



Advancing nuclear disarmament and climate protection in the UN human rights bodies

Report to Abolition 2000 Annual General Meeting

*Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace, Basel Peace Office, Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights,
World Future Council and Youth Fusion*

Introduction:

On October 30, 2018, the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) adopted a new [General comment No. 36 \(2018\) on article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights \(ICCPR\), on the right to life](#), which concludes that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is incompatible with the Right to Life and may amount to a crime under international law.

The HRC also affirmed that States parties to the ICCPR, which includes almost all countries in the world, must refrain from developing, producing, testing, acquiring, stockpiling, selling, transferring and using nuclear weapons, as well as take action to destroy existing stockpiles, pursue negotiations to achieve global nuclear disarmament, and provide adequate reparation to victims of nuclear weapons testing or use.

And the HRC affirmed that “Environmental degradation, **climate change** and unsustainable development constitute some of the most pressing and serious threats to the ability of present and future generations to enjoy the right to life.”

Following the adoption of General Comment 36, the partners in this project (listed above) have made submissions on nuclear weapons (and climate-change) policies of nuclear armed and allied states that have come up for review in various UN treaty bodies. This has included the Human Rights Committee (for review of the ICCPR), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (for review of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women) and the Human Rights Council (for the Universal Periodic Review which includes human rights obligations from all human rights treaties and the UN Charter).

For most of the countries under review, the project partners have also **involved civil society organizations from those countries in the submissions**.

Submissions in 2023:

In 2023 the project partners made submissions to the UN Human Rights Committee for the Universal Periodic Reviews on the nuclear weapons and climate policies of [Germany](#) and [Canada](#) and on the nuclear weapons policies of [Russia](#).

The submission on Canada was done in cooperation with Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, ClimateFast, Religions for Peace Canada, Rideau Institute, Science for Peace, and World Federalist Movement Canada.

The submissions on Germany and Canada argued that these countries were not meeting their obligations under human rights law to reduce the threat of nuclear war, advance negotiations to achieve global nuclear disarmament and limit their carbon emissions sufficiently to protect the climate for current and future

generations. The submissions made concrete proposals on how Germany and Canada could bring their policies in line with their human rights obligations.

The submission on Russia focused solely on their nuclear weapons policies due to the seriousness of nuclear threats being made by Russia in their invasion of Ukraine.

Geneva events 2023

The partners also held two events in Geneva in 2023 to build awareness about the submissions and encourage the Human Rights Council to take up the recommendations in them:

- a) **January 25.** [Human Rights and the Doomsday Clock](#), which followed up on the submissions made regarding [Japan](#) and [Korea](#) in late 2022 which were still under review by the Human Rights Council;
- b) **July 6.** [Nuclear weapons, climate change and human rights](#), which followed up on the submissions of [Canada](#) and [Germany](#) and [Russia](#).

Human Rights and the Doomsday Clock

Using international human rights law to address existential threats posed by nuclear weapons and climate change.



January 25, 2023
1:15-2:45pm
Mont Blanc meeting room
Sidley Austin Law Firm
Rue du Pré-de-la-Bichette 1, Geneva
Light refreshments provided

A side event to the
42nd Universal Periodic Review
(UN Human Rights Council)

About this round-table event

The 'Doomsday Clock' will be reset this week, indicating severe threats to humanity and the planet from nuclear weapons, climate change and other existential risks.

In 2018, the UN Human Rights Committee affirmed that nuclear weapons and climate change threaten the Right to Life (ICCPR Article 6).

This event will consider obligations to protect the Right to Life from nuclear weapons and climate change, including by countries under Universal Periodic Review, and through initiatives at the International Court of Justice and UN Summit of the Future.

Moderator

- * **Joshua Cooper** (Hawai'i, USA)
Director, Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights.

Speakers

- * **Alyn Ware** (New Zealand/Czech Republic)
Int. Representative, Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace. Director, Basel Peace Office.
- * **Anselmo LEE** (South Korea)
Regional Coordinator, Asia Civil Society Partnership for Sustainable Development.
- * **Tadashi INUZUKA** (Japan)
Executive Director, Coalition 3+3 for a North-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. Former Nagasaki Senator.




In-person side event during the Human Rights Council 53rd Session
Thursday July 6 from 15:00 - 16:00
Mont Blanc Meeting Room, Sidley Austin Law Firm,
Rue du Pré-de-la-Bichette 1 Geneva 1202

Nuclear weapons, climate change & human rights

Applying human rights law to address existential threats to humanity

Implementing General Comment 36 of the UN Human Rights Committee with regard to nuclear weapons and climate change.
Includes current challenges in the Universal Periodic Review to policies of Russia, Canada and Germany.
Event held under Chatham House Rules.



Register here
or by email to
info@baselpeaceoffice.org

Contact mobile whatsapp: +420 773 638 867


Speakers:

- Vanessa Lanteigne (Canada)
Rotary Peace Fellow at the University of Uppsala. Former National Coordinator, Canadian Voice of Women for Peace.
- Joshua Cooper (Hawaii, USA)
Executive Director, Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights. Lecturer, University of Hawai'i. Host, Cooper Union Think Tech TV show.
- Jule Schnakenberg (Germany)
Graduate student LLM Master of Law, Leiden University. Coordinator, World's Youth for Climate Justice.

Co-Chairs

- Alyn Ware (Czechia/New Zealand)
International Representative, Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace. Director, Basel Peace Office.
- Holly Crawford (USA)
Student, William S. Richardson School of Law, Program Officer, World Future Council.

Cosponsors



Events we organized in Geneva on January 25 and July 6, 2023.