

# Right to life without Threat of Nuclear Weapons

## Joint Statement to the Human Rights Council by Kazakhstan on behalf of themselves, Austria, Egypt, Nigeria, Panama and 34 other cosponsoring countries

*General Debate on the promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development*

September 20, 2023

(official version available on [Human Rights Council statements webpage](#))

Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of Kazakhstan, Austria, Egypt, Nigeria, Panama and cross regional group of 34 States. The full list of countries will be available on the extranet.

2023 marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the world's most groundbreaking global pledges - the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, which affirms that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

The right to life is fundamental **to the enjoyment of all other rights**: after all, you have to be alive to exercise free speech, get married, or hold nationality.

Every year the world does not become safer on a global scale. The risks associated with new technologies and artificial intelligence are growing. At the same time, the **most dangerous human-made threat to humanity, nuclear weapons, has not gone away**. As the famous Doomsday Clock illustrates, risks are higher today than even at the height of the Cold War and the nuclear taboo has been dramatically weakened.

The UN Human Rights Committee in its General Comment 36 concluded that the **threat or use of nuclear weapons is incompatible with the Right to Life** and may amount to a crime under international law<sup>1</sup>.

As the example of affected countries' history shows, the use and the test of nuclear weapons violates the **right to life, the right** of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental **health** and **the right** to a clean, healthy and sustainable **environment** of not only living people, but also of future generations.

Nuclear build up threatens to stall the achievement of Sustainable Development goals. Enormous resources, wasted on modernization of nuclear weapons, should be made available for the purpose of economic and social development.

Today, a number of environmental problems plague the **ecosystem of all** regions of the world where nuclear tests have been carried out as proved by the series of conference held on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Committee, General Comment 36, para. 66

While nuclear weapons are by nature indiscriminate, **women and children, particularly girls and pregnant women**, are disproportionately affected as a result of the long-lasting effects of exposure and greater vulnerability to the harmful effects of ionizing radiation.

Beyond the physical harm caused by nuclear weapons and long-term genetic disturbances, **victims also continue to experience post-traumatic stress disorders and other forms of trauma**, as well as disruptions to cultural practices, displacement, and environmental damage on a long-term or permanent basis as a result of nuclear testing and maintenance.

**Mr. President,**

**Nuclear weapons are inhumane and immoral due to their catastrophic humanitarian consequences and their inherent risks.** We need to restrengthen the nuclear taboo, foster dialogue and confidence-building measures and achieve nuclear disarmament **with urgency and determination** in line with the collective commitments outlined in the very first United Nations General Assembly resolution as well as obligations under Article 6 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and other relevant treaties.

I thank you!

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