow for some concession for the possession and use of nuclear weapons.

In such times, Grossi remarked, world leaders have an “irrevocable responsibility” to make the critical steps forward to nuclear disarmament. “It’s time that we are reminded at the right level of the necessity of this decision at the top, whether we like it or not,” he said. “We hope that this determination of the world leadership to tackle the issue of nuclear weapons, especially in a world so fragmented as the one we have.”

Yet in the debate of nuclear disarmament, countries seem split on their thinking of nuclear weapons. Experts also warned that the more ‘casual’ discussions of nuclear weapons by major parties also demonstrates an undermining of nuclear treaties. Although 191 member states joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), critics have pointed out that this has not been enforced to the extent that it is intended to, especially among the major players.

Speaking during a panel discussion on the risks of nuclear activity, Manpreet Sethi of the Centre for Air Power Studies in New Delhi, India, reflected on how certain countries—nuclear powers—held different perceptions of the risk of nuclear warfare.

“There is no shared sense of risk like there was during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962,” Sethi said. “Everyone is perceiving risk differently.” Sethi also remarked that countries were pushing the boundaries on the ‘nuclear envelope’—the limits on nuclear

deployment, evident in the language used in discussing nuclear arms and proliferation.

The threat of nuclear warfare is also heightened when considering the advances made in technology and the impact of modernization and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. Wilfred Wan, Director of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme in SIPRI, noted that disruptive technologies such as AI and automation would only “increase the vulnerabilities in nuclear weapons.” The relative unknown factors that remain with AI would also bring an “aura of instability [and] unpredictability to nuclear weapons.” “The only way to eliminate risk... is to eliminate nuclear weapons,” said Wan.

What are the measures then to mitigate the risks of nuclear arsenals in the present day? For one, dialogue between nuclear states and non-nuclear states is one possible step forward for non-nuclear states to call for nuclear states to cease their activities and work towards reduction. Tong Zhao, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, stated that the Global South is in a position to make these demands, especially as many of these countries are also signatories to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Melissa Parke, Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), has said that one step forward would be for all countries, including nuclear powers, to sign the TPNW. The United Nations recently approved a new study on the effects of nuclear warfare for the modern age, a study that would be more comprehensive and update the understanding of nuclear warfare for the 21st century.

“The new UN study will be looking at things like the latest scientific

confirmation from the 2022 Nature Food Journal that... even a limited nuclear war would not only kill millions of people outright, but it would cause global climate disruption, massive amounts of soot going into the stratosphere, circling the globe, blocking out sunlight, causing agricultural collapse, and the death by starvation of more than 2 billion people in a nuclear winter,” said Parke.

“I expect the new study will confirm what the Hibakusha have been telling us—have been warning us about. That the risks are real, immediate, and immense. Confronting them now is not a matter of choice but of necessity,” she said. “And that the necessary action is not just no-use but total nuclear disarmament, as that is the only way of eliminating the existential threat of nuclear weapons.”

A concerted, collective effort will be needed to put pressure on nuclear states to move towards non-proliferation and disarmament. That effort can begin on the individual level.

Ogura remarked that the world held a collective responsibility to prohibit nuclear weapons, from world leaders to the youth of the next generation. This could be achieved if the experiences of the Hibakusha and the survivors of nuclear fallout and testing are shared and never forgotten. With a hint of optimism, she said, “We are more than just a single drop.” Water spreads the word—through the ocean, the tide, through the continent. I have a belief—someday we can make it.” 『INPS Japan/ IPS UN Bureau Report』

# Rising right-wing politics and the status of nuclear disarmament

BY Saqlain Imam



London,,Uk.,26th,June,London, UK. 26th June 2019. Anti-war protesters with banners at the DON'T ATTACK IRAN protest in Whitehall, London, to put pressure on the UK. Image Credit: shutterstock

**London, UK (London Post)** – The current international political climate is witnessing a rise in right-wing populist politics with implications on global security and policies. Populist leaders who are characterised by thumping nationalism and upping defence capabilities as a necessity for national security.

As populist leaders take the centre stage, treaties like Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) or Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) have become even more relevant.

## **Russia revising nuclear policies**

With the largest nuclear arsenal in the world, Russia's nuclear program reflects right-wing authoritarian leadership led by Vladimir Putin. Preventive measures are central to its military doctrine, complicating global disarmament efforts.

In September 2024, Putin in a televised meeting with high-level officials announced that in case of a “massive air attack” it can use its nuclear weaponry. The newly proposed ruled allowed Russia to consider an attack by a non-nuclear country supported by a nuclear power to be considered as an attack by both.

Following this in November 2024, the US reversed a ban on Ukraine's use of long-range missiles against Russia. The White House had put this ban on Ukraine, out of concern that Russia could escalate the situation by involving nuclear weapons.

Putin responded by signing the previously proposed changes to its nuclear doctrine, which now allowed the country to use its nuclear arsenal.

The characterization of the West as an existential threat to Russia is one of its main political narratives.

Janes, an open source defence intelligence website observed that Russian actions in 2023–24 included deploying nuclear weapons to Belarus, unveiling new delivery platforms, tactical nuclear drills, and disengagement from treaty obligations.

Mrityunjay Goswami, a research analyst at Indo-Pacific Studies Centre, says strategic experts are seeing trends in right wing



governments advocating for using nuclear weapons in real time war scenarios, for example, Russians are clearly emerging as the major voice in this fragile nuclear order, under president Putin and its right wing government, the Russians are now looking for tactical nuclear options in Ukraine war.



Büchel , Germany:Activists participate in a peace walk against nuclear weapons around Büchel Military Air Base.. Image Credit :shutterstock

### India counterweighting China and Pakistan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is serving his third-term in power boasts of India's nuclear capabilities. This year in 2024, the ruling nationalist party, Bharatiya Janata Party, in its manifesto promised to expand the country's nuclear energy by focusing on developing small modular reactors and increased investment in nuclear energy production.

Modi, a right-wing hardline politician in his election campaign in 2024,

attacked India's opposition party Congress and its allies, saying they will diffuse the country's nuclear weapons after coming to power. Modi also criticised one of the national leftist parties, CPI-M, when it vowed to eliminate the nuclear weapons of the country in its election manifesto. Modi further said that while India's neighbours were armed with nuclear weapons, the opposition parties were planning to make the country "powerless".

Modi projects himself as a nationalist, a strongman who is building the country's military and nuclear capabilities. He has mocked Pakistan of being unable to sell its nuclear weapons due to poverty and "low quality". When his critics said that Pakistan also has a nuclear button, he said that India's nuclear arsenal is not kept for Diwali (a Hindu festival when crackers are burnt).

Another neighbour of India, China is raising eyebrows of New Delhi for its military buildup – both conventional and nuclear. Goswami comments that China's rise as a major nuclear power and the emphasis of president Xi on enhancing China's strategic capabilities indicates that China is seeking parity in terms of nuclear weapons and delivery capabilities with the United States as part of its military modernisation efforts.

On the other hand, right wing voices in Poland and Germany are calling for Europe's own nuclear deterrent options after the Ukraine invasion.

### Iran vs Israel: Increasing rivalry raising tensions

Iran, which does not possess a nuclear weapon as of now, is being watched closely by Western countries and Israel, and often suspected to be in the nuclear arms race.

Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Rafael Mariano said on 6 December, 2024 that Iran is “dramatically” accelerating its enrichment of Uranium to up to 60 percent purity (90 percent level that is considered as weapons grade)

Iranian President-elect Masoud Pezeshkian has said that the country is not “seeking nuclear weapons”. Tehran has reiterated to be pursuing a peaceful nuclear program transparently and under IAEA supervision within the framework of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

As Donald Trump came to power, tensions around Iran’s nuclear capabilities have heightened. When Trump was in power he pulled out from the Iran nuclear deal also known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) which had put restrictions on Iran’s nuclear program in exchange for the relaxation of some international sanctions on Iran.

“I will do everything in my power to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons”, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu had said in 2023.

Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu’s government hit and destroyed Iran’s nuclear research site in November 2024. While the tensions of a nuclear escalation were rising, Tehran’s military heads also pledged a crushing response to Tel Aviv.

The move was a blow to the efforts of nuclear disarmament. Israel, which is estimated to have about 90 nuclear weapons, remains one of the countries which have not joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

“Eliminating Israel’s nuclear weapons and ensuring that Iran or any other state in the Middle East never acquires them is vital to ensuring

the long-term security of all people in the region”, The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) comments.

Nuclear Disarmament debate is facing existential crisis due to American and Russian disengagement and China’s dipping willingness to engage in any bilateral or trilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. As a result, the strategic communication channels need to be relooked among major nuclear powers, and experts are not seeing progress in the near future in this aspect, Goswami adds.

*Author: Saqlain Imam, Political Analyst/Ex-Journalist at BBC, World Service London, England, United Kingdom.*

『INPS Japan/London Post』

## Peace Beginning with Empathy: SGI's Path to Nuclear Disarmament and Social Transformation (Interview with Mr. Hirotsugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues, SGI.)

BY Paris/Tokyo INPS Japan=Correspondents



Mr. Hirotsugu Terasaki, Director General of Peace and Global Issues of SGI. Photo Credit: Katsuhiro Asagiri, Multimedia Director of INPS Japan.

**Q: How do you think the Paris Peace Forum contributes to a broader international dialogue on nuclear disarmament?**

**Terasaki:** This conference was hosted by the Catholic organization the Community of Sant'Egidio, which is headquartered in Rome. Every

year, they hold a large-scale international interfaith conference like this, providing a space for dialogue and the sharing of perspectives and insights on the challenges faced by diverse modern societies. We are very grateful for the opportunity to participate in this conference as SGI, especially in a forum focused on nuclear disarmament. The issue of nuclear weapons, needless to say, is one of the most critical challenges in today's society. Creating an opportunity to share our awareness of these issues with representatives of religious communities from around the world is a significant and rewarding challenge for us.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dqs6IZR9xJE>

Paris 2024 Peace Meeting. Credit INPS Japan

**Q: As an SGI representative, what unique perspectives of philosophies do you bring to this question of global peace and security?**



Photo: SGI president Daisaku Ikeda.  
Credit: Seikyo Shimbun

**Terasaki:** Our peace movement, particularly our efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons, originates from the Declaration Calling for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons made by Josei Toda, the second president of the Soka Gakkai, in

September 1957. At that time, there was deep concern about the proliferation of nuclear weapons due to the competitive nuclear testing. President Toda's key message to the youth gathered at that time, which he wanted to pass on as his legacy, was that this is a battle to protect humanity's right to survival. From this perspective, while physically eliminating nuclear weapons is the primary goal, the more profound issue is the reality that humanity, in its pursuit of war, even with nuclear weapons, threatens this right to survival. Thus, our movement is not only a concrete effort toward nuclear disarmament but also a broader initiative to safeguard humanity's fundamental right to exist.

In this sense, our approach to nuclear disarmament and abolition is twofold. First, from the perspective of humanity's right to survive, we have long focused on highlighting the humanitarian issues and the stark reality of nuclear exposure to raise awareness about the consequences of using nuclear weapons. Second, as expressed by President Daisaku Ikeda, who succeeded President Toda, the essence of the nuclear issue lies in the mentality that justifies possessing such indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction solely to fulfill the desire for domination. This 'struggle against the mindset of possessing nuclear weapons' is a perspective we have clearly defined, and I believe it is a distinguishing feature of our movement.

**Q: What concrete steps do you believe it can take right now to accelerate nuclear disarmament especially with impending geopolitical tensions?**

**Terasaki:** I believe we are in an extremely challenging and critical



situation. Many people are feeling a sense of hopelessness or helplessness in this current climate, which could potentially amplify discrimination. The theme of this conference, 'Imagine Peace,' emphasizes precisely this — the need to 'envision peace.' I believe this is the most important theme for us right now.

While it's certainly important to learn lessons from how we have addressed issues in the past, what's even more crucial is how much all of humanity is concentrating on new ideas and new challenges. In that sense, I believe that the fight against pessimism and indifference is precisely the hurdle we must first overcome in the current crisis.

In civil society, we must explore every possibility and every challenge, sharing a sense of crisis and raising our voices together in unprecedented solidarity. In doing so, we can create a significant breakthrough and influence decision-makers. It is essential that young people are not passive but stand alongside us in overcoming the challenges of this era. This is the kind of solidarity we should aim for. In this regard, conferences like this one are extremely important, which is why we are participating.

**Q: You are a strong advocate for the “No First Use” policy. Could you elaborate on why this policy is crucial for global nuclear disarmament?**

**Terasaki:** Certainly, this discussion was present in the 20th century as well. At that time, some criticized it as merely giving nuclear-armed states more time and argued that it would not lead to genuine nuclear disarmament. We are well aware of these criticisms.”

However, the crisis we face now is far more severe than anything we have seen before. We are witnessing an unprecedented situation

where nuclear-armed states, which once upheld the NPT framework, are now directly involved in conflicts. This makes an immediate shift toward nuclear disarmament exceedingly difficult. In fact, there is even a movement toward modernizing nuclear weapons as usable arsenals. For those who are seriously considering how to address this crisis, it is an incredibly challenging dilemma.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqVRjS0Fss0>

Filmed by Katsuhiro Asagiri, President and Multimedia Director. Edited by Levin Lin and Gary Kilburn.

We have engaged in ongoing discussions, not only with activists but also with academic experts, to determine what can be done. We have concluded that the one feasible approach under current conditions is the No First Use policy. By adopting this as a starting point, we aim to create a platform for dialogue to build trust. We are currently planning a major international conference on this theme by the end of the year to further amplify this message.

**Q: What motivated your first strategy in your longstanding fight for nuclear disarmament and global peace?**

**Terasaki:** As I mentioned earlier, Soka Gakkai in Japan began an initiative in the 1970s to convey the realities of atomic bomb survivors to younger generations who had not experienced war. This involved going out to interview survivors and those who had lived through the war, documenting their stories, and publishing them. Over 12 years, we published 80 books. As a young man, I served as the secretary-general of this initiative, visiting survivors and listening to their accounts. Many survivors, even more so at that time, found it extremely painful to recount their experiences. Through repeated visits, they came to understand the purpose of our activity, and despite the heavy toll it took, survivors shared their stories with us, sometimes in tears, word by word. I was deeply moved by their words and felt a profound shock, which instilled in me a lifelong commitment to this work.

This motivation has become the foundation of my activities, not only in nuclear disarmament but also in finding ways to support various regions and people in need around the world.

**Q: SGI has been actively engaging youth in its peacebuilding efforts. Young people can play an even wider role in the fight for nuclear disarmament. Could you share a message for the youth?**

**Terasaki:** It has always been the power of young people that has driven change throughout history. There has never been a significant transformation of society or the world that was achieved without the energy of youth. In that sense, I don't see it as doing something for

young people.

Instead, I believe in providing as many opportunities as possible for them to engage, to build their own experiences, and to broaden their solidarity with other young people worldwide. I want them to put their full effort into this, and I will support them in any way I can. This is the traditional approach of SGI.

**Q: How does the SGI's work in nuclear disarmament intersect**

**with  
other**



The remains of the Prefectural Industry Promotion Building, after the dropping of the atomic bomb, in Hiroshima, Japan. This site was later preserved as a monument.  
Credit: UN Photo/DB

**global challenges such as climate change and economic inequality?**

**Terasaki:** While our organization is actively pursuing various challenges, we are also aware that meaningful change comes from providing education and awareness opportunities for each individual. We believe that significant work can only be formed through a collective movement where everyone engages in what they can do.

For example, in addressing issues like nuclear weapons, climate change, human rights, and poverty, there are many talented and sensitive individuals who take these issues personally and commit to action. However, to create a larger movement, it is essential for individuals to cultivate kindness and empathy “=Douku or 同苦” toward those around them, sharing in their struggles. Only through this personal way of living can we foster a meaningful solidarity that has the power to effect social change.

As a civil society organization grounded in faith, we feel strongly about this importance. SGI is sometimes introduced in forums such as the United Nations as an organization that consistently promotes peace education within civil society. I believe this recognition is rooted in these values.

**Q: With the growing role of non-state actors in international diplomacy, how do you think civil society organizations like SGI can have greater impact on global peace efforts.**



Photo Credit: Kevin Lin, INPS Japan

**Terasaki:** As I mentioned earlier, I think it's very positive that civil society now has a place at multilateral dialogue venues such as the United Nations. Of course, the work of leaders who manage countries is crucial, but equally important is how people experience security, peace, and stability in their everyday lives. Civil society, being closer to these realities, can amplify its voice, which I believe strengthens the foundation of peace and democracy.

For this to happen, it's essential that ordinary people strive diligently, act with conviction, and grow stronger while safeguarding the right to know the facts. I am confident that we in civil society can play a significant role in this.

『INPS Japan』

Video Filming and translations, editing: Katsuhiro Asagiri, President of INPS Japan

Interviewer: Raza Sayd, Managing Director of London Post.

Photos, Video Editing: Kevin Lin, INPS Japan

Video Editing: Gary Kilburn

# A Growing New Battle: Nuclear Weapons vs Conventional Arms

BY Thalif Deen



Current conflicts could bring the world precariously close to a nuclear war. Credit: International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

## UNITED NATIONS

**(IPS)** – The warnings from the United Nations and from anti-nuclear activists are increasingly ominous: the world is closer to a nuclear war—by design or by accident—more than ever before.

The current conflicts—and the intense war of words—between nuclear and non-nuclear states—Russia vs. Ukraine, Israel vs. Palestine and North Korea vs. South Korea—are adding fuel to a slow-burning fire. And according to a September 27 report in the New York Times,

Russian President Vladimir Putin is quoted as saying he plans to lower the threshold for his country's use of nuclear weapons—and is prepared to use his weapons in response to any attack carried out by Ukraine with conventional weapons that creates "a critical threat to our sovereignty".

The new threat follows a request by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for long-range missiles, additional fighter planes and drones from the US during his visit to Washington, DC, last month.



According to the State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, the US has provided more than USD 61.3 billion in military assistance "since Russia launched its premeditated, unprovoked, and brutal full-scale invasion of Ukraine" on February 24, 2022, and approximately USD 64.1 billion in military assistance since Russia's initial invasion of Ukraine in 2014.

The US has also used the emergency Presidential Drawdown Authority on 53 occasions since August 2021 to provide Ukraine military assistance totaling approximately USD 31.2 billion from Department of Defense (DoD) stockpiles—all of which have triggered a nuclear threat from Putin.

Asked whether the nuclear threats looming over ongoing conflicts are for real or pure rhetoric, Melissa Parke, Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), winner of the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, told IPS: "We currently face the highest risk there could be a nuclear war since the Cold War. There are two major conflicts involving nuclear-armed states in Ukraine and the Middle East where Russian and Israeli politicians have made overt threats to use nuclear weapons."

She said there are growing geopolitical tensions between nuclear-armed states, not just between Russia and the US over Western military support for Ukraine, but also between the US and China over American efforts to build a network of alliances around China, as well as US support for Taiwan—although thankfully we have heard no overt nuclear threats from either Washington or Beijing.

"But there is a dangerous trend in Western countries, among both

commentators and politicians, to argue Russia is bluffing because it hasn't yet used nuclear weapons. The terrifying reality is that we cannot know for certain if President Putin—or any leader of a nuclear-armed state—will use nuclear weapons at any time."

The doctrine of deterrence that all nuclear powers follow requires creating such a sense of uncertainty, which is one of the reasons it is such a dangerous theory. "We do not know what could lead a situation to escalate out of control."

"What we do know is what could happen if it does: nuclear weapons pose unacceptable humanitarian consequences, and in the event of nuclear weapons being used, no state has the capacity to help survivors in the aftermath," said Parke, who formerly worked for the United Nations in Gaza, Kosovo, New York and Lebanon and served as Australia's Minister for International Development.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, speaking at the high-level meeting commemorating and promoting the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, described nuclear weapons as "double madness."

The first madness is the existence of weapons that can wipe out entire populations, communities and cities in a single attack. "We know that any use of a nuclear weapon would unleash a humanitarian catastrophe—a nightmare spilling over borders, affecting us all. These weapons deliver no real security or stability—only looming danger and constant threats to our very existence."

The second madness, he pointed out, is that, despite the enormous and existential risks these weapons pose to humanity, "we are no closer to eliminating them than we were 10 years ago."

“In fact, we are heading in the wrong direction entirely. Not since the worst days of the Cold War has the specter of nuclear weapons cast such a dark shadow.”

“Nuclear saber-rattling has reached a fever pitch. We have even heard threats to use a nuclear weapon. There are fears of a new arms race,” Guterres warned.

Meanwhile, Russia is responding to the change in US nuclear posture as well as to the billions of dollars the collective West is pumping into the Ukrainian war effort by redrawing its own nuclear “redlines,” according to wire service reports.

Last week, at a meeting of Russia’s Security Council, President Putin announced that “Aggression against Russia by any non-nuclear state... supported by a nuclear power should be treated as their joint attack.”

Tariq Rauf, former Head of Verification and Security Policy, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), told IPS that Russia, in effect, is restating the conditions it has traditionally laid down in its negative security assurances to States parties to the NPT and to nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZ).

This, he pointed out, is essentially similar to that of the US, to the effect that: Russia will not attack or threaten to attack a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the NPT or NWFZ treaty with nuclear weapons, unless that non-nuclear-weapon State attacks Russia in collaboration with another nuclear-weapon State.

“Now, since we’re in a proxy war involving France, UK and the US (all three nuclear weapons states) materially assisting Ukraine in attacking

sites inside the internationally recognized territorial borders of Russia, it is not surprising that Russia has warned Ukraine and its NATO backers that long-range fires against Russia targeting its strategic military bases could trigger a nuclear response by Russia.”

Responding to further questions, Parke of ICAN told IPS all nine nuclear armed states (US, UK, France, China, Russia, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea) are modernizing and, in some cases, expanding their arsenals. Last year, ICAN research shows they spent \$91.4 billion, with the United States spending more than all the others put together.

All these countries follow deterrence doctrine, which is a threat to the entire world given it is based on the readiness and willingness to use nuclear weapons.

This means all of the nuclear-armed states are tacitly threatening the rest of us, given research shows even a regional nuclear war in South Asia would lead to global famine killing 2.5 billion people.

The good news is the majority of countries reject nuclear weapons and support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The TPNW is the only bright spot in a world overshadowed by conflict. It came into force in 2021, which means it is now international law.

Nearly half of all countries have either signed, ratified or acceded to the treaty, and more countries will ratify it.

“We are confident more than half of all countries will have either signed or ratified it in the near future. Pressure and encouragement from civil society and campaigners around the world have been key to bringing the TPNW into being and ensuring more and more countries join it.”

Asked about the role played by the United Nations on nuclear disarmament—and whether there is anything more the UN can do—she said: the United Nations has always played a key role in nuclear disarmament.

The very first meeting of the General Assembly called for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Since then, it has been the forum in which countries have negotiated the key multilateral treaties on nuclear weapons, not just the ban treaty, the TPNW, but also the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The Secretary General continues to provide strong moral and political leadership, using his voice to make clear the unacceptable nature of these weapons and the urgent need to eliminate them.

The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) plays an essential role too, supporting and facilitating UN member states to join the TPNW. This week at the General Assembly high level meeting, we will see another ceremony where more countries will officially ratify the TPNW.

“It is essential the UN continues to be a strong voice for the elimination of nuclear weapons, supporting more countries that back the treaty to join it and also reminding the nuclear-armed states and their allies that support the use of nuclear weapons of the need to live up to their obligations and get rid of their nuclear weapons and the infrastructure that supports them,” Parke declared.

『INPS Japan/ IPS UN Bureau Report』

# Activists Call on World to ‘Imagine’ Peace, End Nuclear Arms

BY AD McKenzie



The panel for the session on “Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Imagining a World without Nuclear Weapons.” Credit: Kevin Lin, Multimedia Assistant director, INPS Japan.

**PARIS (IPS)** – In any discussion of world peace and the future of humanity, the issue of nuclear arms must be addressed, and now.

That was the message from a range of delegates at the “Imaginer la Paix / Imagine Peace” conference, held in Paris September 22 to 24, and organized by the Sant’Egidio Community, a Christian organization founded in Rome in 1968 and now based in 70 countries.

Describing its tenets as “Prayer, service to the Poor and work for Peace,” the community has hosted 38 international, multi-faith peace meetings, bringing together activists from around the world. This is the first time the conference has been held in Paris, with hundreds traveling to France, itself a nuclear-weapon state.

Occurring against the backdrop of brutal, on-going conflicts in different regions and a new race by some countries to “upgrade” their arsenal, the gathering had a sense of urgency, with growing fears that nuclear weapons might be used by warlords. Participants highlighted current and past atrocities and called upon world leaders to learn from the past.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dqs6lZR9xJE>

“After Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we have been blessed with many who have said ‘no’—‘no’ a million times, creating movements and treaties, (and) awareness... that the only reasonable insight to learn from the conception and use of nuclear weapons is to say ‘no’,” said Andrea Bartoli, president of the Sant’Egidio Foundation for Peace and



Dialogue, based in New York.

Participating in a conference forum Monday titled “Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Imagining a World Without Nuclear Weapons,” Bartoli and other speakers drew stark pictures of what living in a world with nuclear weapons entails, and they highlighted developments since World War II.

“After the two bombs were used against Hiroshima and Nagasaki, humans built more than 70,000 nuclear weapons and performed more than 2,000 tests. Still today we have more than 12,500, each of them with power greatly superior to the two used in August 1945,” Bartoli said.

Despite awareness of the catastrophic potential of these weapons and despite a UN treaty prohibiting their use, some governments argue that possessing nuclear arms is a deterrent—an argument that is deceptive, according to the forum speakers.

Jean-Marie Collin, director of ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, a movement launched in the early 2000s in Australia and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017), said that leaders who cite deterrence “accept the possibility of violating” international human rights.

“Nuclear weapons are designed to destroy cities and kill and maim entire populations, which means that all presidents and heads of government who implement a defense policy based on nuclear deterrence and who are therefore responsible for giving this order, are aware of this,” Collin told the forum.

ICAN campaigned for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that was adopted at the United Nations in 2017, entering into force in 2021. The adoption came nearly five decades after the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which entered into force in 1970.

The terms of the NPT consider five countries to be nuclear weapons states: the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China. Four other countries also possess nuclear weapons: India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel.

According to a 2024 ICAN report, these nine states jointly spent €85 billion (USD 94,6 billion) on their atomic weapon arsenals last year, an expenditure ICAN has called “obscene” and “unacceptable.” France, whose president Emmanuel Macron spoke about peace in broad, general terms at the opening of the conference, spent around €5,3 billion (about USD 5,9 billion) in 2023 on its nuclear weapons, said the report.

The policy of “deterrence” and “reciprocity,” which essentially means “we’ll get rid of our weapons if you get rid of yours,” has been slammed by ICAN and fellow disarmament activists.

“With the constant flow of information, we often tend to lose sight of the reality of



Opening Ceremony. Credit: Kevin Lin, Multimedia Assistant director, INPS Japan.

figures,” Collin said at the peace conference. “I hope this one will hold your attention: it is estimated that more than 38,000 children were killed in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Children!” All those killed—an estimated 210,000 people by the end of 1945—died in horrific ways, as survivors and others have testified. Delegates said that this knowledge should be the real “deterrent.”

At the forum, Anna Ikeda, program coordinator for disarmament at the UN Office of Soka Gakkai International, a global Buddhist movement, described testimony from a Hiroshima a-bomb survivor, Reiko Yamada, as one she would never forget.

“She (Yamada) stated, ‘A good friend of mine in the neighbourhood was waiting for her mother to return home with her four brothers and sisters. Later, she told me that on the second day after the bombing, a moving black lump crawled into the house. They first thought it was a black dog, but they soon realized it was their mother; she collapsed and died when she finally got to her children. They cremated her body in the yard,” Ikeda told the audience with emotion.

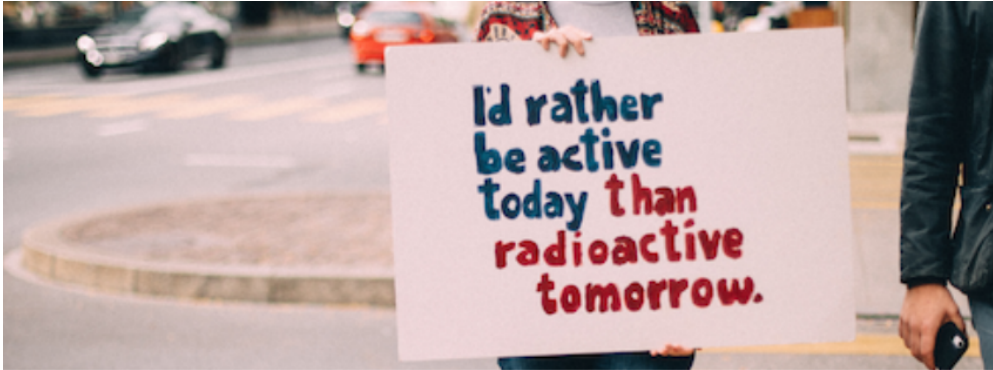
“Who deserves to die such a death? Nobody!” she continued. “Yet our world continues to spend billions of dollars to upkeep our nuclear arsenals, and our leaders at times imply readiness to use them. It is utterly unacceptable.”

Ikeda said that survivors, known as the “hibakusha” in Japan, have a fundamental answer to why nuclear weapons must be abolished—it is that “no one else should ever suffer what we did.”

『INPS Japan/IPS UN Bureau』

# Are the World's Ongoing Conflicts in Danger of Going Nuclear?

BY Thalif Deen



Are decades of arms control treaties being threatened? Credit: International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

**UNITED NATIONS (IPS)** – The constant drumbeat of nuclear threats seems never ending—emanating primarily from the Russians, Israeli right-wing politicians and North Koreans.

The threats also prompt one lingering question: Can there be a World War III without the use of nuclear weapons?

In a report August 27, Reuters quoted a senior Russian official as saying the West was playing with fire by considering allowing Ukraine to strike deep into Russia with Western missiles—and cautioned the United States that World War III would not be confined to Europe. Sergei Lavrov, Russia's longstanding foreign minister and former UN ambassador, said the West was seeking to escalate the Ukraine war and was "asking for trouble" by considering Ukrainian requests to

loosen curbs on using foreign-supplied weapons.

Putting it in the right context, the Washington-based Arms Control Association (ACA) pointed out last week, "the global nuclear security environment could hardly be more precarious."

Carol Giacomo, chief editor of Arms Control Today, the ACA's flagship publication, said that weeks before the US elects a new president, the global nuclear security environment could hardly be more precarious. "Russia continues to raise the specter of escalating its war on Ukraine to nuclear use; Iran and North Korea persist in advancing their nuclear programs; China is moving to steadily expand its nuclear arsenal; the United States and Russia have costly modernization programs underway; and the war in Gaza threatens to explode into a region-wide catastrophe entangling Iran and nuclear-armed Israel, among other countries," she pointed out.

Meanwhile, Russia and China are refusing to enter arms control talks with the United States, new countries are raising the possibility of acquiring nuclear weapons and decades of arms control treaties are unraveling.

The situation has also prompted Rafael Mariano Grossi, director-general of the International Atomic Agency (IAEA), to warn, in an interview with The Financial Times on August 26, that the global nonproliferation regime is under greater pressure than at any time since the end of the Cold War.

The U.S. presidential election campaign has not engaged publicly on most of these issues in any serious way despite the fact that whichever candidate wins will, once inaugurated, immediately inherit the sole authority to launch U.S. nuclear weapons, wrote Giacomo, a former member of The New York Times editorial board (2007-2020). Dr M.V. Ramana, Professor and Simons Chair in Disarmament, Global and Human Security, School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, Graduate Program Director, MPPGA at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, told IPS the dangers posed by nuclear arms, and the very powerful institutions and governments that possess these weapons of mass destruction, have never been greater.

“In the last 16 months, we have seen government officials from Russia (Dmitry Medvedev) and Israel (Amihai Eliyahu) threatening to use, or calling for the use of, nuclear weapons against Ukraine and Gaza respectively” he noted.

The rulers of these countries have already shown the willingness to kill tens of thousands of civilians. “Going further back, we can remember U.S. President Donald Trump threatening to “totally destroy” North Korea. Coming from a person like Trump and a country like the United States that is the only one to use nuclear weapons in war, there is good reason to take such a threat with utmost seriousness”.

Such great dangers, he argued, can be ameliorated only with great visions, by people demanding that no one should be killed in their name, especially using nuclear weapons but not only using nuclear weapons.

This would require people to make common cause with people all over

the world, and refuse to be divided by the “narrow nationalisms” that Albert Einstein identified as an “outmoded concept,” as far back as 1947.

Norman Solomon, executive director, Institute for Public Accuracy and national director, RootsAction.org told IPS the momentum of the nuclear arms race is moving almost entirely in the wrong direction.

The world and humanity as a whole are increasingly in dire circumstances, made even more dire by the refusal of the leaders of nuclear states to acknowledge the heightened jeopardy of thermonuclear annihilation for nearly all of the Earth’s inhabitants. As the nuclear superpowers, the United States and Russia, he said, have propelled the drive to keep developing nuclear weaponry. There are always rationalizations, but the result is proliferation of nuclear weapons.

“Nations with smaller nuclear arsenals and those with nuclear-arms aspirations are keenly aware of what the most powerful nuclear states are doing. Preaching about nonproliferation while proliferating is hardly a convincing role model to halt the spread of nuclear weapons to more and more countries,” Solomon pointed out.

“Notably, amid the vast amount of media coverage and diplomatic verbiage about Israel, rarely do we read or hear mention of the fact that Israel — uniquely in the Middle East — possesses nuclear weapons. Given Israel’s impunity to attack other countries in the region, it would be a mistake to have any confidence in Israeli self-restraint with military matters.”

The return of a cold war between the U.S. and Russia, said Solomon, is fueling the nuclear arms race to a dangerous extreme. Arms control



has become a thing of the past, as one treaty after another in this century has been abrogated by the U.S. government. The Open Skies and Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaties were canceled by President Trump.

Earlier, the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty was canceled by President George W. Bush. The absence of those pacts makes a nuclear war with Russia more likely. But President Biden has not tried to revive those agreements snuffed out by his Republican predecessors, he argued.

“If sanity is going to prevail, a drastic change in attitudes and policies will be needed. The current course is headed toward unfathomable catastrophe for the human race”, said Solomon, author, “War Made Invisible: How America Hides the Human Toll of Its Military Machine.” Jacqueline Cabasso, Executive Director, Western States Legal Foundation, told IPS: “Looking around today’s world, we see a growing mob of nationalist authoritarian governments and leaders—including in nuclear-armed Russia, Israel, India, China, North Korea and increasingly, the United States. All of them are busily preparing for war in the name of peace.

But it doesn’t have to be this way. Reflecting the urgency of this moment, in June, the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), the official nonpartisan association of more than 1,400 American cities with populations over 30,000, adopted a sweeping resolution, titled “The Imperative of Dialogue in a Time of Acute Nuclear Dangers.” The resolution rightly “condemns Russia’s illegal war of aggression on Ukraine and its repeated nuclear threats and calls on the Russian government to withdraw all forces from Ukraine.” But it also calls on

the President and Congress “to maximize diplomatic efforts to end the war in Ukraine as soon as possible.”

The resolution, Cabasso said, “calls on the U.S. government to work to re-establish high-level U.S.-Russian risk reduction and arms control talks to rebuild trust and work toward replacement of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the only remaining bilateral nuclear arms control treaty, set to expire in 2026.”

『INPS Japan/ IPS UN Bureau』

# Kazakhstan Takes Lead in Global Push for Nuclear Disarmament Amid Heightened Tensions

BY Katsuhiko Asagiri



Photo: Central Downtown Astana with Bayterek tower. Credit : Wikimedia Commons

**TOKYO/ASTANA (INPS Japan)** — In a world increasingly overshadowed by the threat of nuclear conflict, Kazakhstan is stepping up its efforts in the global disarmament movement. On August 27-28, 2024, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Kazakhstan will host a critical workshop in Astana. This gathering, the first of its kind in five years, is set to reinvigorate the five existing Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs) and enhance cooperation and consultation among them.

This initiative aligns with UN Secretary-General António Guterres's Agenda for Disarmament, particularly Action 5, which emphasizes the strengthening of NWFZs through enhanced collaboration between the zones, urging nuclear-armed states to respect relevant treaties, and supporting the establishment of new zones, such as in the Middle East. This effort reflects the global community's ongoing push to reduce the nuclear threat and foster regional and global peace.

## Kazakhstan's Historical Commitment to Disarmament

10-Minute  
Documentary  
on Nuclear  
Testing in  
Kazakhstan.  
Credit: The  
ATOM  
Project.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WF7tYhZoJAQ>

Kazakhstan's vision for a nuclear-free world is deeply rooted in its leadership in global disarmament efforts. This vision is not just aspirational; it is grounded in the country's lived experience of the devastating impact of nuclear weapons. The Semipalatinsk Test Site in northeastern

Kazakhstan, often referred to as “The Polygon,” was the site of 456 nuclear tests conducted by the Soviet Union between 1949 and 1989. These tests exposed over 1.5 million people to radiation, resulting in severe health consequences, including cancer and birth defects, as well as environmental degradation.

Kazakhstan’s dedication to disarmament is further highlighted by its initiative to establish August 29 as the International Day against Nuclear Tests, recognized by the United Nations. This date commemorates both the first Soviet nuclear test at Semipalatinsk in 1949 and the closure of the site in 1991, serving as a reminder of the horrors of nuclear testing and a call to action for the global community.

### **The Role of NWFZs in Global Security**

NWFZs are critical components of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. There are five established NWFZs, created through treaties: Treaty of Tlatelolco (Latin America and the Caribbean), Treaty of Rarotonga (South Pacific), Treaty of Bangkok (Southeast Asia), Treaty of Pelindaba (Africa), Treaty of Semey (Central Asia). In addition, Mongolia’s unique status as a self-declared nuclear-weapon-free state, recognized through a United Nations General Assembly resolution, exemplifies a national commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.

These zones prohibit the presence of nuclear weapons within their territories, reinforced by international verification and control systems. NWFZs play a crucial role in maintaining regional stability, reducing the risk of nuclear conflict, and promoting global disarmament.

### **Astana Workshop: A Critical Gathering for Disarmament**

The upcoming workshop in Astana is a critical opportunity for states-parties to the five NWFZ treaties, alongside representatives from international organizations, to engage in vital discussions aimed at overcoming the challenges facing these zones. This gathering is particularly timely, given the escalating geopolitical tensions in regions where nuclear capabilities remain central to national security.

A key focus of the workshop will be on enhancing cooperation among the NWFZs, as outlined in the Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament. This includes facilitating consultation between the zones and encouraging nuclear-armed states to adhere to the protocols of these treaties. The workshop builds on the 2019 seminar titled “Cooperation Among Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia,” co-organized by UNODA and Kazakhstan in Nur-Sultan(Astana), which produced key recommendations aimed at revitalizing cooperation among NWFZs.

Participants will discuss strategies to advance the objectives of NWFZs, with an emphasis on strengthening security benefits for member states and fostering more robust consultation mechanisms. The workshop will also address the challenges posed by the reluctance of certain nuclear-armed states, particularly the United States, to ratify protocols related to several NWFZ treaties. Despite being a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the U.S. has yet to ratify protocols to treaties covering the South Pacific (Treaty of Rarotonga), Africa (Treaty of Pelindaba), and Central Asia. This reluctance has impeded the full realization of the security benefits these zones could offer.

## Kazakhstan's Leadership in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)



Kazakhstan will preside over the 3rd meeting of state parties to TPNW which will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York between March 3 and 7 in 2025. Photo: Katsuhiro Asagiri, President of INPS Japan.

Kazakhstan's role in nuclear disarmament extends beyond NWFZs to include leadership in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). In March 2025, Kazakhstan will host the 3rd Meeting of State Parties to the TPNW at the United Nations, further solidifying its position as a champion

of nuclear disarmament.

Kazakhstan has been a vocal advocate of the TPNW and has actively pushed for the creation of an international fund to support victims of nuclear testing and remediate environments affected by nuclear activities, in line with Articles 6 and 7 of the treaty.

The Vienna Action Plan, developed during the First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW (1 MSP), outlines actions for implementing these articles, including exploring the feasibility of an international trust fund and encouraging affected states parties to assess the impacts of nuclear weapons use and testing and to develop national plans for implementation.

At the Second Meeting of States Parties (2MSP), co-chaired by Kazakhstan and Kiribati, progress was made, but challenges remain. The informal working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation, and international cooperation presented a report, and its mandate was renewed, with the goal of submitting recommendations for the establishment of an international trust fund at the 3rd Meeting of States Parties (3MSP). Kazakhstan's leadership in this area underscores its commitment to addressing the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, drawing from its own experience with the devastating consequences of nuclear testing at Semipalatinsk.



Semipalatinsk Former Nuclear Weapon Test site/ Katsuhiro Asagiri



## Civil Society's Crucial Role



Photo: Algerim Yelgeldy, a third-generation survivor of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test Site, giving a testimony at a side event during the 2nd meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. By Katsuhiro Asagiri, President of INPS Japan.

As a part of the two day event, Soka Gakkai International (SGI) from Japan and the Center for International Security and Policy (CISP) will hold a side event in the evening of September 28 to screen the documentary “I Want to Live On: The Untold Stories of the Polygon,” highlighting the survivors of nuclear testing at Semipalatinsk. This documentary, produced by CISP with SGI’s support, was first shown at the UN during the second meeting of state parties to the TPNW in 2023. This side event is part of a broader initiative by SGI and Kazakhstan, which have co-organized several events focusing on the

humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons at the UN, Vienna, and Astana in recent years.

Also coinciding with the Astana workshop, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) will hold a conference convening civil society organizations and activists including Hibakusha from some countries. This confluence of governmental and civil society efforts in Astana marks a significant moment in the global disarmament movement. While diplomats and state representatives discuss policy and cooperation during the official workshop, the parallel activities organized by civil society will amplify the humanitarian message and emphasize the urgent need for a world free of nuclear weapons.

As global tensions rise, the Astana workshop represents a beacon of hope, a critical moment in the global journey toward disarmament.

Through cooperation, dialogue, and a shared commitment to peace, the dream of a world free of nuclear weapons remains within reach.

Kazakhstan, with the support of the international community, is at the forefront of this vital effort.

『INPS Japan』

# Latin America and OPANAL: Crucial References in the Fight Against Nuclear Weapons, 79 Years After Hiroshima and Nagasaki

BY Guillermo Ayala Alanis

Exhibition “Everything You Treasure: For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons” on Display in Mexico. The Organization for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) was invited as a guest of honor to the opening ceremony of this exhibition. OPANAL will travel to Kazakhstan to participate in meetings, including one later this month, where representatives from five Nuclear Weapons Free Zones will gather to share experiences related to the prohibition of nuclear weapons.



Inauguration of the exhibition "Everything You Treasure- For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons". Left to right: Jans Fromow, (IPPNW) Flávio Roberto Bonzanini (OPANAL) Fernanda Somuano (Colmex) Micaela Chávez (Colmex), Nereo Ordaz (Soka Gakkai) Photo: Guillermo Ayala Alanis.

**Mexico City (INPS Japan)** - Raising awareness about the dangers posed by nuclear weapons is the focus of the exhibition “Everything You Treasure: For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons,” currently on display at the Colegio de México, one of the country’s most prestigious universities. The exhibit is part of the commemoration of

the 79th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

“This is a delicate subject that has been discussed for almost 80 years, yet there are still people who neither know about it nor believe in it. Our mission is to raise awareness among citizens, students, and professionals,” said Nereo Ordaz, General Director of Soka Gakkai Mexico.

The exhibition, created by Soka Gakkai International and the International Campaign to Abolish

Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), was first displayed in 2012 in Hiroshima, Japan. It has since been translated into Spanish, English, Japanese, and Russian and features 42 informative displays on nuclear disarmament. In Mexico, the exhibition has been showcased at various universities in the capital, as well as in cities such as Guadalajara, Puebla, and La Piedad.

Another of the posters highlights the work of the Hibakusha, who transmit to young people their experiences on August 6th and 9th, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as their struggle to ensure that a nuclear attack will never happen again.

Visitors to the exhibition can explore topics related to the financial support for the production of nuclear weapons. One display reveals that 329 banks, pension funds, and other financial institutions from 24 countries are involved in this issue, with North America contributing the most, through 204 institutions.

The inauguration, held on August 6th, featured Ambassador Flávio Roberto Bonzanini, Secretary-General of OPANAL, as the guest of honor. He praised the initiative, emphasizing the importance of informing society about the imperative need for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, which, along with climate change, he described as one of the greatest threats to humanity.

“Mexico, along with the rest of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, formed the first Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ) in a densely populated area of the world. This legacy is embodied in the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which has served as an inspiration and model for the creation of four other such zones, now encompassing almost two-thirds of the member states of the United Nations,” said Secretary Bonzanini.

He also reminded attendees that OPANAL is the only organization in the world solely dedicated to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. He encouraged reflection on the importance of building a more peaceful and secure world, and the role that each person can

play in this process.

On August 27-28, OPANAL will participate in a series of activities in Astana, Kazakhstan, related to nuclear non-proliferation and the fight for nuclear disarmament.

These events will coincide with the 33rd anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk Nuclear Weapons Site, where 456 nuclear bombs were detonated between 1949 and 1989.

In an interview with INPS Japan, Natalia Zhurina, Research and Education Officer at OPANAL, emphasized that the organization will meet with representatives from other Nuclear Weapons Free Zones to share experiences and strengthen communication channels that facilitate collaboration towards the prohibition of nuclear weapons. “As I mentioned, there is no other organization like OPANAL in other regions. We know that regions like Central Asia are very interested in establishing such a body. They want to learn about OPANAL and understand how it operates,” she explained.

Zhurina also mentioned that OPANAL will participate in an informal meeting regarding the establishment of a Nuclear Weapons Free



Exhibition: “Everything You Treasure- For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons”. Photos: Guillermo Ayala Alanis.



Zone in the Middle East. Additionally, OPANAL will attend a meeting organized by ICAN to discuss issues related to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). “We view the TPNW as a global version of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which was the first treaty to establish a ban on nuclear weapons. The TPNW has incorporated many principles from the Treaty of Tlatelolco, as has OPANAL.”



Natalia Zhurina, Research and Education Officer of OPANAL.  
Photo:OPANAL

Latin America and the Caribbean serve as exemplary regions in the disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The nations in these regions maintain a firm commitment to these issues, despite the serious threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. “In Latin America and the Caribbean, while countries may not always agree on every issue, there is a unified vision and organized stance on

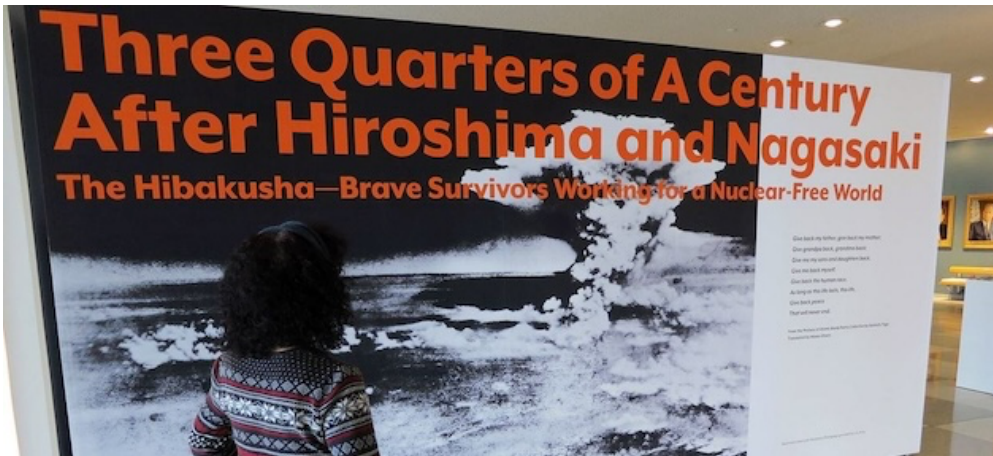
disarmament and non-proliferation. OPANAL and the region offer hope and set an example for other countries,” said the OPANAL official, who will accompany Secretary Bonzanini in the meetings in Kazakhstan. The United Nations estimates that there are approximately 12,500 nuclear weapons in the world, making society’s role crucial in demanding that governments work towards and allocate resources for a world free of nuclear weapons. Exhibitions like “Everything You Treasure: For a World Free From Nuclear Weapons” have raised awareness among young people in Mexico about the privilege of living in a region free from the nuclear threat. The exhibit will remain on display at the Colegio de México until August 15th, alongside theses and bibliographies on nuclear weapons and non-proliferation.

『INPS Japan』



# 79 Years After Hiroshima & Nagasaki: A Grim Reminder of Nuclear Annihilation

BY Thalif Deen



Erico Platt looks at the disarmament exhibition that she staged, "Three Quarters of a Century After Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Hibakusha—Brave Survivors Working for a Nuclear-Free World." Credit: UNODA/Diane Barnes

**UNITED NATIONS (IPS)** – The upcoming 79th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which took place on August 6 and 9, 1945, remains a grim reminder of the destructive consequences of nuclear weapons.

The US bombings killed an estimated 90,000 to 210,000, with roughly half of the deaths occurring on the first day in Hiroshima.

But despite an intense global campaign for nuclear disarmament, the world has witnessed an increase in the number of nuclear powers from five—the US, UK, France, China and Russia—to nine, including India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel.

Is the continued worldwide anti-nuclear campaign an exercise in

futility? And will the rising trend continue—with countries such as Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and South Korea—as potential nuclear powers of the future?

South Africa is the only country that has voluntarily given up nuclear weapons after developing them. In the 1980s, South Africa produced six nuclear weapons, but dismantled them between 1989 and 1993. A number of factors may have influenced South Africa's decision, including national security, international relations, and a desire to avoid becoming a pariah state.

But there is an equally valid argument that there have been no nuclear wars—only threats—largely because of the success of the world-wide anti-nuclear campaign, the role of the United Nations and the collective action by most of the 193 member states in adopting several anti-nuclear treaties.

According to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the United Nations has sought to eliminate weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) ever since the establishment of the world body. The first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1946 established a commission to deal with problems related to the discovery of atomic energy, among others.

The commission was to make proposals for, inter alia, the control of atomic energy to the extent necessary to ensure its use only for peaceful purposes.

Several multilateral treaties have since been established with the aim

of preventing nuclear proliferation and testing, while promoting progress in nuclear disarmament.

These include the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, also known as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was signed in 1996 but has yet to enter into force, and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Jackie Cabasso, Executive Director, Western States Legal Foundation in Oakland, California, which monitors and analyzes US nuclear weapons programs and policies, told IPS: “As we approach the 79th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world is facing a greater danger of nuclear war than at any time since 1945.”

“The terrifying doctrine of “nuclear deterrence,” which should long ago have been delegitimized and relegated to the dustbin of history and replaced with multilateral, non-militarized common security, has metastasized into a pathological ideology brandished by nuclear-armed states and their allies to justify the perpetual possession and threatened use—including first use—of nuclear weapons,” she pointed out.

“It is more important than ever that we heed the warnings of the aging hibakusha (A-bomb survivors): What happened to us must never be allowed to happen to anyone again; nuclear weapons and human beings cannot co-exist; no more Hiroshimas, no more Nagasakis!” This demands an irreversible process of nuclear disarmament. But to the contrary, all nuclear armed states are qualitatively and, in some

cases, quantitatively upgrading their nuclear arsenals and a new multipolar arms race is underway, she noted.

“To achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons and a global society that is more fair, peaceful, and ecologically sustainable, we will need to move from the irrational fear-based ideology of deterrence to the rational fear of an eventual nuclear weapon use, whether by accident, miscalculation, or design.”

“We will also need to stimulate a rational hope that security can be redefined in humanitarian and ecologically sustainable terms that will lead to the elimination of nuclear weapons and dramatic demilitarization, freeing up tremendous resources desperately needed to address universal human needs and protect the environment.”

In this time of multiple global crises, “our work for the elimination of nuclear weapons must take place in a much broader framework, taking into account the interface between nuclear and conventional weapons and militarism in general, the humanitarian and long-term environmental consequences of nuclear war, and the fundamental incompatibility of nuclear weapons with democracy, the rule of law, and human wellbeing,” declared Cabasso.

Dr. M.V. Ramana, Professor and Simons Chair in Disarmament, Global and Human Security School of Public Policy and Global Affairs and Graduate Program Director, MPPGA at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, told IPS, “The glass is half-full or half-empty depending on how one looks at it.”

“The fact that we have avoided nuclear war since 1945 is also partly due to the persistence of the anti-nuclear movement. Historians like Lawrence Wittner have pointed to the many instances when

governments have chosen nuclear restraint instead of unrestrained expansion.”

While South Africa is the only country that dismantled its entire nuclear weapons program, many countries—Sweden, for example—have chosen not to develop nuclear weapons even though they had the technical capacity to do so. They did so in part because of strong public opposition to nuclear weapons, which in turn is due to social movements supporting nuclear disarmament, he pointed out.

Thus, organizing for nuclear disarmament is not futile. Especially as we move into another era of conflicts between major powers, such movements will be critical to our survival, declared Ramana.

According to the UN, a group of elderly hibakusha, called Nihon Hidankyo, have dedicated their lives to achieving a non-proliferation treaty, which they hope will ultimately lead to a total ban on nuclear weapons.

“On an overcrowded train on the Hakushima line, I fainted for a while, holding in my arms my eldest daughter of one year and six months. I regained my senses at her cries and found no one else was on the train,” a 34-year-old woman testifies in the booklet. She was located just two kilometres from the Hiroshima epicenter.

Fleeing to her relatives in Hesaka, at age 24, another woman remembers that “people, with the skin dangling down, were stumbling along. They fell down with a thud and died one after another,” adding, “still now I often have nightmares about this, and people say, ‘it’s neurosis’.”

One man who entered Hiroshima after the bomb recalled in the exhibition “that dreadful scene—I cannot forget even after many

decades.”

A woman who was 25 years old at the time said, “When I went outside, it was dark as night. Then it got brighter and brighter, and I could see burnt people crying and running about in utter confusion. It



At a disarmament exhibition in UN Headquarters in New York, a visitor reads text about a young boy bringing his little brother to a cremation site in Nagasaki, Japan. Credit: UNODA/Erico Platt

was hell...I found my neighbor trapped under a fallen concrete wall... Only half of his face was showing. He was burned alive”.

The steadfast conviction of the Hidankyo remains: “Nuclear weapons are absolute evil that cannot coexist with humans. There is no choice but to abolish them.”

Addressing the UN Security Council last March, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that with geopolitical tensions escalating the risk of nuclear warfare to its highest point in decades, reducing and abolishing nuclear weapons is the only viable path to saving humanity. “There is one path—and one path only—that will vanquish this senseless and suicidal shadow once and for all. We need

disarmament now,” he said, urging nuclear-weapon States to re-engage to prevent any use of a nuclear weapon, re-affirm moratoria on nuclear testing and “urgently agree that none of them will be the first to use nuclear weapons.”

He called for reductions in the number of nuclear weapons led by the holders of the largest arsenals—the United States and the Russian Federation—to “find a way back to the negotiating table” to fully implement the New Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, or START Treaty, and agree on its successor.

“When each country pursues its own security without regard for others, we create global insecurity that threatens us all,” he observed. Almost eight decades after the incineration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons still represent a clear danger to global peace and security, growing in power, range and stealth.”

“States possessing them are absent from the negotiating table, and some statements have raised the prospect of unleashing nuclear hell—threats that we must all denounce with clarity and force,” he said. Moreover, emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and cyber and outer space domains have created new risks.”

From Pope Francis, who calls the possession of nuclear arms “immoral”, to the hibakusha, the brave survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to Hollywood, where Oppenheimer brought the harsh reality of nuclear doomsday to vivid life for millions around the world, people are calling for an end to the nuclear madness. “Humanity cannot survive a sequel to Oppenheimer,” he warned.

When Nagasaki marked the 78th anniversary of the U.S. atomic

bombing of the city last year, the mayor Shiro Suzuki, urged world powers to abolish nuclear weapons, saying nuclear deterrence also increases risks of nuclear war, according to an Associated Press (AP) report.

He called on the Group of Seven (G7) industrial powers to adopt a separate document on nuclear disarmament that called for using nuclear weapons as deterrence.

“Now is the time to show courage and make the decision to break free from dependence on nuclear deterrence,” Suzuki said in his peace declaration. “As long as states are dependent on nuclear deterrence, we cannot realize a world without nuclear weapons.”

Russia’s nuclear threat has encouraged other nuclear states to accelerate their dependence on nuclear weapons or enhance capabilities, further increasing the risk of nuclear war, and that Russia is not the only one representing the risk of nuclear deterrence, Suzuki said.

Suzuki, whose parents were hibakusha, or survivors of the Nagasaki attack, said knowing the reality of the atomic bombings is the starting point for achieving a world without nuclear weapons. He said the survivors’ testimonies are a true deterrent against nuclear weapons use, the AP report said.

『INPS Japan/ IPS UN Bureau』



# The Middle East is balancing on the brink of a major war, and the parties are resorting to threats of using nuclear weapons

BY Roman Yanushevsky



Map of the Middle East, with Israel highlighted in orange and Iran highlighted in green. By Torsten - own work, CC BY-SA 3.0 UNODA/Erico Platt

## Tel Aviv (IPS Japan) -

The “shadow war” between Iran and Israel has been lasting for several decades, and it is gradually gaining momentum. High-ranking representatives of the Islamic Republic regime have repeatedly declared their intention to destroy Israel. To this end, Iran

has created, developed, and continues to finance military groups in several countries in the region: Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. For them, Iran has meticulously devised a comprehensive attack plan on Israel, which could be fatal for the Jewish state. This plan might have been thwarted by Hamas on October 7th, as they accelerated the implementation of their part of the plan without warning their allies in advance. The plan envisioned coordinated actions between all the groups, not just one of them.

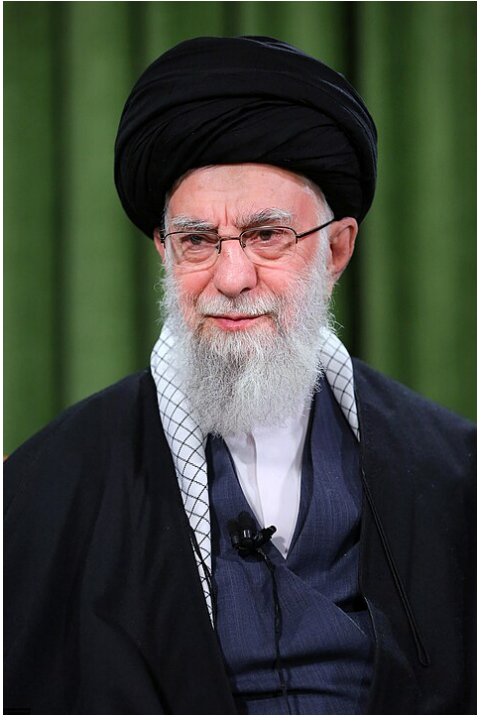
The most powerful pro-Iranian group in the region, the Lebanese Hezbollah, although it verbally supported Hamas, only joined the war the next day, on October 8, and did so rather moderately. As a result,

for almost ten months now, Israel has been conducting an operation in the Gaza Strip, Hamas’s stronghold, while Hezbollah has been gradually increasing its pace, attacking northern Israel with rockets and drones. This has led to the evacuation of residents from border areas, as well as from southern Lebanon.

In the context of the confrontation with pro-Iranian groups since last fall, Israel struck the Iranian consulate in Damascus, killing Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Zahedi, a senior commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and seven other IRGC officers.

In response, on April 13, Iran directly attacked Israel for the first time since 1979, using hundreds of drones and rockets. Most of these were intercepted, but this forced Israel to respond with a targeted strike on a radar protecting an Iranian nuclear site near Isfahan.

Subsequently, both sides exchanged threats involving nuclear weapons. On April 18, a senior IRGC commander responsible for nuclear security, Ahmad Haghtalab, stated that “the Zionist regime’s threats against Iranian nuclear facilities could lead to a reconsideration of our nuclear doctrine and abandonment of previous considerations.” Haghtalab threatened to launch a powerful missile strike on Israel’s



Ayatollah Khamenei, the leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, congratulated Nowruz 1403 CH in a televised message. Credit: By Khamenei.ir, CC BY 4.0.

regime for such threats, Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs preferred to backtrack and issued a softer statement, announcing that Iran remains committed to adhering to international agreements that prohibit the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and does not intend to change its nuclear doctrine.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanani said that Iran's principled position on weapons of mass destruction is based on a fatwa (religious decree) by Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, which prohibits the creation of such weapons. According to him, Iran

nuclear facilities and destroy them.

On May 9, Kamal Kharrazi, an advisor to Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, made similar statements. He said that Iran might be forced to develop nuclear weapons if Israel threatens its existence.

"We have not decided to create a nuclear bomb, but if there is a threat to Iran's existence, we will have no choice but to reconsider our military doctrine," he said.

After sharp criticism of the

believes that such weapons pose a threat to the international community.

Israel responded to Iran's threats with counter-threats. At the end of June, Yair Katz, head of the working committee of Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI), indicated that Israel is prepared to use nuclear weapons in the event of a large-scale attack against it.

"In case of a massive attack on us simultaneously from all sides, we have Doomsday weapons. We have weapons that will disrupt the equation they are trying to impose on us," he said. "If Iran, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and all the countries of the Middle East decide that it is time to settle accounts with us, I understand that we have the capabilities to use end-of-the-world weapons."

A few days later, on July 8, former Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman also addressed the topic of Iran's nuclear program and Tehran's growing strength in a radio interview. According to him, Israel should use all the means at its disposal.

"We must end their nuclear program," he said, reminding listeners of the US war against Japan, which ended only after the use of nuclear weapons.

Many perceived these remarks as a hint at the possibility of Israel using nuclear weapons.

It is worth noting that Israel is not among the states that have signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Israel has maintained a policy of ambiguity on this issue for decades. Experts are confident that Israel possesses at least two hundred nuclear warheads. In the late 1960s, Israel secretly developed nuclear weapons with the

assistance of France, but it has not officially declared this. Formally, Israeli leaders deny it.

The annual report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) shows that nuclear-armed states have increased their spending on nuclear weapons by a third over the past five years. They are modernizing their arsenals against the backdrop of growing geopolitical tensions. According to the report, over the past year, all nine nuclear-armed states have been involved in these efforts.

As for Israel, experts believe that it is modernizing its nuclear arsenal and the plutonium production reactor in Dimona. Spending on nuclear weapons in Israel has increased by more than 33 percent since 2018.

Regarding Iran, in mid-July, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a very concerning statement about the speed at which Iran is approaching nuclear capability during a security conference in Aspen, Colorado. “Iran is at most two weeks away from enriching enough fissile material to make an atomic bomb,” he said.

According to experts on Iran’s nuclear program at the U.S. Institute for National Security Studies, key points from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report for May 2024 indicate that Iran continues to advance its uranium enrichment program, focusing on accumulating material enriched to 60 percent.

This does not mean that Iran is on the brink of creating nuclear weapons since there is a technological gap between uranium enrichment and bomb creation.

Experts estimate that Iran could start enriching uranium to weapon-grade levels (90 percent) as soon as tomorrow, but it is currently

refraining from doing so, fearing Western reactions. However, it continues to enrich uranium to 60 percent and is accumulating its stockpile.

Thus, the confrontation between Iran and Israel and the threats of nuclear weapon use create a potentially dangerous situation where, in the event of a direct military conflict, one of the parties might not maintain its composure and could resort to using banned weapons.

『INPS Japan』

# Will the New Triumvirate—Russia, China & North Korea—Force the South To Go Nuclear?

BY Thalif Deen



A message projected onto the United Nations headquarters in New York in 2022 calls on North Korea to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Credit: The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

**UNITED NATIONS (IPS)** – When Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un signed a pact last month to revive a Cold War-era mutual defense pledge between two of the world’s nuclear powers, it also had the implicit support a

third nuclear power standing in the shadows: China.

The new nuclear alliance, which has triggered fears in Japan and South Korea, ensures the possible sharing of Russia’s knowledge of satellites and missile technologies with North Korea.

The new pact, has also resulted in a sharp divide between Russia, China and North Korea on the one hand and the US, Japan and South Korea on the other.

But one lingering question remains: Will these new developments force—at least in the not-too-distant future—South Korea to go nuclear, joining the world’s nine nuclear powers: the U.S., UK, France,

Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea.

The New York Times quoted Cheong Seong-chang, the director of the Center for Korean Peninsula Strategy at the Sejong Institute, as



Addressing the UN General Assembly, Ambassador Kim Song of North Korea said nuclear weapons are stockpiled in many countries, including the U.S., yet Pyongyang is the only one facing sanctions: Credit: UN Photo/Evan Schneider

saying: “It is time for South Korea to have a fundamental review of its current security policy, which depends almost totally on the US nuclear umbrella to counter the North Korean nuclear threat.”

And quoting North Korea’s official Central News Agency, the Times said Putin and Kim agreed that if one country found itself in a state of war, then the other would provide “military and other assistance with all means in its possession without delay.”

Alice Slater, who serves on the boards of World BEYOND War and the



Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space, told IPS the fact that Russia is allying with North Korea and China at this time is a result of the failure of U.S. diplomacy, and the drive by the U.S. military-industrial-congressional-media-academic-think tank complex (MICIMATT) to expand the U.S. empire beyond its 800 U.S. military bases in 87 nations.

The U.S., she said, is now surrounding China with new bases recently established in the Pacific and forming AUKUS, a new military alliance with Australia, the UK and the U.S.

“The U.S. has been breaking its agreement made with China in 1972, as we now are arming Taiwan despite promises made by Nixon and Kissinger to recognize China and remain neutral on the question of the future of Taiwan, to where the anti-communist forces retreated after the Chinese Revolution,” said Slater, who is also a UN NGO Representative for the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

According to a report in the Associated Press (AP) wire on July 12, the U.S. and South Korea have signed joint nuclear deterrence guidelines for the first time, “a basic yet important step in their efforts to improve their ability to respond to North Korea’s evolving nuclear threats.”

Meeting on the sidelines of a NATO summit in Washington, U.S. President Joe Biden and South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol commended what they called “the tremendous progress” that their countries’ alliance has made a year after creating a joint Nuclear Consultative Group.

Last year, the U.S. and South Korea launched the consultative body to strengthen communication on nuclear operations and discuss how to integrate U.S. nuclear weapons and South Korean conventional

weapons in various contingencies, said the AP report.

Meanwhile, Abolition 2000, the Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons, will host a seminar in Geneva on July 30, titled “Denuclearization in North-East Asia through a 3+3 Model Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.”

Tensions, unresolved conflicts and nuclear weapons policies of nuclear armed and allied states active in North-East Asia (China, Japan, North Korea, Russia, South Korea and the USA) increase the risks of armed conflict and nuclear war in the region, says Abolition 2000.

“Unilateral disarmament by any one of these countries is highly unlikely while other countries in the region continue with robust nuclear deterrence policies. What is required is a regional approach to nuclear disarmament which maintains the security of all.”

The 3+3 model for a North-East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone envisages an agreement where-by the three territorial countries in the zone (Japan, North Korea and South Korea) would mutually relinquish their reliance on nuclear weapons in return for credible and enforceable security guarantees from China, Russia and the US that they would not be threatened with nuclear weapons.

This agreement would provide part of a more comprehensive peace agreement to formally end the Korean War.

The proposal is being seriously discussed amongst academics, legislators and civil society organizations in Japan, South Korea and the USA. The upcoming event aims to broaden the discussion to include delegations to the NPT Prep Com.

Asked about the rising nuclear threats from North Korea, State

Department Spokesman Matthew Miller said July 22: “We have made clear on a number of occasions that we prefer diplomacy to deal with this situation, and the North Koreans have shown that they are not in any way interested in that.”

Responding to a question on the consequences of Russia being driven closer to North Korea and China, Antony Blinken, US Secretary of State said: “I think we’ve seen two things. We have seen that, although that was something that was in the works for a long time, and maybe some of it’s accelerated as a result of the war in Ukraine, but we’ve also seen something else that’s been quite remarkable.”

During a Fireside Chat at the Aspen Security Forum, moderated by Mary Louise Kelly of National Public Radio (NPR) on July 19, Blinken said: “I’ve been doing this for more than 30 years. I have not seen a time when there’s been greater convergence between the United States and our European partners and our partners in Asia in terms of the approach to Russia, but also in terms of the approach to China, than we’re seeing right now.”

“We’ve built convergence across the Atlantic, we’ve built it across the Pacific, and we’ve built it between the Atlantic and the Pacific. So, I would take our team and the countries that we’re working with than anything that Russia’s been able to put together.

“Beyond that, I think there are going to be – and we’ve already seen a lot of strains in these groupings. It’s not particularly good for your reputation to be working closely with Russia and helping it perpetuate its war in Ukraine.

“So, I think China is very uncomfortable in the position it’s in, but for

now we do have a challenge, which is China is providing not weapons, unlike North Korea and Iran, but it’s providing the inputs for Russia’s defense industrial base.”

Seventy percent of the machine tools that Russia is importing come from China, he pointed out. And ninety percent of the microelectronics come from China. And that’s going into the defense industrial base and turning into missiles, tanks and other weapons.

“We’ve called out China on that. We have sanctioned Chinese companies. But more to the point, so have many others. And we just saw that in Europe a couple of weeks ago. And China can’t have it both ways. It can’t all at once be saying that it’s for peace in Ukraine when it is helping to fuel the ongoing pursuit of the war by Russia.

“I can’t say that it wants better relations with Europe when it is actually helping to fuel the greatest threat to Europe’s security since the end of the Cold War,” Blinken declared.

『INPS Japan/IPS UN Bureau Report』

# France's Nuclear tests in Algeria: Nuclear Weapons continue Colonialism

BY Ali Aouyeche Tindouf/Raza Syed

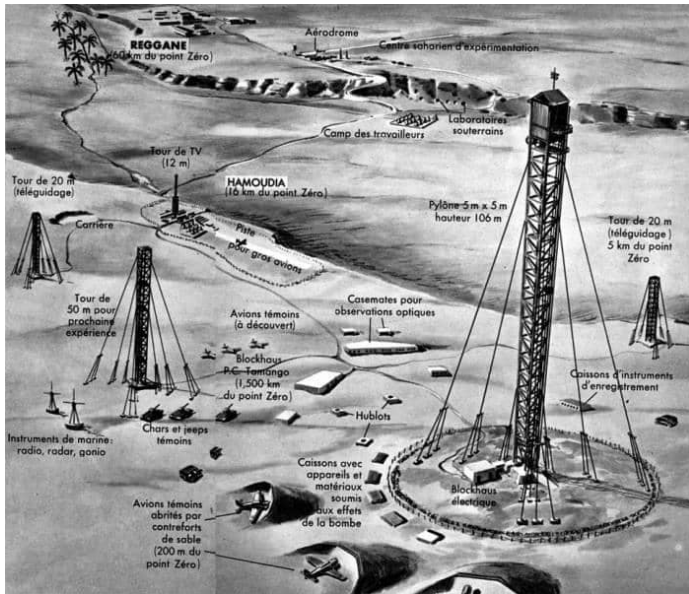


Image Credit: National Museum of Nuclear Science & History

**TINDOUF, Algeria/LONDON (London Post)** – Power, fear, technological prowess- symbols that signify nuclear weapons. What is presented as “measures for deterrence and security” often conceal deeper layers of political dominance and

colonial ambition under it.

One of the most glaring examples of this is nuclear testing in Algeria by its former colonial ruler- France. These tests were not merely “scientific experiments”; they were acts that perpetuated colonial oppression, caused environmental devastation, and long-lasting health repercussions for the local population.

## History of tests: What went wrong?

From 1960 to 1966, France conducted a series of nuclear tests in the Algerian Sahara, region they had colonised in the 19th century.

Despite Algeria's fight for independence, which culminated in 1962, France continued to exploit the territory for its nuclear ambitions. This

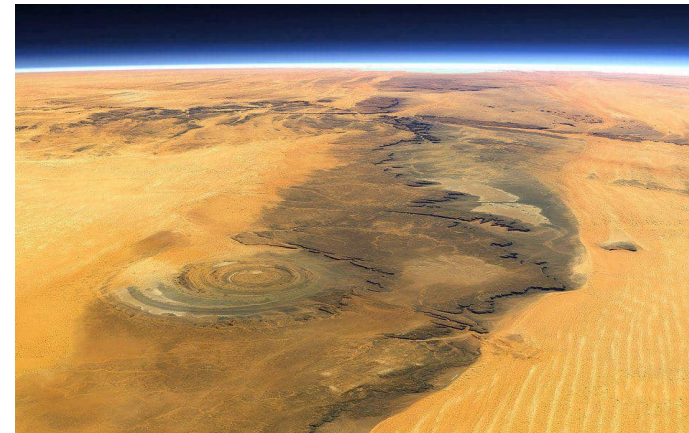


Image Credit: National Museum of Nuclear Science & History

period saw 17 nuclear tests in total, including both atmospheric and underground detonations.

In the Hamoudiya region, for example, on February 13, 1960, France conducted one of

the worst nuclear tests in modern history and officially joined the “nuclear club” among many colonial countries at that time.

## The colonialism connection

This choice of selecting Algeria as a testing ground was not incidental, but a reflection of colonialism – which at its core, is about control and exploitation. The French nuclear testing in Algeria exemplifies this, as it showed a blatant disregard for the sovereignty and well-being of the Algerian people.

During and after the tests, radioactive fallout contaminated vast areas, affecting local communities who were neither informed nor protected from the hazards. As a result, cases of increased cancer rates, genetic

mutations, and other severe health issues have reportedly persisted through generations.

By conducting these tests, France asserted its dominance over Algeria, even as the latter was on the cusp of gaining independence. This act of nuclear testing was a clear message that despite Algeria's political liberation, France still wielded significant power and influence over its former colony.

The continuation of nuclear testing in Algeria post-independence highlights the inherent racism and dehumanisation within colonialism. Despite various treaties and international pressure to address the consequences of nuclear testing, France has been slow to acknowledge the full extent of the damage or offer adequate compensation and remediation to the affected populations. This reluctance to take responsibility is a continuation of colonial attitudes, where former colonisers often resist admitting and rectifying their historical wrongs.



Dr. Abdel Fattah Belaroussi

### **France's actions "Complete war crime"**

Dr. Abdel Fattah Belaroussi, a law professor at Algeria's Adrar University, told the London Post that the nuclear tests conducted in Reggan region of Algeria's southwestern Adrar Province could be classified as a "war crime" under international law. "According to international standards, they are crimes against humanity punishable by international humanitarian law", he adds.

Belaroussi further explained these experiments led to harm to humans and nature, and they certainly amount to acts that could be considered "genocide", as approved by the United Nations General Assembly on December 11, 1946.

### **Citizens used as "laboratory rats"**

Reggan nuclear testing reportedly resulted in cancer, premature births, deformities, mental disabilities, and miscarriages, and the disappearance of large areas of natural vegetation and various types of wildlife from the bombing area.

Ahmed Mizab, a security and strategic affairs expert comments that the nuclear tests in Reggan were mere experiments to measure the intensity of the explosions. He claims that this was which was a process of extermination and execution on them.

These tests led to extensive and irreparable damage, affecting human life, wildlife, and the environment as a whole. They are a crime under law, a violation of international treaties and agreements, as France did not clean the area used for the explosions.

Effects of the nuclear crime persist and hence a strong civil society action is necessary to demand compensation and clean up the affected area of the explosions, without the need for the French



Ahmed Mizab, a security and strategic affairs expert.



government's consent.

Victims have the right to sue France, and the Algerian state should help them.

The environmental degradation caused by these tests is massive. The Sahara, already a harsh and unforgiving landscape, became even more inhospitable due to radioactive contamination.

There is lack of accountability for the environmental destruction where the natural resources and environments of colonised regions were exploited without thinking about the locals.

French newspaper Le Parisien cited secret documents in 2014 that reveal that much larger areas were impacted by these tests as told by French the government.



Sid Amar Al-Hamel, one of the civil society actors in the Reggan region and a defender of the victims of nuclear explosions.

### **Eyes on France to take accountability and action**

Sid Amar Al-Hamel, one of the civil society actors in the Reggan region and a defender of the victims of nuclear explosions, said that France's crimes in the region have left serious damage that is still visible today.

He stressed that by calculating the time required for the effects of nuclear radiation to disappear naturally, the region is still in the first seconds of the disaster.

Congenital malformations in foetuses

continue to this day, and many families find it difficult to live with children with them as there is no radical treatment for the diseases spread in the region. Citizens in Reggan still find nuclear waste left behind by France, unaware of the danger it may cause.

Hamel points out that France did not bother to disinfect the experiment area, or even remove the equipment that was the subject of the experiment from residential areas.

He also says that the issue of financial compensation would open the way to the question of who has the right to compensation, given that the negative consequences of nuclear explosions are not limited to a specific time frame or geographic space.

He pointed out that the residents of the Reggan region are today demanding health facilities specialized in treating cancers and various diseases resulting from nuclear radiation, demanding that France bear the consequences of its criminal acts.

It is high time that France steps up in three aspects: acknowledging the existence of nuclear explosions, its leftover waste and identifying its victims.

### **What next?**

Nuclear weapons are not just instruments of war; they are symbols of power disparities rooted in history. True abolition is not just about eliminating the weapons but also addressing the legacies of their development and testing.

The international community has made strides in nuclear non-proliferation, yet the narratives around these efforts often overlook the colonial histories and the disproportionate impacts on marginalised communities.

As the world progresses towards nuclear disarmament, it is crucial to address historical injustices and ensure that the legacies of colonial exploitation are not forgotten. Abolition in real sense must go beyond simply eliminating nuclear arsenals; it requires taking stock of the past and a steadfast commitment to justice and reparations for those most grievously harmed by these weapons of mass destruction.

### **Key treaty provisions**

The First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP) to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) outlines countries to prioritise victim assistance and environmental remediation.

It requires each State Party to provide age- and gender-sensitive assistance, including medical care, rehabilitation, and psychological support, to individuals affected by nuclear weapons, adhering to international humanitarian and human rights standards.

In addition, each state party is asked to take necessary measures for the environmental remediation of areas contaminated by nuclear activities under its jurisdiction or control. These obligations are to be fulfilled without prejudice under international law or bilateral agreements.

TPNW third meeting of state parties is schedule to be held on 3-7 March, 2025 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, with Kazakhstan serving as President.

『INPS Japan/London Post』

# A Nuclear-Armed European Union? A Proposal Under Fire

BY Thalif Deen

## UNITED NATIONS (IPS) –

The continued veiled threats from Russia, warning of nuclear attacks on Ukraine, have prompted some politicians in Europe to visualize a nuclear-armed European Union (EU).

But Volkert Ohm, Co-Chair of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA) in Germany, told IPS that the call for nuclear weapons for the EU contradicts international law.

“The Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is that even in extreme circumstances of self-defense, states may only defend themselves with weapons that fulfil the conditions of international humanitarian law.”

“Nuclear weapons do not fulfill them. Nuclear radiation is inherent in



UN Secretary-General António Guterres (centre right) attended a Security Council meeting on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation on 18 March 2024. UN Photo/Evan Schneider

any nuclear weapon; thus, “clean” nuclear weapons cannot exist. Debates and statements by politicians in the EU, and particularly in Germany, are neglecting international law on many levels,” he pointed out.

Facing the potential return of Donald Trump to the White House, the head of the EU’s biggest political

grouping is calling for Europeans to prepare for war without support from the United States and to build their own nuclear umbrella, according to POLITICO, a US-based online publication.

Manfred Weber, leader of the center-right European People’s Party (EPP), has described Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin as “the two who set the framework” for 2024.

The 27 member states of the European Union (EU) are: Austria,

Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

But France is the only EU member that is also one of the world's nine nuclear powers, along with the US, UK, China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea.

John Burroughs, Vice President, International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms and Senior Analyst, Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, told IPS that interest in some quarters in the European Union (EU) or some European entity acquiring nuclear weapons stems in part from the illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine accompanied by illegal nuclear threats.

But the solution is not some form of increased European reliance on nuclear arms. Rather, it is bringing Russia's war on Ukraine to an end soon, which would involve painful compromises on Ukraine's part, he said.

"That would eliminate the very real potential for nuclear war arising out of the conflict, and it would open the way for getting arms control and disarmament negotiations with Russia back on track."

This, he pointed out, is a far better path than the acquisition of nuclear weapons by the EU or another European entity. That would violate the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, as the IALANA Germany statement points out, reinforce nuclear arms racing already underway, and tend to greenlight the spread of nuclear weapons in other regions.

"The interest in European nuclear weapons has also been spurred by

concern over statements by former and possible future US President Donald Trump implying US disengagement from NATO. This concern is exaggerated."

The US government as a whole is deeply committed to NATO, as is illustrated by the fact that Congress passed and President Biden signed a law requiring that a withdrawal from NATO be approved by Congress. It is also true that French and British nuclear arsenals are available for defense of Europe through NATO or otherwise, said Burroughs.

"While they are not as large and diverse as the US or Russian arsenals, it does not take many nuclear weapons to cause Russia or any other country to think twice about aggression. More fundamentally, as the IALANA Germany statement conveys, reliance on nuclear arms, US or European, is incompatible with a law-governed world, and increasing such reliance is going in the wrong direction," he declared.

"We want NATO, but we also have to be strong enough to be able to defend ourselves without it or in times of Trump," Weber said in a phone interview with POLITICO on the return leg of a train trip to Kyiv. "Regardless of who is elected in America, Europe must be able to stand on its own in terms of foreign policy and be able to defend itself independently," the influential German conservative said.

That brought him to the vexing question of European nuclear defenses. NATO currently relies heavily on U.S. nuclear warheads, which are deployed on six military air bases in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey, according to POLITICO.

"Europe must build deterrence; we must be able to deter and defend



ourselves,” he said. “We all know that when push comes to shove, the nuclear option is the really decisive one.”

Since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Putin has significantly upped his nuclear rhetoric and regularly made veiled atomic threats toward the West.

Within the EU, the only country that would be able to play a larger role is France, which has about 300 nuclear warheads.

The other European nuclear power—but outside the EU—is Britain, with fewer than some 260 warheads. “Perhaps, just to make the options clear, we are now at a point where, after the years and decade of Brexit, we should open a constructive dialogue with our British friends,” Weber continued.

Jacqueline Cabasso, Executive Director, Western States Legal Foundation, Oakland, California, told IPS that in light of the Russian Federation’s illegal war of aggression in Ukraine and its attendant drumbeat of nuclear threats, a number of former German government officials and politicians have called for the European Union to acquire its own nuclear arsenal.

For example, former Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer of the Green Party told *Der Spiegel* last year, “As long as we have a neighbor Russia that follows Putin’s imperial ideology, we cannot do without deterring this Russia.”

Asked whether deterrence includes Germany acquiring its own nuclear weapons, he said, “That is indeed the most difficult question.” Noting that Russia’s President Vladimir Putin is “also working with nuclear blackmail,” he said: “Should the Federal Republic of Germany

possess nuclear weapons? No. Europe? Yes. The EU needs its own nuclear deterrent.”

As pointed out in the IALANA Germany statement, such plans would violate the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and other applicable laws. But more alarming is the growing normalization of nuclear threats and legitimization of nuclear proliferation suggested by Fischer and others, said Cabasso.

At a time when all of the nuclear armed states are qualitatively and, in some cases, quantitatively upgrading their nuclear arsenals, a new multipolar arms race is underway, and the dangers of wars among nuclear armed states are growing, adding more nuclear-armed actors to the world stage is a truly terrifying prospect, she pointed out.

Germany and other EU members should rebuff any suggestion of acquiring nuclear weapons and take the lead in rejecting reliance on nuclear weapons, use every diplomatic means at their disposal to lower the temperature with Russia and bring the Ukraine war to an end, and promote negotiations among nuclear-armed states to begin the process of nuclear disarmament, declared Cabasso.

Dr M.V. Ramana, Professor and Simons Chair in Disarmament, Global and Human Security School of Public Policy and Global Affairs at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, told IPS that the vast majority of the countries that are part of the European Union have signed the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as non-nuclear-weapon State Parties.

According to Article 2 of the NPT, each “non-nuclear-weapon State Party to the Treaty undertakes not to receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive

devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly or indirectly.”

Likewise, nuclear-weapon State Parties to the NPT that are either part of the EU (i.e., France) or not (e.g., the United States) are obligated under Article 1 of the NPT “not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly or indirectly; and not in any way to assist, encourage, or induce any non-nuclear-weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or control over such weapons or explosive devices,” he said.

Even without going into the details of who might control these proposed “nuclear weapons for the EU”, it is clear that such an arsenal would contradict the spirit of the NPT and weaken the already weak non-proliferation and disarmament norms.

As IALANA says, EU states should distance themselves from this idea and work for a world free of nuclear weapons, declared Ramana.

『INPS Japan/IPS UN Bureau Report』

# Nuclear Weapons and Explosions, a book that has the art of explaining a complex subject in a simple way

BY Guillermo Ayala Alanis



María Ester Brandan author of the book Nuclear weapons and explosions. Humanity in danger. Credit: Guillermo Ayala Alanis

María Ester Brandan is an expert in nuclear physics who exemplifies how devastating the use of a nuclear weapon would be in a city like Mexico.

**Mexico City (IPS Japan)** - “Explaining in an extremely simple way some complex topics such as the definition of a nuclear bomb, how it works, and the devastating consequences for the planet and living beings was the challenge that inspired the scientist and specialist in nuclear physics, María Ester Brandan, to write the book Nuclear Weapons and Explosions: Humanity in Danger (Armas y explosiones

nucleares: La humanidad en peligro). The text was published for the first time in 1988 by Fondo de Cultura Económica (FCE) as part of the collection Science for Everyone (La ciencia para todos), which aims to bring students and readers without scientific training closer to complex topics so that they can understand them and spread the knowledge among friends and family.

The current international context, where the danger of nuclear war is very real, has helped to keep the book in the interest of young readers, even though it was written in a different era. As Professor Brandan commented in an interview for INPS Japan: “Its essential content continues... every day we are more concerned or frightened by the possibility of nuclear weapons being used, depending on a handful of people... I would like society to reflect that everything that has been built as humanity, as homo sapiens, can be lost at the push of a button.”

The idea for the book came more than 40 years ago in her native Chile when, in 1983, Professor Brandan read a text about the consequences and devastation of a hypothetical nuclear explosion of 1 megaton (1 million tons of TNT) in New York. Months later, she came up with the idea of taking the references and adapting them to the city of Santiago in an article for a popular scientific magazine. Once in Mexico, to write the book, she made the same adaptation and named one of the chapters “A Megaton Over Mexico City.” With

precision, she details that a nuclear bomb would fall 2,000 meters above the center of the Mexican capital and within a few seconds, a ball of hot and luminous fire would form, which combined with the shock wave, would devastate a large part of the metropolis, currently home to 22 million people.

With more than 30 years of living in Mexico, María Ester Brandan, who is dedicated to the study of nuclear physics, works at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and says she is proud of the research carried out for the book Nuclear Weapons and Explosions because the technical and historical research retains legitimacy and relevance, despite the fact that today there is more information and openness of classified texts and films such as Oppenheimer.

The book has sold more than 52 thousand copies and is one of the most popular texts in the Science for Everyone collection. The author acknowledged the work of the FCE in promoting it and also its readers who have been interested in transmitting knowledge among friends and family. As an anecdote, she told a story of a high school student who had the task of writing an essay and a summary of the book but was so impressed by the topic of nuclear weapons that he spread it among his parents and relatives, making it the main topic at dinner time for several days.

She also commented that she has been fortunate to find copies of the book in public schools outside of Mexico, such as in Cuba and Chile. “We were traveling through the south of Chile to a city called Chillán, where there is a public school called Escuela México. My husband is Mexican, and so we decided with our daughters that we had to go to

Escuela México because in that place, David Alfaro Siqueiros had painted a mural in the library during his exile... When I saw the mural and books that came from Mexico in the library, I realized that my book was there. The same thing happened to me in Havana,” María Ester Brandan commented.

The creativity in the work was not only limited to explaining with ease the complexity of nuclear weapons and the devastation of the world. The covers have also been the result of the talent and effort of designers. In the 36 years that the book has been published, three covers have been released. Professor Brandan explained that she feels a special appreciation for the first one because of the originality



Covers of the book Nuclear weapons and explosions. Humanity in danger. Credit: Guillermo Ayala Alanis

with which it was made, using cauliflowers and orange paper to recreate the nuclear explosion.

She also recognized the cover of the latest edition that puts the planet Earth on a tightrope before the symbol of radioactivity.

Regarding the future of nuclear war, Brandan was pessimistic and assured that it is a very critical and terribly dangerous moment. She emphasized that there are no better words to describe what humanity is experiencing today regarding nuclear weapons than a quote from Gabriel García Márquez:

“Since the appearance of visible life on Earth, it took 380 million years for a butterfly to learn to fly, another 180 million years to make a rose with no other commitment than to be beautiful, and four geological eras for human beings, unlike the great-grandfather pitecanthropus, to be able to sing better than birds and to die of love. It is nothing honorable for human talent, in the golden age of science, to have conceived the way in which such a wasteful and colossal millenary process could return to nothingness from whence it came by the simple art of pressing a button.”

Currently, María Ester Brandan is dedicated to the research of nuclear physics for medical purposes at the Institute of Physics of the UNAM.”

『INPS Japan』



# At the Crossroads: The Urgent Call for International Regulation of Autonomous Weapons Systems

BY Aurora Weiss



PHOTO Credit: Michael Gruber (BMEIA)

**Vienna (INPS Japan)** – More than 1000 guests, including representatives from 144 countries, international organizations, industry, academia, science, and civil society, gathered in Vienna to discuss how Autonomous Weapons Systems can be regulated. The first international conference on Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS), titled ‘Humanity at the Crossroads: Autonomous Weapons Systems and the Challenge of Regulation,’ took place from 29 to 30 April 2024, organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria. The increasing autonomy of weapons through the introduction of

artificial intelligence (AI) has fundamentally changed armed conflicts. Despite years of efforts and discussions, regulations have not yet been implemented for the rapid technological progress at the international level. Autonomous Weapons Systems (AWS) are already being used in current conflicts, such as Israel’s war in Gaza and Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine. Regulations are urgently needed, as the use of AI in armed conflicts raises profound questions of international law, morality, humanitarianism, and security.

“Autonomous weapons systems will soon fill the world’s battlefields. We already see this with AI-enabled drones and AI-based target selection. Technology is moving ahead with racing speed, while politics is lagging behind. We are faced with profound legal, ethical, and security questions: How can we prevent ceding life and death decisions to machines? How can we deal with algorithms prone to mistakes and bias? How can we stop an AI-driven arms race and keep this technology out of the hands of terrorists? I cannot overstate the urgency. This is the ‘Oppenheimer moment’ of our generation. ‘Now is the time to agree on international rules and norms to ensure human control,” stressed Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg in his opening speech. He appealed that every human life lost is one too many and that we must always ensure that decisions about life and death are not made by machines

Austria has long been striving for international regulation of AWS and

is playing a pioneering role in this area. In 2023, Austria coordinated the first UN resolution on autonomous weapons systems, underlining the need for regulations. Developing international laws and standards takes time, as the adoption of a treaty typically results from decades of work, close partnerships, and collective mobilization. Agreements also require effective support after they have been signed.

An autonomous weapon system is pre-programmed to kill a specific 'target profile.' The weapon is then deployed into an environment where its AI searches for that 'target profile' using sensor data, such as facial recognition. Autonomous weapons are an example of digital dehumanization at its most extreme. Giving machines the power to make life-or-death decisions undermines human dignity and denies us our rights. Instead of being seen as people, individuals are processed as objects. When an autonomous weapon is activated, we do not specifically know who or what it will strike, nor precisely where or when that strike will occur.

Austria has a long-standing tradition of working on disarmament issues and creating international legally binding treaties, such as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which challenged the established nuclear order. One of the architects of the Humanitarian Initiative that led to the TPNW is Alexander Kmentt, Director for Disarmament, Arms Control, and Non-Proliferation at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the conference, many speakers pointed out that we are once again in a historic Oppenheimer moment. We asked Ambassador Kmentt to explain the comparison between nuclear and autonomous weapons.”

“The comparison to the Oppenheimer moment is that after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, many people, including Oppenheimer and Einstein, warned of the implications of nuclear weapons and pushed for regulation. Today, we have key AI experts warning about the possible existential risks of AI and AWS and asking for regulation, but the current geopolitical situation makes it very difficult to agree on international rules. We must try not to miss the moment when preventative action is still possible,” explains Alexander Kmentt.

There are several significant challenges associated with AWS from the perspective of arms control experts like Kmentt. Increasing autonomy (through the use of AI) in weapons systems will fundamentally change armed conflicts. We are already witnessing some of these changes. One major concern is when machines make life-and-death decisions based on pre-programmed algorithms.

“When machines learn and communicate with each other, what is, or should be, the role of humans when weapons make such decisions? We already see signs of an AI arms race. Soon, these weapons will be in many arsenals worldwide and also in the hands of non-state actors, such as terrorists,” an alarmed Austrian diplomat said.

Currently, there are no specific rules to deal with the legal, ethical, and security policy challenges posed by weapons systems like AWS. Kmentt stressed that Austria wants to raise the political profile of this issue and create momentum for progress on international rules for AWS. Austria initiated a resolution in the UNGA last year, and we have now organized this conference. It was significant as the largest

international meeting so far specifically on this issue, and we hope that it will be a step towards more political momentum for international rules. Knowing about his great contribution to the creation of the TPNW, we asked him if this conference is a sign that a Treaty on AWS is being prepared soon.

“The challenge at the moment is to move from discussions, which have been ongoing for years, to actually negotiating a treaty. The UN Secretary-General has challenged the international community to do this by 2026. If we get to negotiations, we should aim to explicitly prohibit systems that cannot be used in accordance with international law or contravene basic ethical principles, and to regulate other systems in a way that a meaningful level of human control can be maintained,” concluded Alexander Kmentt.

Innovation in science and technology (S&T) is progressing at a rapid pace. Some advances have applications in weapons development, from directed energy weapons to nanoweapons or neuroweapons, to swarms of autonomous robotic platforms. Such developments can

challenge established norms for the maintenance of international peace and security, the protection of human rights, and the achievement of sustainable development goals.

That’s why Richard Moyes, Director of Article 36 thinks

that the Vienna conference was significant in continuing to build the partnership of states, international organizations, and civil society that are needed to make these treaties happen. Stop Killer Robots is a coalition of civil society organizations from around the world concerned with human rights, conflict, technology, and the protection of civilians. It is a partnership of organizations working together to push states to develop a new international treaty.

“We are not at the stage of drafting treaty text yet, but we are building confidence across different partners that a treaty is possible. In the end, it is only states that can agree on new international law, but we can work together to make sure they act,” Richard Moyes, an expert on the impact of conflict on civilians and the international regulation of weapon technologies, told us.

He has worked on the creation of a number of international legal and political instruments relating to weapons and conflict. Regarding AWS, he sees a special threat in the removal of human control and accountability from the use of force.

“People make mistakes, and people sometimes do terrible things, but all of our legal frameworks around the use of force are built on the foundation that people make decisions and people can be held responsible. We need to maintain meaningful human control if we are going to preserve the concept of law in armed conflict. Handing life and death decisions over to machines is also dehumanizing and will further devalue human life, especially for those who are already marginalized,” says Moyes, pointing out how challenging it is to regulate new technologies before they become a widespread problem.



Alexander Kmentt, Director for Disarmament, Arms Control, and Non-Proliferation at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. PHOTO Credit: Michael Gruber (BMEIA)

By the time autonomous weapons become a widespread problem, it will be too late.

Moyes stressed that the legal treaty should contain prohibitions on systems that cannot be used with meaningful human control, and rules to ensure that control in practice. It should also prohibit autonomous systems that would target people directly. From his perspective, these are the key rules that will influence how technologies are developed in the future.

“A key challenge is that highly militarized states don’t want to accept any constraint on their military options. We need to get a wider majority of states to draw the lines that can guide society in a safer direction,” the director of the UK non-governmental organization Article 36 told us.

The importance of building a legal framework, specifically an international treaty, was also emphasized by the NGO Soka Gakkai International(SGI), which is also part of the Stop Killer Robots campaign.

“We therefore join a growing number of stakeholders in calling for an international treaty to prohibit and regulate autonomy in weapons systems, to safeguard the rights and dignities of humanity in the face of rapidly advancing technological change,” Hayato Yamashita, Program Coordinator for Disarmament at SGI from Japan, appealed in his statement.

『INPS Japan』

# A Russian Veto Threatens to Trigger a Nuclear Arms Race in Outer Space

BY Thalif Deen



A view of the Earth and a satellite as seen from outer space. Credit: NASA via UN News

**UNITED NATIONS (IPS)** – When the 15-member UN Security Council failed last month to adopt its first-ever resolution on outer space—co-sponsored by the US and Japan—the Russian veto led to speculation whether this was a precursor for a future nuclear arms race in the skies above.

The vetoed resolution was expected to “affirm the obligation of all States parties to fully comply with the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, including not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, install such weapons on celestial bodies or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner.”

Randy Rydell, Executive Advisor, Mayors for Peace, and a former Senior Political Affairs Officer at the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs

(UNODA), told IPS that the Security Council’s record on disarmament issues has long suffered from the same plague that has also tormented the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva: namely the veto and the CD’s “consensus rule.”

Sadly, this vote on the outer space resolution should surprise no one, he said.

The world is facing a crisis of the “rule of law” in disarmament. Key treaties have failed to achieve universal membership, failed to be negotiated, failed to enter into force, failed to be fully incorporated into domestic laws and policies of the parties, and failed to be fully implemented, while other treaties have actually lost parties, he pointed out.

While the Outer Space Treaty will remain in force despite this unfortunate vote, Rydell argued, the specters of the existing nuclear arms race proliferating one day into space, along with unbridled competition to deploy non-nuclear space weapons, have profound implications not just for the future of disarmament but also for the peace and security of our fragile planet.

“The Charter’s norms against the threat of use of force and the obligation to resolve disputes peacefully remain the most potentially effective antidotes to the contagion unfolding before us, coupled with new steps not just “toward” but “in” disarmament”.

“I hope the General Assembly’s Summit of the Future in September



will succeed in reviving a new global commitment to precisely these priorities,” declared Rydell

By a vote of 13 in favor to 1 against (Russian Federation) and 1 abstention (China), the Council rejected the draft resolution, owing to the negative vote cast by a permanent member.

Besides the US, UK and France, all 10 non-permanent members voted for the resolution, including Algeria, Ecuador, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia and Switzerland.

Jackie Cabasso, Executive Director, Western States Legal Foundation, told IPS it is impossible, amidst the current geopolitical rivalries and fog of propaganda, to evaluate the ramifications of the Security Council’s failure to adopt this resolution—though it does underscore the dysfunction in the Security Council created by the P-5’s veto power.

“Russia and China have long been proponents of negotiations for a comprehensive treaty on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, and in 2008 and 2014 submitted draft treaty texts to the moribund Conference on Disarmament,” she said.

The United States, under both the Bush and Obama administrations, rejected those drafts out of hand, said Cabasso, whose California-based WSLF is a non-profit public interest organization that seeks to abolish nuclear weapons as an essential step in securing a more just and environmentally sustainable world.

A week after its April 24 veto, Russia submitted a new draft resolution to the U.N. Security Council that goes farther than the U.S.-Japan proposal, calling not only for efforts to stop weapons from being

deployed in outer space “for all time,” but for preventing “the threat or use of force in outer space.”

The resolution reportedly states this should include bans on deploying weapons “from space against Earth, and from Earth against objects in outer space.” By definition, this would include anti-satellite weapons. With new nuclear arms races underway here on earth, with the erosion and dismantling of the Cold War nuclear arms control architecture, and with the dangers of wars among nuclear armed states growing to perhaps an all-time high, it certainly remains true, as recognized by the UN General Assembly in 1981, that “the extension of the arms race into outer space [is] a real possibility.”

“We are in a global emergency and every effort must be made to lower the temperature and create openings for diplomatic dialogue among the nuclear-armed states. To this end, the U.S. and its allies should call Russia’s bluff (if that’s what they think it is) and welcome its proposed new resolution in the Security Council,” declared Cabasso. Speaking after the vote, the representative of the United States said that this is not the first time the Russian Federation has undermined the global non-proliferation regime, according to a report in UN News. “It has defended—and even enabled—dangerous proliferators.”

Moreover, with its abstention, the US said, China showed that it would rather “defend Russia as its junior partner” than safeguard the global non-proliferation regime, she added.

“There should be no doubt that placing a nuclear weapon into orbit would be unprecedented, unacceptable, and deeply dangerous.”

The US said Japan had gone to great lengths to forge consensus, with 65 cross-regional co-sponsors who joined in support.

Japan's representative said he deeply regretted the Russian Federation's decision to use the veto to break the adoption of "this historic draft resolution."

Notwithstanding the support of 65 countries that co-sponsored the document, one permanent member decided to "silence the critical message we wanted to send to the world," he stressed, noting that the draft resolution would have been a practical contribution to the promotion of peaceful use and the exploration of outer space.

The representative of the Russian Federation, noting that the Council is again involved in "a dirty spectacle prepared by the US and Japan, said, "This is a cynical ploy. We are being tricked."

Recalling that the ban on placing weapons of mass destruction in outer space is already enshrined in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, he said that Washington, D.C., Japan, and their allies are "cherry-picking" weapons of mass destruction out of all other weapons, trying to "camouflage their lack of interest" in outer space being free from any kinds of weapons.

The addition to the operative paragraph, proposed by the Russian Federation and China, does not delete from the draft resolution a call not to develop weapons of mass destruction and not to place them in outer space, he emphasized.

Meanwhile, outlining the treaty's history, Cabasso said that in Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty, adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1967, States Parties agreed "not to place in orbit around the earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, install such weapons on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner."

Yet, according to the UN Yearbook, by 1981, member states had expressed concern in the General Assembly that "rapid advances in science and technology had made the extension of the arms race into outer space a real possibility, and that new kinds of weapons were still being developed despite the existence of international agreements."

In his May 1 testimony to the House Armed Services subcommittee, John Plumb, the first Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy, claimed that "Russia is developing and—if we are unable to convince them otherwise—to ultimately fly a nuclear weapon in space which will be an indiscriminate weapon" that would not distinguish among military, civilian, or commercial satellites.

In February, President Vladimir Putin declared that Russia has no intention of deploying nuclear weapons in space. It is troubling, therefore, that on April 24, Russia vetoed the first-ever Security Council resolution on an arms race in outer space, said Cabasso. The resolution, introduced by the United States and Japan, would have affirmed the obligation of all States Parties to fully comply with the Outer Space Treaty, including its provisions to not deploy nuclear or any other kind of weapon of mass destruction in space. China abstained.

Before the resolution was put to a vote, Russia and China had proposed an amendment that would have broadened the call on all countries—beyond banning nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons—to "prevent for all time the placement of weapons in outer space and the threat of use of force in outer space." The amendment was defeated, she said.

『INPS Japan/ IPS UN Bureau Report』

# “Navigating Nuclear safety: Insights from the India-Pakistan missile incident”

BY Dr.Majid Khan



Image Credit:CNN

**Isramabad (London Post)** – In early 2022, an incident involving a missile unintentionally fired by India into Pakistani territory raised international alarms about the precarious nature of nuclear safety and diplomacy between these two historically antagonistic neighbors. This incident, while not resulting in any casualties, underscored the potential for catastrophic miscalculations between nuclear-armed states. The mishap serves as a reminder of the fragility of peace in South Asia and the constant need for vigilance and communication to prevent such errors from escalating into full-blown conflicts.

## **Background on India-Pakistan Relations**

The relationship between India and Pakistan has been marked by

deep-rooted tensions and conflicts since their partition in 1947. The genesis of their discord lies in territorial disputes, religious differences, and political rivalries, which have led to several wars over the decades.

The presence of nuclear weapons has instilled a complex layer of deterrence in Indo-Pak relations, theoretically designed to prevent direct conflicts due to the mutually assured destruction such a confrontation would guarantee. However, this has also led to an arms race and increased militarization on both sides, with each country periodically testing ballistic missiles and conducting military exercises to display their military capabilities and resolve.

Despite several diplomatic attempts to normalize relations, including peace talks and treaties, the two countries have often found themselves on the brink of military escalation, most notably during the Kargil War in 1999 and the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

## **Details of the 2022 Missile Incident**

India unintentionally launched a BrahMos missile from Sirsa, Haryana on March 9, 2022, which crashed near Mian Channu in the Khanewal District of Punjab, Pakistan. The missile, which was not armed, was reportedly launched due to a technical malfunction during routine maintenance.

Even after Pakistan repeated its calls for an explanation of the incident, India took two days to answer. All the while India chose to

conduct an internal investigation into the incident instead of agreeing to a joint one. The incident was described as “accidental launch” by the Indian Ministry of Defence, and a group captain was held accountable for it following an investigation led by an Indian Air Vice Marshal.

### **Immediate Consequences**

The international response to the 2022 missile mishap was swift, with major powers and international organizations expressing concern and calling for comprehensive investigations and increased transparency in military operations by both countries. The incident served as a wake-up call for the international community about the dangers of mismanagement and accidents involving military arsenals in nuclear-capable states.

On a bilateral level, the incident temporarily heightened tensions between India and Pakistan. The diplomatic channels that were activated following the incident highlighted the importance of maintaining open and reliable lines of communication during crises.

### **Analysis of Communication Strategies**

The 2022 missile mishap highlighted the critical importance of communication strategies in managing crises between nuclear-armed neighbors. The need for robust, fail-safe communication mechanisms that can operate effectively under any circumstances became evident. Effective communication is not only about crisis management but also about building trust over time.

### **Strategic Lessons Learned**

The inadvertent missile launch provided several strategic lessons for India, Pakistan, and the international community. First, it highlighted

the necessity for stringent checks and balances within national military protocols to prevent such mishaps.

Secondly, the incident reinforced the importance of crisis management protocols that are capable of de-escalating potential conflicts. These protocols must be continually reviewed and updated in response to both technological advances and evolving political landscapes. Lastly, the incident has implications for international nuclear non-proliferation and safety standards. It serves as a reminder that international oversight and cooperative safety measures can be beneficial in regions where nuclear-armed neighbors have historically contentious relationships.

### **Implications for Future Policy**

The 2022 incident offers significant insights for future policy directions for both India and Pakistan. Domestically, both countries need to enhance their military oversight and invest in safer technology to manage their arsenals. Internationally, there is a need for greater collaboration on nuclear safety protocols to ensure that such incidents do not escalate into international crises.

Policy recommendations might include the establishment of a bilateral nuclear risk reduction center, which could serve as a forum for sharing best practices, conducting joint trainings, and facilitating real-time communication during crises. Additionally, regular bilateral or multilateral talks, possibly under the auspices of an international body like the United Nations, could help establish frameworks for dialogue and engagement that reduce the risk of misperceptions and accidental escalations.

Moreover, these policies could be supported by international

agreements on nuclear safety and crisis management, which could include provisions for transparency, regular inspections, and joint exercises in risk management. Such initiatives would not only bolster regional security but also contribute to global stability by ensuring that nuclear-armed states have robust mechanisms in place to prevent accidents and manage potential crises effectively.

### **Conclusion**

The 2022 India-Pakistan missile mishap serves as a poignant reminder of the fine balance required to maintain peace and security in a nuclear-armed context. The incident has provided both immediate lessons in crisis management and strategic insights for long-term safety and stability measures. By learning from this event, India and Pakistan can enhance their policies and protocols to better manage their military assets and prevent future crises.

Author: Dr. Majid Khan a PhD Scholar of Media, qualified Journalist, Academic and Writer; have expertise in analyzing and designing strategy of propaganda, Information warfare and Image Building.

『INPS Japan/ London Post』



# War and Warming

BY Kunda Dixit



Photos: SUMAN NEPALI (left)/ AMIT MACHAMASI (right)

It is a macabre choice about which is a bigger threat to the planet: nuclear winter or climate heating.

**ISTANBUL (Nepali Times)** – It is hard to imagine that only 200km away from here on Turkey's Black Sea coast there is a full-scale war going on which has killed 200,000 people in the past two years. And to the south, the complete destruction of Gaza with unconscionable violence against Palestinian civilians has escalated into a direct Iran-Israel conflict.

In both wars, the protagonists have atomic weapons or are close to developing them. Russia has threatened to use tactical nuclear

weapons in Ukraine, while Israel and Iran have both targeted locations of each other's nuclear facilities in this week's drone and missile attacks.

Although there are indications Iran and Israel are exercising restraint, a slight miscalculation could result in a regional conflagration dragging in the Saudis and Emirates. If that happens, the US could also get involved.

A bipartisan vote in the US legislature sanctioning \$65 billion worth of weapon systems for Ukraine will prolong the war. Hawks on Russian tv talk shows now openly threaten to nuke not just Ukraine but also

London and Paris.

The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists has moved its 'Doomsday Clock' to 90 seconds before midnight because of what it called 'ominous trends that continue to point the world toward global catastrophe'. This is the closest the clock has ever been to nuclear Armageddon.

Besides Russia-Ukraine and Iran-Israel tensions, nuclear nation-states have also proliferated. Aside from the US, Russia, Britain and France, Israel has 90 warheads, India and Pakistan have about 170 each, China has more than 400 and North Korea has 30 with ballistic missiles to deliver them across the Pacific.

Although total warhead stockpiles have declined after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990, there is now a new three-pronged US-Russia-China Cold War, and the number of nuclear weapons states has increased.

The threat of nuclear conflict is real enough for The New York Times to launch a series (titled: At the Brink) to look into the new nuclear arms race and 'what might be done to make the world safer'.

It is a macabre choice about which is a bigger threat to the Earth in the coming years: a planet cooked by global warming, or destroyed by all-out war leading to a nuclear winter. Robert Frost's poem Fire and Ice comes to mind:

Some say the world will end in fire,

Some say in ice.

From what I've tasted of desire

I hold with those who favour fire.

But if it had to perish twice,

I think I know enough of hate

To say that for destruction ice

Is also great

And would suffice.

The way we are headed, the world could 'perish twice'. The two crises are linked, both have their origins in greed, ambition and ultra-nationalism. It is the result of tribalism and the decline of the multilateral approaches needed to address justice, fairness and co-existence.

The Doomsday Clock was moved to 7 minutes to midnight during the Cuban Missile Crisis. All-out nuclear war was so unthinkable then that most people blocked it from their minds. It is the same now with war and warming.

Here in Nepal, global affairs seem remote to people struggling just to get by from day to day. When news of the war in Ukraine and West Asia does reach the public on mobile devices, it could as well be happening on another planet.

Yet, we in Nepal will be affected. The Ukraine war led to a spike in fuel and food prices worldwide, and Nepal's economy is still reeling from it. Hundreds of Nepalis are fighting in the Russian Army, and at least 33 have been killed in action with dozens out of contact.

Ten Nepali students were killed by Hamas in Israel, and one is still missing. A broader war in West Asia, aside from the impact on the world economy, would directly affect the estimated 2 million Nepalis working in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Israel and Lebanon. The country is just not prepared for their sudden mass return.

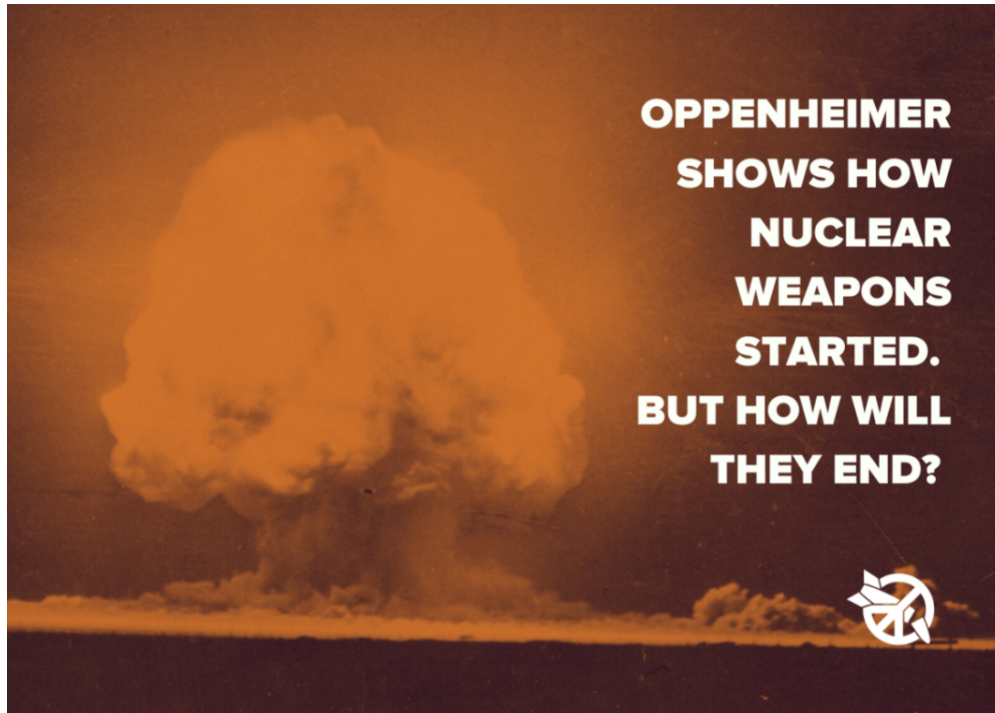
A nuclear war between Israel and Iran is not as unthinkable as it sounds. Hardliners in Israel are calling for nuclear hits on Iran's atomic research facilities before Tehran develops its own bombs. Prevailing winds would blow radioactive fallout from even a tactical nuclear strike to Pakistan, India and over Nepal.

We now live in a global village. War anywhere will affect Nepalis everywhere.

『INPS Japan/Nepali Times』

# When the Man Who Built the Bombs Met the Man Who Dropped the Bombs...

BY Thalif Deen



Analysts say the film *Oppenheimer* would have benefitted from showing the impact on those the bombs were unleashed upon. Credit: The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

**UNITED NATIONS (IPS)** – The award-winning Hollywood movie *Oppenheimer* portrays the life of J. Robert Oppenheimer, who helped create the atomic bomb, which claimed the lives of an estimated 140,000 to 226,000 people and devastated the two Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

The tragedy was best described as a humanitarian disaster of Biblical proportions. But the film focuses on the creation of the bombs, not the devastation it caused.

In a *Time* magazine piece last February, Jeffrey Kluger recounts a meeting at the White House between US President Harry S. Truman and Oppenheimer, aptly describing it as “the man who built the bombs and the man who dropped the bombs.”

Suffering from an unforgivable guilt, Oppenheimer reportedly told Truman, “Mr. President, I feel I have blood on my hands.” But history recalls just what happened next differently, says *Time*. Truman apparently said, “Never mind, it’ll come out in the wash.” Or another story, where an unrepentant Truman hands a handkerchief to Oppenheimer and says, “Well here, would you like to wipe your hand?”

In the film, Truman merely brandishes the handkerchief.

A former Hiroshima mayor, Takashi Hiraoka, who spoke at a preview event for the film, was more critical of what was omitted from the movie.

He was quoted as saying: “From Hiroshima’s standpoint, the horror of nuclear weapons was not sufficiently depicted. The film was made in a way to validate the conclusion that the atomic bomb was used to save

the lives of Americans.”

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) said the release of the Oppenheimer film, and the wave of (media) attention surrounding it, creates an opportunity to spark public attention on the risks of nuclear weapons and invite new audiences to get involved in the movement to abolish nuclear weapons.

“We can educate about the risks, and share a much-needed message of hope and resistance: Oppenheimer is about how nuclear weapons began, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is how we end them.”

Speaking of the historical perspective, Dr Alon Ben-Meir, a retired professor of international relations at the Center for Global Affairs at New York University (NYU), told IPS that the Manhattan Project, which was spearheaded by Oppenheimer to develop a nuclear weapon, started while the Second World War was raging and Germany had been on the march, conquering one country after another in Europe. However, by the time the nuclear weapon was developed, Germany had surrendered, but Japan continued to fight. Based on documented historical accounts, Japanese forces were fighting in every trench, in every front, to the last soldier, and the word ‘surrender’ was not in their vocabulary, he said.

General Marshall, who was Chief of Staff of the US Army, provided counsel to President Truman at the time that if the war were to continue for another one to two years, hundreds of thousands of American soldiers and perhaps more than a million Japanese would be killed.

When Truman asked what he would suggest, General Marshall and others indicated that bombing one or even two sites in Japan with a nuclear weapon could bring the war to a swift conclusion and save the lives of millions from both sides.

Truman was finally persuaded that this may be the only solution, specifically given that the Japanese were determined to fight until the bitter end, said Ben-Meir, who taught courses on international negotiation and Middle Eastern studies for over 20 years.

“Once the bombs were dropped and Oppenheimer realized the extent of the damage and death that occurred in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, he felt personally responsible for the catastrophic impact of the bomb, stating to President Truman that he felt that he had blood on his hands because of what happened.”

Truman then told Oppenheimer that although he was behind the development of the nuclear weapon, the decision to use it was his own, and Oppenheimer bore no responsibility whatsoever.

President Truman allegedly handed Oppenheimer his handkerchief to presumably wipe his hands off the bloodstains. Nevertheless, Oppenheimer left the president’s office completely distraught, said Ben-Meir.

“The Japanese do not believe that Truman was concerned about the potential loss of Japanese lives had the war continued, but was mainly concerned about American lives. This sadly remains a point of contention but was mostly overcome due to the strong alliance that was subsequently developed between the US and Japan.”

Of course, what compounded Oppenheimer’s profound despair over what happened was that he was subsequently accused of being a



member of the Communist Party and had his security clearance revoked, ending his work with the US government (he was posthumously exonerated), declared Ben-Meir.

Broadly, though, according to National Public Radio (NPR), many Japanese viewers expressed discomfort with Oppenheimer's storytelling and felt the portrayal was incomplete.

"The film was only about the side that dropped the A-bomb," Tsuyuko Iwanai, a Nagasaki resident, told NPR. "I wish they had included the side it was dropped on."

Upon witnessing the first successful nuclear test, Oppenheimer reportedly quoted from the Hindu scripture Bhagavad Gita: "Now I am Death: the destroyer of the worlds," according to UNFOLD ZERO, a platform for UN focused initiatives and actions for the achievement of a nuclear weapons-free world.

"Indeed, Oppenheimer was so impacted by the potential of the nuclear bomb to destroy the world that, following the end of the Second World War, he became deeply involved in international nuclear weapons control, peace and the promotion of world governance".

"The movie should remind us of how important and relevant these ideas are today—as wars are raging, tensions between nuclear armed States are increasing and the threat of nuclear war is as high as it has ever been," said UNFOLD ZERO.

"The thinking, passion and commitment of Oppenheimer regarding these issues is barely touched upon in the movie, despite it being so important today for re-awakening our collective understanding of the nature of nuclear deterrence, the risks of nationalism and the

importance to strengthen the rule of law, prevent nuclear war and achieve peace through global governance."

Addressing the UN Security Council on March 18, Secretary-General António Guterres referred to the movie, which won seven Oscars at the Hollywood Academy Awards ceremony on March 10, including the four major awards for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor.

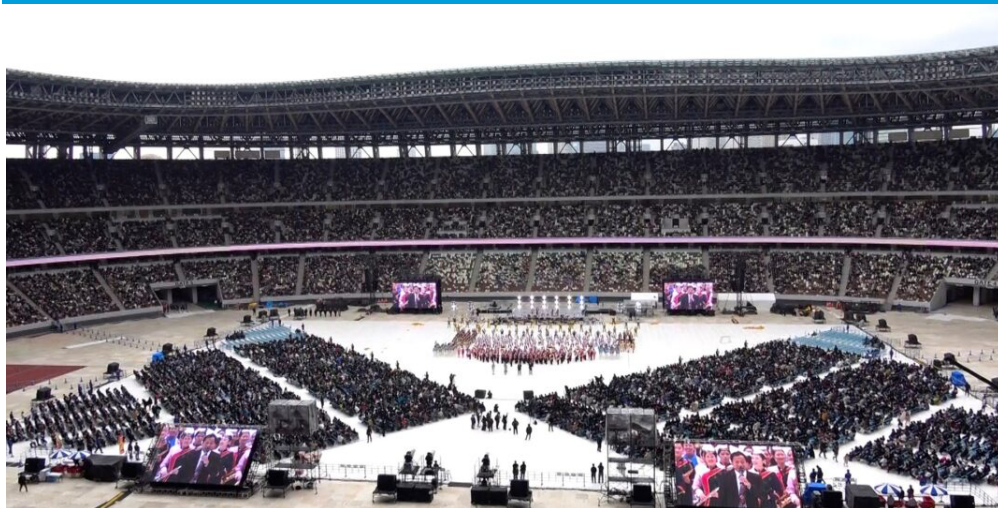
"The Doomsday Clock is ticking loudly enough for all to hear. From academics and civil society groups, calling for an end to the nuclear madness," he said.

"To Pope Francis, who calls the possession of nuclear arms 'immoral'. To young people across the globe worried about their future, demanding change. To the Hibakusha, the brave survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—among our greatest living examples of speaking truth to power—delivering their timeless message of peace." Humanity cannot survive a sequel to Oppenheimer, Guterres warned.

『INPS Japan/ IPS UN Bureau』

# Ahead of UN Summit of the Future, Mobilizing Youth for Change

BY Katsuhiro Asagiri



Future Action Festival convened at Tokyo's National Stadium on March 24, drawing approximately 66,000 attendees. Photo: Yukie Asagiri, INPS Japan.

**TOKYO (IPS Japan)**— In a significant precursor to the United Nations Summit of the Future slated for September, the “Future Action Festival” convened at Tokyo’s National Stadium on March 24, drawing a crowd of approximately 66,000 attendees and reaching over half a million viewers via live streaming. The event, a collaborative effort by youth and citizen groups, aimed to foster a deeper understanding and proactive stance among young people on nuclear disarmament and climate change solutions.

The festival featured interactive quizzes displayed on large screens, offering attendees a collective learning experience about the complex global crises currently challenging the international community. Additionally, a panel discussion with Kaoru Nemoto, director of the

United Nations Information Center, and other youth representatives delved into nuclear weapons and climate change, facilitating a deeper exploration of these pressing issues. Adding to the event’s poignancy, performances included one by Jacob Koller who played the “A-bombed Piano,” a relic from Hiroshima that endured the atomic bombing, and others that highlighted the value of peace through music and dances, reinforcing the call for action and solidarity as agents of



A panel discussion with Kaoru Nemoto, director of the United Nations Information Center(3rd from left), and youth representatives delved into nuclear weapons and climate change. Photo: Yukie Asagiri, INPS Japan.

change.

Central to the festival’s impact were the insights shared by a participant of the panel discussion like Yuki Tokuda, co-founder of

GeNuine, who shared her insights from a “youth awareness survey” conducted before the event. “The survey revealed that over 80% of young respondents felt their voices were not being heard,” she explained. “This suggests a systemic issue, not merely a matter of personal perception, which is discouraging the younger generation



Yuki Tokuda, co-founder of GeNuine (Left) Katsuhiro Asagiri, President of INPS Japan (Right) Photo: Yukie Asagiri, INPS Japan.

from engaging with vital issues.”

Despite this, the massive turnout at the festival offered a glimmer of hope. “The presence of 66,000 like-minded individuals here today signals that change is

possible. Together, we can reshape the system and forge a future that aligns with our aspirations,” Tokuda remarked, emphasizing the power of collective action and the importance of carrying forward the momentum generated by the festival.

Equally compelling was the narrative shared by Yuki Tominaga, who captivated the audience with her dance performance at the event. “I have always been deeply inspired by my late grandmother’s life as a storyteller sharing her experiences of the atomic bombing in Hiroshima.” Tominaga shared. “My grandmother would begin her account with her own experiences of the bombing but then expand her

narrative to include her visits to places like India and Pakistan, countries with nuclear arsenals, and regions afflicted by poverty and conflict where landmines remain

a deadly legacy. She emphasized that the tragedy of Hiroshima is an ongoing story, urging us to spread the message of peace to future generations.”

Reflecting on her grandmother’s profound impact, Tominaga continued, “I once doubted my ability to continue her legacy; her words seemed irreplaceable. But she encouraged me, saying, ‘Do what you’re able to spread peace.’ That inspired me to use my passion for dance as a medium to communicate about peace and the Hiroshima bombing. I aim to serve as a conduit between the survivors of the atomic bomb and today’s youth, making peace discussions engaging and accessible through dance.”

The “Youth Attitude Survey,” which garnered responses from 119,925 individuals across Japan, revealed a striking consensus: over 90% of young people expressed a desire to contribute to a better society. Yet, they also acknowledged feeling marginalized from the decision-



Yuki Tominaga, third generation Hibakusha from Hiroshima, continues her grandmother's legacy while using her passion for dance as a medium to communicate about peace and Hiroshima bombing. Photo: Yukie Asagiri, INPS Japan.



making processes. The survey illuminated young people's readiness to transform their awareness into action, despite prevailing sentiments of exclusion.



Melissa Parke, Executive Director of ICAN. Photo: Yukie Asagiri, INPS Japan

This enthusiasm and potential for change have not gone unnoticed by the international community. High-profile supporters, including Felipe Paullier, UN Assistant Secretary-

General for Youth Affairs, Orlando Bloom, UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, and Melissa Park, Executive Director of ICAN, have all voiced their encouragement, recognizing young people's crucial role in driving global advancements in sustainability and peace.

The upcoming UN Summit of the Future offers a pivotal platform for youth engagement, with the "Joint Statement" released by the festival's Organizing Committee—encompassing key areas like climate crisis resolution, nuclear disarmament, youth participation in decision-making, and UN reform—serving as a testament to the collective will to influence global policies. The joint statement articulates the following series of actionable step.

### **Tackling the Climate Crisis with Renewed Vigor**

The document lays out an ambitious strategy to combat climate change, emphasizing the need to enhance Nationally Determined

Contributions (NDCs) to cap global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. It calls for a significant uptick in renewable energy capacity and energy efficiency improvements by 2030, alongside providing international support to communities disproportionately affected by climate change, advocating for a framework rooted in climate justice.

### **A World Free from Nuclear Weapons**

On nuclear disarmament, the statement urges an expansion of signatories and ratifying countries to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). It advocates for a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and a decade of nuclear disarmament education, starting in 2025, to share the harrowing experiences of global hibakusha including those in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

### **Empowering Youth in Decision-Making**

The festival's organizers propose establishing a youth parliament and a minister of youth affairs to better incorporate young voices in the policymaking process. Additionally, they suggest creating a youth fund to sustain youth-led initiatives aimed at addressing global issues.

### **Reforming the United Nations for a New Era**

The statement concludes with a call for the United Nations to further embrace youth participation and leadership through the establishment of a youth council within the Economic and Social Council. It also recommends the formation of a reform committee for the Security Council, addressing the critical need for modernization in global governance structures.

The Future Action Festival, and its joint statement, stand as a

testament to the power of youth-led initiatives in shaping a more sustainable and peaceful world. As the global community looks towards the Summit of the Future, the voices from Tokyo echo a clear and urgent message: the time for action is now, with the youth leading the charge.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=steEfm0ayrI>

Future Action Festival Filmed and edited by Katsuhiro Asagiri, Yukie Asagiri and Kevin Lin of INPS Japan Media.

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