

## **Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons Submission to the 2016 Defence Policy Review**

The Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons believes deeply that the continued possession of nuclear weapons constitutes a clear and present threat to global security. The high risk facing Canadians, and indeed all global citizens, demands urgent coordinated work toward complete nuclear disarmament. In our view, it is in the best interest of every nation to move decisively toward the shared goal of abolition, and we are convinced that Canada can and should play a leading role in this regard.

The primary rationale for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons rests in the possibility that a catastrophe could occur, by accident or design, and would likely involve greater numbers of vastly more powerful bombs than those used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Until all nuclear weapons are eliminated, an imminent and unacceptable risk threatens all of us.

More than 15,000 nuclear weapons still exist, and they continue to be framed as the supreme security guarantee for the majority of the world's population — either through direct possession or by virtue of collective security arrangements. Within NATO, which has an overt policy of nuclear deterrence, a nuclear weapon state can make its weapons available to the multilateral alliance and place weapons on the territory of non-nuclear-weapon states, contravening the spirit and specific provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In recent years, renewed attention to the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has served as both catalyst and rallying point for a growing number of states and international civil society organizations. There is also increasing awareness that the existential risk posed by nuclear weapons is exacerbated by deteriorating relations between the world's top nuclear powers — the United States and Russia — which together account for roughly 95% of existing nuclear weapons.

Almost every state that possesses nuclear weapons is currently spending huge amounts of money to modernize their nuclear arsenals. As well, missile defense systems, whose efficacy is routinely challenged on scientific grounds, are seen by some as provocative, not defensive, measures, and continue to expand. Such actions not only work to ensure that the ultimate threat persists for decades to come, but discourage both nuclear- and non-nuclear weapons states from adhering to their nonproliferation treaty obligations.

Complete nuclear disarmament is widely seen as the only certain way to avoid such a nuclear catastrophe, yet no credible multilateral undertaking now exists that will lead to nuclear abolition in the foreseeable future. In this context, we believe it is imperative to start a comprehensive process leading to the enactment of a legal framework for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. It is our view that the humanitarian imperative for nuclear disarmament should be the catalyst to launch such a process.

In the context of multilateral efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons, to defuse international tensions, and to foster common security arrangements, the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons strongly urges Canada's Department of National Defence to:

1. Collaborate with other government agencies and departments, including Global Affairs Canada, to position Canada as a recognized and credible international leader on nuclear disarmament. Canada should press for an urgent start to negotiations on the elimination of nuclear weapons.
2. Advocate within NATO for alternative security arrangements that do not rely on the possession of nuclear weapons and the overt Alliance doctrine of nuclear deterrence.
3. Advocate within NATO for the removal of US tactical nuclear weapons from European soil.
4. Urge the United States to halt and reverse the steady expansion of its Ballistic Missile Defense system.
5. Seek agreement on mandatory de-alerting measures, and an end to launch-on-warning policies, in order that the immediate threat of nuclear forces on high-alert status is removed.
6. Affirm, whenever appropriate, the catastrophic consequences of any nuclear weapons use, and the humanitarian imperative to move promptly toward abolition.
7. Affirm, whenever appropriate, the need for a universal, non-discriminatory process, with provisions for the irreversible elimination of existing nuclear arsenals and a timeline for verified implementation.

8. Shift spending and resources towards cooperative defences, and sustainable common security, emphasizing top priority UN requirements and enhancements. Step away from systems and perspectives that perpetuate the idea of weapons of mass destruction being useful and permanent.
9. Oppose the modernization of nuclear arsenals by nuclear-weapons states as inconsistent with their legal obligation to disarm.

This statement has been endorsed by the following groups:

Association québécoise de lutte contre la pollution atmosphérique  
Les Artistes pour la Paix  
Boundary Peace Initiative  
B.C. Southern Interior Peace Coalition  
Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment  
Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility  
Canadian Federation of University Women  
The Canadian Peace Alliance/L'Alliance canadienne pour la paix  
The Canadian Peace Initiative  
Canadian Pugwash Group  
Canadian Voice of Women for Peace  
Committee for Future Generations  
The Council of Canadians  
Greenspiration  
Group of 78  
Hiroshima Nagasaki Day Coalition  
Inter-Church Uranium Committee Educational Co-operative  
National Council of Women of Canada  
New Clear Solutions (New Brunswick)  
Pax Christi Montreal  
Pax Christi Toronto  
PEACE-NB  
Peace Quest  
Physicians for Global Survival  
Project Ploughshares  
Project Ploughshares Saskatoon  
Religions for Peace Canada  
Religions pour la Paix – Québec  
Renewable Power – the Intelligent Choice  
The Rideau Institute  
Saskatoon Peace Coalition  
Science for Peace  
Toronto Raging Grannies  
The United Church of Canada  
United Nations Association in Canada/Association canadienne pour les Nations Unies  
Veterans Against Nuclear Arms, Saskatchewan  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom  
WILPF, Nanaimo Branch  
WILPF, Vancouver Branch  
World Federalist Movement – Canada/Mouvement Fédéraliste Mondial – Canada

(List updated August 3, 2016)