

Dear Friends Awakened to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons,

Since 1947, the Doomsday Clock has served to remind people around the world that nuclear weapons can annihilate us. We at VOICES write to you a brief letter urging a year of bold action, as the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has moved the Clock hands up to 90 seconds to midnight, the closest to midnight it has ever been.

VOICES for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons is made up of spiritually-grounded scientists, diplomats, academics, peace educators, religious leaders, and advocates and is a Cooperating Circle of the United Religions Initiative.

The world is at a dangerous crossroads regarding potential nuclear weapons usage. We at VOICES are sounding the alarm for people of good will and spirit. It is time to stop business as usual, pivot to confront utter destruction, and turn toward concerted, coordinated, and comprehensive action to eliminate nuclear weapons.

A glimpse of the present reality:

- Russia's threat of the use of tactical nuclear weapons in its war in Ukraine cannot be ignored. Promoted as a "practical" option to achieve conquest and victory, it may actually be under consideration as a plausible alternative to military defeat. Therefore, the possibility of nuclear weapon usage has increased.
- A new nuclear arms race has begun. The United States, Great Britain, and China are planning to "modernize" their arsenals. Appropriations and implementation planning has begun. The risks of first use, irrational decisions by one leader, heightened sense of vulnerability, and miscalculation grow by the continued refinement and expansion of this new generation of weapons.
- The Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1970 served for many years to limit and decrease nuclear stockpiles, and prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear countries. Negotiations among nuclear states toward elimination of nuclear weapons have broken down. The danger of spread is increasing. This heightens the risk to all living creatures.

We all live in one human village on one planet Earth. People throughout the world are increasingly aware of their proximity to nuclear weapon catastrophe. In accordance with this reality, we recall the urgent plea in scripture to "choose life so that we and our descendants may live." The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), signed by 92 nations, is a signal that the moral and political will exists and continues to grow for a non-nuclear weapons world.

We extend a compassionate, urgent invitation to make 2023 a year in which the "world turned" away from nuclear weapons including and especially in nations which perpetuate their presence. We, through our actions, can contribute to the movement of the clock's hands away

from mutual danger and destruction. Specifically, we ask in spirit and conscience that you, loved ones, organizations, faith communities and groups with whom you affiliate:

- Pray for a moment of 90 seconds or a period of up to 90 minutes per day each day this year for an end to nuclear weapons;
- Study 90 minutes per week on matters of war, peace, morally or spiritually-grounded teachings and the nuclear weapons threat: <https://www.voices-uri.org/learn>;
- Act 90 minutes per month to write, speak, vigil, educate, gather, and take non-violent steps to give voice to your commitment to eliminate nuclear weapons. Take part in activities for Nuclear Prayer Day on August 6, 2023, in your local community and with Voices, as we join hearts and minds in saying, “Never Again!” with our siblings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

With other spiritually-minded efforts and organizations around the world, we believe a nuclear-weapon-free world is possible. Be part of the wave of hope created by small ripples of those who had the audacity to imagine a reality different than what seemed possible. We honor those who have sacrificed their lives, their health, and their liberty to write a new story of coexistence from a perspective of abundance and justice that transcends borders. The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The time is always right to do right.” Now is the minute and a half warning to heed this message and take responsibility having seen the signs of these times.

Sincerely,

VOICES for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons