

Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space

Report for 2023

During 2023 our GN coordinator was invited to speak in 20 Zoom events discussing space issues and the US-NATO war on Russia using Ukraine as the hammer. These events were in various US states and overseas - as far away as the Philippines and India. We have also published and distributed an edition of our newsletter *Space Alert*. We are also continuing to produce regular *Space Alert* videos on space issues. This last year these included interviews with peace anti-war and anti-war-in-space activists information on the military use of AI and how space is used in the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. All are available, alongside other resources, through our website (www.space4peace.org) and our linktree (<https://linktr.ee/space4peace>).

We also continue to employ a part-time social media worker who manages our twitter and instagram social media accounts and we publish notices regularly on facebook.

During 2023 there were plenty of issues concerning the further use of space by the military and the increasing use of space in terrestrial wars for communications, reconnaissance, surveillance and controlling drones. Some states are developing new space weapons (e.g. powerful lasers) and training for combat in space. The use of SpaceX's Starlink satellites for military communications in the Ukraine war has demonstrated that commercial systems often have a 'dual use'. Many commercial space activities are biased towards military requirements.

In the UK, GN Convenor has co-founded "Spacewatch", a group working to oppose the US/UK military use of space at the spaceports being planned though out the UK.

Since February, GN Board members have coordinated monthly peace protests in cities and towns in Maine, firstly calling for an end to the US-NATO war in Ukraine and now featuring Israel's war on Palestine. They have also led a campaign to oppose the construction of 1-2 space launch facilities in northern Maine through public presentations, protests and radio and newspaper ads. GN board members are also involved in organising protests at the Bath Iron Works shipyard (owned by General Dynamics) that builds Navy destroyers outfitted with so-called 'missile defense' systems.

In July we held our 31st annual conference via zoom with the title "Latest developments on war in space" a recording is available on the website. Invited speakers were from Canada, US, UK, and South Korea and a musical interlude ("Elon's gone to Mars") was provided by Tom Neilson.

The overcrowding in certain space orbits has become a major problem, much of which is due to satellite constellations placed in Low Earth Orbit to increase communication speed for commercial and military purposes. In 2023 there were space 223 launches made by 10 countries, 109 by the US (98 by SpaceX) and 2,234 satellites were launched (1,937 by SpaceX). There are plans to increase the total number of satellites to over 100,000 in the

next few years, increasing the danger of satellite numbers becoming so large that cascading collisions with space debris precludes further space use.

The theme “The Dangers of Crowded Orbits” was adopted for October’s “Keep Space for Peace Week” and protest actions were held in New Zealand, Scotland, England, South Korea, and the US. In addition, a webinar on “Crowded space: why the increasing militarisation of space could risk nuclear war” was held by CND in the UK with two speakers from our Board of Directors.

The increase in space launches is accompanied by an increase in environmental damage (around launch sites and in the upper atmosphere) and we have joined a legal action calling on the Federal Communications Commission (who regulate interstate and international satellite communications) to adhere to the law that requires environmental impact statements before approving launches. The obligations to adhere to The Outer Space Treaty and other agreements are not being taken seriously and rules must immediately be put in place to prevent the overcrowding of Lower Earth Orbit.

The end of the year saw a number of moon shots and another race to the Moon is underway. The reason? To establish moon bases possibly powered by small modular nuclear reactors for use by the military and/or to aid the exploitation of lunar and planetary resources. As corporations rapidly trash the Earth, they are set to spread their greed and abuse through the Solar System.

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