



CANADIAN NETWORK TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS  
Le Réseau canadien pour l'abolition des armes nucléaires

## Canadians call on NATO: Reduce Nuclear Risks

Canada is collaborating with other countries to respond to the Covid 19 pandemic. We now also need collaboration to sharply reduce the greater threat we face from the risk of use of nuclear weapons.

Canada, as a member of NATO, relies on threats of nuclear use to stop actions by other states. This is a very dangerous strategy. In past decades, there have been more than 1000 instances where these weapons have nearly been launched due to human error or communications and technical faults.

In June 2022, NATO will conclude a review of its policies. Backed by strong science-based information, we urge the Canadian Government to lessen the risk of nuclear use, and emphasize diplomacy in resolving conflicts.

### **NATO's Strategic Concept can reduce nuclear risks globally by:**

- stating that the supreme guarantee of security is provided by use of peaceful international processes for responses to conflict,
- planning for NO FIRST USE of nuclear weapons to decrease the risk of accidents, and
- energizing negotiations by all states on nuclear disarmament.

**Eighty percent of Canadians agree the world should work to eliminate nuclear weapons.** All countries agreed to negotiate nuclear disarmament in 1968. Significant reductions have occurred, but roughly 13,000 nuclear warheads remain and 1800 of these could be used in under 30 minutes.

Scientific evidence confirms that if a nuclear exchange were to occur, we must anticipate:

- the catastrophic physical impacts of the explosive use of nuclear weapons (compiled by the International Red Cross here, and illustrated here), and
- the environmental impacts of such explosions. (“[A] regional conflict using <1% of the worldwide nuclear arsenal could have adverse consequences for global food

security unmatched in modern history”). The International Red Cross also have spoken on the impacts on food production.

Some 127 states have now pledged that, because there is no humanitarian response for such a disaster, they will cooperate in work to eliminate nuclear weapons.

International Humanitarian Law prohibits use of these weapons in virtually all circumstances.

Lieutenant-General, The Honorable Roméo A. Dallaire (ret'd) stated in the Canadian Senate that:

*“We should stop supporting the nuclear policies of NATO, which are incompatible with our obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. On the one hand, we are against nuclear weapons and we say so. On the other hand, we are a member of an organization with a treaty based on the availability of nuclear weapons. There is actually an intolerable contradiction between our commitments under the treaty and our membership in an alliance which gives such importance to nuclear weapons in its security policies. In the post-Cold War world, there is no longer any reason to state that nuclear weapons play a vital role within the alliance.”*

**We do not want our security to be dependent on luck and high risk.** Nor do we want to live under constant risk of global disaster. Our public funds need to respond to existing threats — like the climate crisis, cyber threats and pandemics — and not create new disasters.

Human security around the world is being built through negotiations, conflict resolution, led by international agencies, UN peacekeepers, nonviolent practices, trade agreements, UN debate, the International Court of Justice, and the International Criminal Court. However, for twenty years, there have been no serious negotiations towards nuclear disarmament. One of the greatest threats to humanity, nuclear disaster, is insufficiently addressed. We need to reduce reliance on, and eliminate, these weapons. The Canadian government needs to create meaningful dialogue within NATO to strengthen these processes.

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