



IPPNW
CANADA

THE TURNING TIDE, SPRING 2022

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War *Canada*

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Purposes of IPPNW Canada

To Teach, Research and Address:

1. The health consequences of violence, armed conflict, nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction
2. The health consequences associated with energy resources and armed conflict
3. Methods of nonviolent conflict resolution
4. The promotion of social justice in a sustainable world

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**IPPNW Canada
President's Report
February 26, 2022**

*Jonathan Down, MD,
President*



Dr. Jonathan Down.

At the time of writing this report the people of Ukraine are being murdered and traumatized. Their homes, schools and daycares are being destroyed. Crimes of aggression are being committed in the heart of Europe, and the world struggles to respond in a meaningful way. We at IPPNW Canada join our mother and sister organizations around the world in calling for the immediate end to this naked aggression, wholly initiated by Russia. Our hearts and hopes for peace go out to the Ukrainian people.

The war against Ukraine, like all wars, is a public health disaster. More than that, it has the potential to be a global catastrophe. President Putin holds the nuclear sword of Damocles in one hand and the Non-Proliferation Treaty in the other. By his ominous threatening he is clearly violating the latter. It is a chilling reminder of a global vulnerability that is largely of our own making. Global institutions have failed us and countries have walked away from their disarmament treaties and obligations. The United Nations Security Council is dysfunctional, and paralyzed through the power of veto. The UN General Assembly is scrambling to pull together some sort of resolution. But resolve to do what? Wasn't the UN Charter set up to prevent this type of conflict? The international rule of law

is being scorned. Global policymaking and the building of supranational institutions have been absent from the UN agenda since its inception. The architecture of the UN has a multitude of systemic flaws beyond its inherent underfunding. To address the collective security mechanism of the Charter, the intervention of an established International Peace Force may have deterred such an overt assault on a sovereign member state. Meanwhile in Ukraine, death and destruction are the order of the day. Whereas Covid-19 exposed the cracks in our global health and social care systems, Putin is exposing the fault-lines in our institutions of global governance and collective security.

The unprecedented challenges of the 21st century demand reforms to the central institutions of the United Nations and a new global governance system. Neither Ukraine nor the rest of us can afford the luxury of time -its 100 seconds to midnight and the hand of Damocles is shaking.

Respectfully submitted

Jonathan Down, MD
President, IPPNWC

Open Letter from Civil Society Organizations Regarding the Situation in Ukraine



Rivne Nuclear Power Plant.
Vladimir Leonidovich Dyakov. Ukraine. 2006.

March 1, 2022

International Atomic Energy Agency
Vienna International Centre
Vienna, Austria

Via online form to Headquarters in Vienna: <https://www.iaea.org/contact/official-mail>

Via email to: iaeany@un.org; iaeage@unog.ch.

Re: Open Letter from Civil Society Organizations Regarding the Situation in Ukraine

Dear International Atomic Energy Agency,

We, the undersigned, represent civil society organizations across the world.

We are deeply concerned about the safety of the people of Ukraine under the current military aggression, which has put the lives of civilians at great risk, threatening a humanitarian disaster on an enormous scale.

Specifically, we are very concerned about the ongoing situation at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and at Ukraine's 15 commercial reactors. We understand that Russian forces have taken control of the Chernobyl nuclear

site and are also approaching – or may even be occupying – the six reactor Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in eastern Ukraine.

We currently have little information regarding the radiation safety of these and the three other nuclear power plant sites.

According to SaveEcoBot and MEDO, online radiation monitoring sites of Ukraine, the radiation data provided by the State Specialized Enterprise Chernobyl nuclear power plant has not been fully updated since the morning of February 25, 2022. The data from the Chernobyl site recorded an exceptional jump in the radiation counts of

65500 nSv/h at 21:50 on February 24. Another concerning increase of 93000 nSv/h was recorded at 10:40 on February 25.

On February 28, 2022, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) issued a statement that:

Last week, Ukraine informed the IAEA that Russian forces had taken control of the facilities of the State Specialized Enterprise Chornobyl NPP, located within the Exclusion Zone set up after the 1986 accident. The regulator said today that the shift supervisor at the site had not been replaced since 24 February but that he continued to perform his duties. SNRIU (State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine) also provided radiation readings from the site which the IAEA assessed as low and in line with near background levels.

The IAEA statement does not provide an explanation for the exceptional jump in the radiation counts that were recorded on February 24 and February 25.

On February 27, 2022, the IAEA published an update that: *Ukraine informed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) today that missiles hit the site of a radioactive waste disposal facility in Kyiv overnight, but there were no reports of damage to the building or any indications of a radioactive release.*

The IAEA also highlighted that a similar incident also took place in another city:

An electrical transformer at a similar disposal facility near the north-eastern city of Kharkiv had been damaged, also without any reports of a radioactive release. Such facilities typically hold disused radioactive sources and other low-level waste from hospitals and industry.

Beyond Nuclear recently published the following concerns related to nuclear facilities in Ukraine:

1. *The 15 operating reactors in Ukraine – located at Rivne (4), Khmelnytsky (2), South Ukraine (3) and Zaporizhzhia (6) – are all vulnerable to catastrophic meltdown, even if they are not directly attacked or accidentally hit.*
2. *Of even greater concern are the fuel pools containing irradiated fuel rods, which are unprotected by the containment building. Fuel pools contain far more radioactivity than the reactor itself and a fire would release even greater amounts of radiation.*
3. *A war zone could also create a dangerous environment for the nuclear workforce and their families, tempting some to evacuate. But a nuclear power plant, even under daily, routine operations, is not walkaway safe and cannot be*

abandoned.

Damaged nuclear power plants or radioactive storage sites could result in devastating radioactive impacts in the region.

Therefore, we, the undersigned, call on the IAEA to:

1. Determine who is currently responsible for the operation and the radiation safety of the Chernobyl site and investigate their degree of technical capability to deal with nuclear emergencies;
2. Conduct assessments to identify the necessity to send additional nuclear technicians to maintain the safety of the Chernobyl site;
3. Investigate and establish the status of Ukraine's 15 reactor sites, to ensure their continued operation under qualified personnel;
4. Ensure transparency and protect the right to information of local people by promptly publishing all relevant data and information, in the local language and English, regarding the radiation safety of all nuclear facilities and nuclear power plants in Ukraine; and,
5. Request member states of the IAEA, in particular those of all parties to the conflict, to refrain from any military or other action that could threaten the nuclear safety and security of nuclear facilities in the conflict zone.

Sincerely,

Endorsed by:

Beyond Nuclear

Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility

Citizens' Nuclear Information Center, Japan

DiaNuke.org

Manhattan Project for a Nuclear-Free World

Ontario Clean Air Alliance

Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility

Veterans For Peace Golden Rule Project

Veterans For Peace Linus Pauling Chapter 132 Corvallis-Albany, OR

World BEYOND War

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War Canada

The Health and Safety Consequences of Fighter Jets

Jonathan Down, MD,
President



Dr. Jonathan Down.

Canada intends to replace its aging fleet of CF-18 fighter jets at a sticker price of \$19 billion and an estimated lifetime cost of \$77 billion. At first glance, a review of the health and safety consequences of fighter jets might seem redundant—even superfluous. After all, they are weapons designed for war and are tools of extreme violence. However, advanced fighter jets of the 21st century have not only an order of magnitude in their intended consequences for death and destruction, but also have unintended consequences in terms of health and safety. Canada has not conducted an environmental assessment, nor engaged in a Parliamentary debate. Moreover the twin threats of climate crisis and a global pandemic together with multiple social, educational, and health demands call for an assessment of opportunity cost.

Intended consequences

The primary intention is to kill and destroy using missiles and bombs that contain high explosives and depleted uranium. In practice, this means destroying a nation's cities, factories, military bases, transportation and communications infrastructure, and seat of government.

Unintended consequences

These fighter jets in training exercises produce serious adverse health effects.

Noise Pollution: Noise pollution is a major

concern for those living next to air bases. The peak noise level of the F35 is 115dB. There is evidence that environmental noise levels above 70dB over a 24 hour period are related to hearing impairment. In addition, environmental noise exposure is linked to hypertension and ischemic heart disease, sleep impairment, speech interference, attention difficulties, memory recall problems, together with learning and cognitive effects. WHO recommends that day care centres and schools not be located near major sources of noise.

Contamination and Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG): The manufacture of fighter jets requires the extractive use of many toxic rare metals that have negative environmental and health consequences. Airbases have been found to be contaminated with a range of environmental pollutants including PFAS and other forever chemicals. GHG emissions have multiple health effects ranging from respiratory diseases to others associated with the climate crisis. The specialized fuel used in fighter jets emits excessive greenhouse gases that are not reported to the International Panel on Climate Change.

Fighter jets bring multiple concerns for health and safety, together with lost opportunity costs. It is essential that the Canadian Government examine all aspects of this intended procurement.

Medical Appeal: No War in Europe!

IPPNW Europe

Medical professionals call for diplomacy to avert a humanitarian disaster.

Editor's Note:

This article may have been overtaken by events by publication date, but the principles expressed are worth inclusion.

Sign the medical appeal:

<http://www.ippnw.eu/en/prevention-of-war/medical-appeal-no-war-in-europe/sign-the-medical-appeal-no-war-in-europe.html>

Doctors and other health professionals in Europe take their responsibility for preventive action to save lives very seriously. The pandemic has shown how much effort they are prepared to put into this task. Yet another medical emergency is brewing in Europe that must be avoided. If the correct action is taken now, we can avert war – and the humanitarian disaster that it will inevitably bring – by choosing diplomacy over further escalation. Russia is a part of the European continent and culture. People across Europe had great hopes when the Cold War ended and the Warsaw Pact was dissolved. The promise of a united Europe seemed possible. But NATO was not dissolved and the relationship between Russia on the one side and NATO and the EU on the other has steadily worsened in the last twenty years, reaching an acute stage of antagonism in the last few years, which is extremely worrying.

A complete breakdown of trust in arms control and the withdrawal from treaties, as in the case of Ukraine, has exacerbated the situation.

The costly expansion of NATO and the forced shifting of Ukraine's borders have not improved the probability of achieving common security or peace. Maintaining military forces and keeping up in the arms race come at a heavy cost both for Europe and Russia. All of us now need those financial resources to mitigate the effects of climate change and today's pandemic.

Confrontational policies are driving us to the edge of war with both sides blaming the other for the escalation. It is counterproductive for NATO and Russia to address this conflict by adding fuel to the fire and giving hardliners on both sides ammunition for more confrontation. Sending more arms and soldiers to the borders on both sides adds to the see-saw effect that escalates the danger of war and creates a perilous stand-off like in Berlin in 1958 or Cuba in 1962. Sixty years ago, we stood on the precipice of nuclear war and only individual heroic acts, courageous decision-making and luck saved us. Let's not do that again.

We need to step back and look at this impasse through the eyes of the other. That

doesn't mean we have to accept the other's opinion or take on their perspective as our own. We should listen to their needs and try to understand them. Let us draw on the wisdom of our forebears who faced similar circumstances during the global confrontation in the 1950s and strove for arms reduction and a nuclear weapons-free zone in Central Europe.

There are no easy solutions to conflicts, but a diplomatic and peaceful solution must be found. The alternative is unthinkable: large-scale death and the destruction of life-supporting infrastructure, nuclear power plants, and the possible displacement of millions of people within Europe. But added to this is the nuclear threat, ever present, that comes with any war between nuclear armed nations. In this conflict, four states possess nuclear weapons and have first strike policies.

We call on all conflict parties to:

- Cease making threats and renounce military escalation
- Pull back all troops and arms from the borders on all sides of Ukraine
- Prevent additional states from directly participating in military conflict.
- Discuss confidence building measures and underlying needs on both sides and how to address these
- Stop blaming each other for starting the conflict and begin afresh
- Commence with talks on nuclear disarmament with the goal of verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons worldwide
- Begin preparations to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

We call on all countries in Europe to help to avert war and a humanitarian disaster by proposing and applauding de-escalatory measures.

Our call for a continuous diplomatic effort to solve the political crisis does not mean agreement with certain political positions. We seek to prevent a potentially uncontrollable conflict which might escalate even into a nuclear war.

Opportunity Costs For Canadian Government

88 Fighter Jets
\$19 billion price tag

OR

15 state-of-the-art healthcare complexes

(\$1.2 billion cost for West Park Healthcare Centre in York, ON)

760 indigenous wellness centres

(\$2.5 million cost of the Songhees Indigenous wellness & health centre in BC)

240 high schools

(\$7.9 million cost of the Edmonton Meadows HS for 1,800 students in AB)

130km of light rail transit

(\$9 billion cost of 64km of LRT in Ottawa, ON)

87,842 green affordable housing units

(\$56.8 million cost for 263 units in QC)

Graphic adapted from Tamara Lorincz. Data from the report "Soaring: The Harms and Risks of Fighter Jets and Why Canada Must Not Buy a New Fleet" by Women's International League for Peace & Freedom.

The Hill Times: An open letter to Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault

Dr. Nancy Covington,
Dr. Charles King &
Dr. Cathy Vakil

Reprinted with permission
from the Hill Times.

We are three physicians concerned about government support for Small Modular Nuclear Reactors (SMRs), representing International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War Canada and Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment. As physicians, our concerns about health inform our attention to the environment around us, and the particular dangers the world faces today.

We would like to congratulate Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault on his recent appointment as federal minister of environment and climate change. His history of activism for the environment and his long list of achievements in working to build a green economy are impressive. The Canadian public is extremely fortunate to have him in the cabinet at this critical juncture for the future of our planet. We wish him the best in his work with the challenges ahead.

Our hope in writing this letter is that we might be able to work collaboratively in achieving new policies concerning SMRs.

We have deep reservations about Guilbeault's recent statement regarding whether the government will continue subsidizing the nuclear industry: "It's not up to the government to decide which of these technologies will thrive. It's going to be up to the market." However, we would expect great skepticism regarding SMRs as part of Canada's technological approach. Pure market forces cannot support nuclear energy, which has been propped up by governments since its inception. Industry promoting SMRs is well funded and lobbies MPs and Senators continuously. But where is the voice of caution?

There is currently not a single functioning SMR worldwide, despite many failed attempts in the past. The nuclear industry itself estimates that it would take at least ten years to produce a SMR and the nuclear industry is historically notorious for running many years late on production. Hence even if a functioning new SMR were to be created, it would have no place in addressing our climate crisis in a timely fashion.

The nuclear industry has always been financially unviable, eating up billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies and these

projects typically go massively over budget. The global percentage of electricity created by nuclear power has been dwindling for years. The cost per KWH exceeds any other energy source, particularly renewables such as solar and wind power. This is money which could be redirected in other ways to address our climate crisis - for instance by improving existing renewable energy systems or by assisting in a just transition for workers in the fossil fuel industry.

The dangers inherent in nuclear accidents are so horrific (Chernobyl, Fukushima for example) that no liability insurance is available for this industry - the government dealing with the disaster (i.e., the taxpayer) becoming the de facto underwriter. Nuclear energy produces extremely hazardous radioactive waste for which there is no acceptable disposal method. These human-made substances produce ionizing radiation that threatens human health, our water sources, and the environment, for hundreds of thousands of years. Cancer, cardiovascular disease as well as genetic anomalies are some of the better known health effects which create unspeakable burdens to future generations.

SMRs use technologies which extract plutonium from CANDU waste, a process which causes security and nuclear weapons proliferation risks. Although the nuclear industry states that this plutonium would not be sufficiently refined to be fashioned into a nuclear bomb, many international experts disagree.

The climate crisis is upon us. Canadians deserve a future of renewable energy and environmental stewardship, neither of which is possible if Canada continues to promote SMRs. Policies driven by market, and corporate interests driven by profit, do not hold the health of the planet as the first priority. We advocate that our government take charge of a bold plan to address climate change, recognizing the emergency that it is. SMRs cannot be a part of this plan.

Uneasy Bedfellows: Armed Security and Humanitarian Aid

Simon Roome



Simon Roome.

Simon Roome, a UBC medical student worked with Mary-Wynne Ashford and Jonathan Down in a FLEX project at UBC. This is an excerpt of his research paper. The full paper is on ipnwcanada.ca



An aid worker of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees distributes blankets to the survivors displaced by the cyclone "Nargis" in Myanmar. UN Photo/UNHCR. Myanmar. 2008.

Kidnapped in Kenya

Imagine you are an aid worker in Kenya. It is late Friday afternoon, and you are heading home after a long day of visits and outreach in a refugee camp. As you climb into an aid vehicle, you pat your wallet to make sure it's secure in your pocket. The local driver, whom you just met this morning, asks if everyone is ready. The truck kicks up a cloud of dust as the three-car convoy rolls off.

Minutes after leaving the camp you hear loud popping sounds from ahead. The windshield shatters. The vehicle veers to the left and grinds to a halt. Men are outside the car pointing rifles and shouting. Behind you the other vehicles have stopped.

Another crack. Something hits you in the leg. You look down to see a tear in your jeans by your thigh. Your driver gasps in pain and hunches desperately against the door for cover. A man with a rifle pulls you out the door and into another aid truck. Three of your other colleagues are inside. The driver is dead. A man yanks him out and starts the engine, while five other men pile into the truck.

Your friend's leg is soaked red. Remembering the hole in your own jeans, you put your hand on your thigh where you were hit - but it feels dry. You pull your tattered wallet from your jeans. A bullet tore through it but stopped short of your leg, bruising and cutting it a bit. One of the men snatches the wallet away.

This scenario is almost identical to the experience of Steven Dennis, a Canadian Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) worker

who was kidnapped in 2012 with three of his colleagues and rescued four days later. [1] In 2016, a court in Oslo found that the NRC "acted with gross negligence" in its handling of the kidnapping. [2] The court criticized many of the NRC's security decisions, especially the decision to not use an armed escort. The ruling marked the first time a court applied the concept of a "duty of care" towards employees to an international humanitarian aid organization. [2]

As a medical student, volunteering to do humanitarian medical work in conflict settings greatly interests me. It seems like a uniquely altruistic endeavour, helping people in the most desperate need. However, it is a dangerous enterprise. Although I had a foggy idea that aid organizations might use armed security sometimes, I had no concept of how often or of its consequences. I wanted to know: how dangerous is humanitarian aid in these settings, and do security measures conflict with the Hippocratic axiom to "do no harm"?

Aid in Danger

There has been growing concern with violence faced by humanitarian organizations. The Aid Worker Security Database reports a steady increase in violence against humanitarian workers since 1997, when they first began collecting these data. With 483 casualties and 125 killed, 2019 was the most violent year on record. Health care workers made up 42% of those killed - a sharp increase from previous *continued on page 10 »*

Getting Involved With IPPNW Canada

Join our Speakers Series

Join in on our monthly Speaker Series for interesting speakers and discussion on current issues; we share projects we are working on and support each other in our work. There is no fee, the Zoom meeting is on the second Wednesday of each month at 5:00 PM PDT, please send an email to admin@ippnwcanada.ca indicating you wish to join the meeting. Observers are welcome and if you wish to be an IPPNWC Active Member let us know and we can send you an Application Form you can submit with your CV.

Medical Student Mentorship

IPPNWC physicians provide mentorship for medical students interested in peace activism. If you are in a program that allows time to do independent research, we

have physicians who are willing to assist you to write for publication on issues of peace, environment and health.

What You Can Do for Peace

Attend or organize a meeting about how to reduce racism and prejudice in your community.

Write letters, poetry, music for your community to build unity and justice.

Write a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, House of Commons, Ottawa K1L 0A9, to ask him to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Meet with your municipal council to ask them to join the ICAN Cities Appeal on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Continued from page 9.

years. [3] The fatalities in 2019 were in part due to attacks on humanitarian health workers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the most recent Ebola outbreak. [3] Poor security management practices may have worsened the situation, with aid agencies relying too heavily on armed escorts compared to softer strategies like pursuing community acceptance. [3,4]

Unfortunately, violence against aid workers has major downstream effects on the people who need aid the most. One study reported that people in need felt insecurity was a major factor affecting aid delivery. [5] Moreover, it showed through quantitative data and interviews with field workers that within the four highest-risk countries at the time (Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, and South Sudan) aid organizations were concentrated in the safest and most secure areas, irrespective of the need of the local

populations. [5]

Simply by operating in dangerous areas, workers are exposed to significant risk. How much risk can or should realistically be mitigated? While organizations cannot guarantee complete safety, it can be argued that they should provide context-appropriate security management to ensure no reasonably preventable incidents occur. However, the security management strategies selected can have profound ethical consequences. Aid organizations like the NRC are left in an unenviable position: ensuring the safety of their workers and maximizing access to aid recipients, while avoiding unintended consequences of security decisions.

The full article & references are published on ippnwcanada.ca/archive

Tribute to Alexa McDonough OC

Dr. Nancy Covington



Dr. Nancy Covington.

Editor's Note:

IPPNW Canada is a nonpartisan organization and we would like to acknowledge the important contributions to nuclear disarmament of other political leaders, including Prime Minister Mulroney, Prime Minister Chretien, Senator Douglas Roche, and MP Elizabeth May.

Alexa McDonough OC, politician and peace activist died January 2022 in Halifax at age 77 of Alzheimer's. Educated as a social worker, Alexa, best known simply by her first name, became the first woman leader of a major Nova Scotian political party in 1980. From MLA to MP, she transcended partisan politics to become one of the inaugural Co-Presidents of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament. Amongst her many accomplishments, she supported initiatives such as the Mayors for Peace Campaign, spoke at the United Nations on several occasions, and introduced the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons to fellow parliamentarians on Parliament Hill in 2007.

She attained support from diverse groups of people from her military voter base in Halifax to peace activist folks worldwide; she became a leader for women in politics, a mentor for many, and a shining example of what a public servant can be.

Alexa had a passion for peace. Often seen with a peace brooch on her label, she spoke persistently of the urgent challenges of nuclear weapons issues and urged all of us to participate.

Alexa, we miss you!



Alexa with members of Physicians for Global Survival (now IPPNWC), where she introduced the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) to other Parliamentarians. At this time she was an MP and Co-President of Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. Debbie Grisdale. Parliament Hill, Canada. 2007.



Alexa shares a moment with Jack Layton and Setsuko Thurlow at the 2007 event on Parliament Hill to launch the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Ten years later, ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work in creating the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Setsuko Thurlow became a co-recipient of this award on behalf of ICAN. Debbie Grisdale. Parliament Hill, Canada. 2007.

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