

# Abolition 2000 Nuclear Risk Reduction Working Group

## *Report to the Abolition 2000 Annual Meeting*

### Introduction

This working group (formerly called the [De-alerting Working Group](#)) promotes measures to reduce the risks of nuclear weapons being used and to lower the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. These include de-alerting, eliminating launch on warning, lowering threat postures and adopting policies of no-first-use and/or sole purpose.

These are incremental measures, to be advanced along with simultaneous efforts to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons entirely and to achieve the global prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. Such incremental measures are vital to prevent nuclear weapons being used, and to build confidence amongst those currently relying on nuclear weapons that the phased prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons will increase – not decrease – their security.

The working group is a co-founder of [NoFirstUse Global](#), a coalition of organizations, academics, policy makers and civil society advocates working cooperatively for the adoption of no-first-use policies by nuclear-armed States, support for such policies from nuclear allied countries, and implementation of such policies to help achieve broader nuclear risk-reduction, non-proliferation and disarmament measures.

### SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES DURING 2023:

#### Appeals and working papers:

- [Nuclear Taboo from Norm to Law](#). Declaration of Public Conscience presented to the G7 Summit in Hiroshima and NPT Prep Com in Vienna;
- [No-First Use of Nuclear Weapons: An Exploration of Unilateral, Bilateral and Plurilateral Approaches and their Security, Risk-reduction and Disarmament Implications](#), Working paper presented to the NPT Prep Com in Vienna in August 2023

#### Events:

- **Jan 25** : [Human Rights and the Doomsday Clock](#), side event at the Human Rights Council, Geneva.
- **July 3**: [Common Security, Nuclear Risk-Reduction and the UN Summit of the Future](#), side event at the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Annual Session, Vancouver
- **Aug 1**: *Nuclear Risk Reduction - 90 seconds to Midnight*, side event at the NPT Prep Com, Vienna.
- **Sep 26**: [Don't even THINK about starting a nuclear war](#). Social media action outside embassies of nuclear-armed countries.

#### Blog articles and Updates:

- **Feb 27**: [Nuclear restraint, no-first-use and the Russia/Ukraine war](#)
- **April 11**: [Launch of Nuclear Taboo: From Norm to Law](#)
- **April 18**: [Former \(nuclear\) Naval Commander calls for UK conventional forces – not nuclear – to deter and address aggression](#)
- **May 18**: [G7 Hiroshima Summit should reaffirm the Nuclear Taboo](#)
- **July 31**: [NoFirstUse and the NPT Prep Com: plus NoFirstUse Global, President Putin and the BRICS Summit](#)
- **August 2**: [Nuclear Taboo from Norm to Law presented to the NPT Prep Com](#)
- **August 20**: [NPT States parties call for No-First-Use policies](#)
- **September 13**: [G20 Leaders in Delhi affirm inadmissibility of nuclear weapons threat or use. Or did they?](#)
- **October 12**: [Don't even THINK about starting a nuclear war](#).
- **December 18**: [States Parties to the TPNW welcome the G20 affirmation of the inadmissibility of nuclear weapons use and threats, and call for action to reinforce it;](#)

## DETAILS, DISCUSSION PLUS RELATED STATEMENTS OF PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

The Nuclear Risk Reduction Working Group, formerly the De-Alerting Working Group, is one of the most active working groups of Abolition 2000, jointly convened by Alyn Ware, Aaron Tovish, and myself, John Hallam.

As in previous years, Nuclear Risk Reduction Working Group (formerly called the De-alerting Working Group) promotes measures to reduce the risks of nuclear weapons being used and to lower the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines. These include de-alerting, eliminating launch on warning, lowering threat postures and adopting policies of no-first-use and/or sole purpose. These are incremental measures, to be advanced along with, and reinforcing and complementing, simultaneous efforts to eliminate the role of nuclear weapons entirely and to achieve the global prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. Such incremental measures are vital to prevent nuclear weapons being used, and to build confidence amongst those currently relying on nuclear weapons that the phased prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons will increase – not decrease – their security.

The climate for even modest advances in nuclear risk reduction and in disarmament is more hostile now than it has been for decades, yet the very fact of increased risk makes such measures more relevant and more important, than ever.

Over much of the previous 12 months we have been focussed on obtaining a reaffirmation of the G20 Bali and Delhi declarations to the effect that 'The Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons is inadmissible', in UN First Committee.

This effort focussed on the 2023 NPT Prepcom, in which we both

(a) presented a statement to Plenary (John Hallam, below <https://nofirstuse.global/2023/08/02/nuclear-taboo-from-norm-to-law-presented-to-the-npt-prep-com/>), comprising a declaration of Public Conscience signed by an array of distinguished persons worldwide.

In presenting this declaration, Mr Hallam noted that:

“The risk of nuclear weapons use is higher than at any time since the depths of the cold war.” ... “A major, though not the only, contributor to that risk has been the stream of explicit and implicit nuclear threats emanating from one single Government (Russia).”

“However, there is one bright spot,” said Mr Hallam. “The taboo against use of nuclear weapons, in spite of – or because of – the threats emanating from one government, has received a massive upgrade. On November 17th leaders of the G20 – which includes six nuclear armed states, seven states in alliances with nuclear-weapon states and six nonaligned/neutral states – declared that **“The threat of use or use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible.”**

“The G20 statement indicates a breakthrough in consolidating a general practice against nuclear weapons use and elevating this to a norm now accepted, at least on paper, by the nuclear weapon states,” said Mr Hallam. “It is vital that this ‘breakthrough’ be reaffirmed in as many forums as possible – here at the 2023 NPT Preparatory Committee, at UNGA First Committee, or else at succeeding G7 and G20 meetings, such as the upcoming one in Delhi.”

We also (b) organised a panel/workshop on nuclear risk reduction with a focus on reaffirmation of the G20 Bali and Delhi statements:

(<https://www.abolition2000.org/event/nuclear-risk-reduction-90-seconds-to-midnight/>)

That panel was extremely well attended and interest in nuclear risk and ways to lower it was keen.

Much effort was expended by representatives of a number of organisations (Abolition 2000/PND/NFU/PNND) on subsequent lobbying of diplomats who seemed likely to be receptive to the idea of reaffirming the G20 Bali and Delhi declarations on inadmissibility.

In spite of a significant effort, our efforts to obtain a reaffirmation of the G20 statements on inadmissibility of nuclear weapons use in the First Committee at the end of the year, which had initially seemed to be pushing open a door that was already open, initially met with no success at all!

First Committee did not even mention the G20 Bali and Delhi declarations in spite of our strenuous efforts.

However, the TPNW Meeting of states parties in its final declaration, DID make prominent mention of the G20 Delhi and Bali declarations, suggesting to us that further efforts in this area might be worthwhile. We understand that those who inserted the language on the G20 Bali and Delhi declarations in the final declaration of the TPNW Meeting of States Parties in NY in November '23 were people we had lobbied as far back as the previous August in Vienna, as well as subsequently in NY.

In general, the situation with respect to nuclear risk is grim, with more or less continual threats of nuclear weapons use, - overt or thinly veiled – emanating from Russia. We literally have not been this close to 'doomsday' for so long, ever – including during the Cuban Missile Crisis which though more 'acute' lasted a much shorter time.

The Doomsday Clock maintained its hands at 90 seconds to putative 'midnight', and there was even speculation that they might move even closer.

<http://www.pndnsw.org.au/articles/flashpoints/523-poised-on-the-brink-closer-than-weve-ever-been-for-longer-than-weve-ever-been.html>,

This makes the work of the risk reduction group more vital than ever, and makes the group busier than ever.

The Abolition 2000 Risk Reduction working group works closely with the Global No First use Campaign, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament (PNND), the Global Security Institute (GSI) and People for Nuclear Disarmament NSW (PND).

Below are links to some of the more important statements on nuclear risk of the past year and more.

Statements to NPT Meetings

Statement to 2022 NPT Review Conference NY 5Aug 2022

[https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/5Aug\\_PeopleforNuclearDisarmament.pdf](https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/5Aug_PeopleforNuclearDisarmament.pdf)

Statement to 2023 NPT Preparatory Committee Vienna 2 August 2023

[https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/2Aug\\_PND.pdf](https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom23/statements/2Aug_PND.pdf)

Memos to UNGA etc on nuclear risk reduction

Poised on the brink, closer than we've ever been for longer than we've ever been

<http://www.pndnsw.org.au/articles/flashpoints/523-poised-on-the-brink-closer-than-weve-ever-been-for-longer-than-weve-ever-been.html>

(To UNGA)

Did the Bali and Delhi G20 meetings just never happen?

<http://www.pndnsw.org.au/articles/flashpoints/519-did-the-g20-meetings-in-bali-and-delhi-never-happen.html>

(To UNGA) Sept 26 2023 – International Day for the total elimination of Nuclear Weapons

<http://www.pndnsw.org.au/articles/flashpoints/518-sept-26-international-day-for-the-total-elimination-of-nuclear-weapons.html>

(To UNGA) 100 Seconds to 'Midnight' – Are we running out of time?

<http://www.pndnsw.org.au/articles/flashpoints/512-100-seconds-to-midnight--are-we-running-out-of-time.html>