

Statement on Nuclear Risk Reduction for 10th NPT Review Conference

NGO Session Aug 5th

People for Nuclear Disarmament
Human Survival Project

Abolition 2000 Nuclear Risk Reduction Working group NoFirstUse Global
Basel Peace Office
World Future Council
Zona Libre
Peace Depot
Youth Fusion

Dear Delegates,

I have delivered (up till now always in person) a statement on nuclear risk reduction from a number of NGOs, at both NPT conferences and First Committee.

Every time it has been my somewhat grim duty to say that the risk of an apocalypse has never been worse. This year is emphatically no exception, as highlighted in the joint civil society statement which we welcome and endorse. Of course if each year the danger of a nuclear apocalypse rises, it will at some point reach 100%. Somewhere along that journey to 100% we will actually have one.

Over the past months and weeks we have witnessed increasingly active talk by leaders and in mainstream media of conflict escalation including to the nuclear level. Nuclear fuses are burning, not only over Ukraine, most especially since the invasion, but also potentially in the Taiwan Strait and between India and Pakistan. The deterioration in global security and the spike in nuclear risk has been dramatic, and not merely in one theater.

The very fact that there is more and more TALK of nuclear war – some alarmingly casual – places it more firmly on the agenda of decision-makers, to ensure that this disturbing possibility, the talked-about potential of nuclear war, does not become realized. Diplomacy and risk-reduction are paramount. We are (Potentially) in a vicious cycle, both strategically and psychologically, that could, if enough things go wrong, lead into the abyss.

That it **COULD** lead to the abyss – potentially to the destruction of civilization – does not however mean that it **WILL**. But it **might** unless States Parties to the NPT – and in particular the nuclear armed and allied countries – take action to enhance diplomacy and reduce nuclear risks. Repeated threats issued almost with nonchalance, do nothing to make the world safer and everything to instill an atmosphere of alarm in which fatal miscalculations are all the more likely.

Former leaders and officials, legislators, scientists, religious leaders, former military leaders, academics, experts, youth and other representatives from civil society all call on you urgently to take action.

Here are just a few examples, facilitated by NoFirstUse Global, a campaign with over 70 participating organizations;

--A joint letter to US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin just prior to their summit in June, endorsed by 1200 civil society representatives calling on the two Presidents to affirm that a nuclear war cannot be won and so must never be fought, and to implement this by adopting no-first-use policies;

http://baselpeaceoffice.org/sites/default/files/imce/articles/2021/open_letter_on_no_first_use_to_presidents_putin_biden_for_the_june_16_summit_.pdf

--A letter from NATO parliamentarians to President Biden supporting adoption of a **No First Use** policy by the United States. Endorsers included members of parliamentary foreign affairs and defense committees as well as a former Head of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, former Foreign Ministers and other parliamentary leaders.

<https://nofirstuse.global/2021/11/29/nato-parliamentarians-support-nuclear-no-first-use-policies/>

--And most significantly for this NPT Conference, is **Fulfil the NPT: From nuclear threats to human security, An Open Letter to the nuclear weapon states and the NPT Review Conference**, which we present to you today.

The Open Letter is endorsed by more than 1400 individuals including the President of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the Head of the US Delegation to the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the former Commander of the French Air Force, a former UK Nuclear Submarine Commander, former Foreign Ministers and Ambassadors from nuclear reliant countries, Nobel Laureates, religious leaders, legislators, scientists/academics, leaders of civil society organizations and other influential people.

This Open Letter urges governments to:

--Start the process to permanently end arms racing and phase out the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines by supporting the **adoption of no-first-use policies** and cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons no later than the 11th NPT Review Conference in 2025; and Commit to a timeframe of no later than 2045 to fulfil the Article VI obligation to achieve the global elimination of nuclear weapons;

<https://nofirstuse.global/2021/11/12/fulfil-the-npt-from-nuclear-threats-to-human-security/>

No First Use Global has also produced a working paper on nuclear risk-reduction and ensuring undiminished security for all, which will be released at the Risk Reduction event on 19 August in Conference Room B during the lunchtime slot.

<https://nofirstuse.global/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Civil-society-working-paper-on-NFU-.pdf>

We encourage you to join the event for more in-depth discussion on nuclear risk reduction measures, especially the importance of moving to no-first-use.

<https://nofirstuse.global/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Civil-society-working-paper-on-NFU-.pdf>

We welcome the Stockholm Initiative working paper (also to be discussed at the 19 Aug event)

<https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/documents/WP9.pdf>

Finally you will by now all have had copies of a memo to a large degree circulated by myself but representing the efforts of a number of organizations including the World Future Council,

Basel Peace Office, Zona Libre, PND and Human Survival Project, and the Abolition 2000 Risk Reduction Working Group, urging the adoption, possibly at First Committee in October, of a resolution characterizing nuclear weapons use in Eastern Europe (or elsewhere) as contrary to the UN charter and IHL. In the current situation this is very much to the point and I urge Governments to sponsor and support it.

It is our conviction that spiraling nuclear risks **can** be reduced, including through adoption of no-first-use policies, and a number of other commonsense measures, without diminishing the security of those states which currently rely on nuclear weapons. And by doing so, the security of everyone from the risk of nuclear war is increased, and the possibility of achieving more comprehensive nuclear disarmament is enhanced. We call on you to act now before it is too late.

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