Can Common Security replace Nuclear Deterrence

Statement to the 2024 NPT Prep Com by Basel Peace Office, Citizens for Global Solutions, UNFOLD ZERO, World Future Council and World Federalist Movement-Institute for Global Policy

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Your Excellencies,

There are currently nine nuclear armed countries and another 37 countries that rely on nuclear deterrence for their security. Although these countries comprise a numerical minority amongst UN member states, they together comprise most of the northern hemisphere and nearly 2/3rds of the world's population.

This indicates that nuclear deterrence is widely embraced as a mechanism to provide security, especially from acts of aggression. Nuclear weapons will most likely therefore continue to be a part of security doctrines until we can build confidence that the security provided by nuclear weapons is no longer necessary, or that nuclear deterrence can be replaced by credible alternatives.

I have the honour to present an Appeal to the 2023 and 2024 NPT prep coms entitled "*Common Security and Nuclear Deterrence*" which explores ways in which the current reliance on nuclear weapons can be replaced with common security approaches and mechanisms to ensure security for all and facilitate the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The Appeal, which has been endorsed by 170 organizations from 37 countries, highlights a range of currently existing common security mechanisms that could be better used to ensure security – including security against aggression - and ways to strengthen them. These include, amongst others, the UN General Assembly (UNGA), International Court of Justice and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

In April 2022, for example, UN member states adopted a strengthened process for the UNGA to act in the face of aggression or threats to the peace, including when the Security Council is blocked by a veto cast by one of the permanent members. The UNGA has subsequently taken action, including declaring the Russian invasion of Ukraine to be an act of aggression in violation of the UN Charter and declaring that the annexation by Russia of Ukrainian territories is invalid and illegal.

Further measures to strengthen the UNGA to act to prevent or respond to aggression are proposed in Chapter 2 of the *Peoples Pact for the Future* which has been prepared in advance of the UN Summit of the Future taking place in September this year

With regard to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), it has demonstrated in numerous contentious cases and advisory opinions that it can successfully address aggression including the threat or use of nuclear weapons, territorial conflicts and other threats to the peace. Despite its lack of direct enforcement powers, compliance with ICJ decisions is very robust. As reported by Joan Donaghue, then President of the ICJ speaking to the UN Security Council last year "*It is encouraging to note that there has been compliance with the vast majority of cases decided by the International Court of Justice to date.*"

Increased use of the court in such cases – and broader acceptance of the jurisdiction of the ICJ – would build confidence in the capacity of common security to replace nuclear deterrence. **We therefore**

encourage all States that have not yet done so to declare their acceptance of compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, as called for by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, and as supported by the *Declaration on promoting the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice* endorsed by 33 countries and as promoted by Legal Alternatives to War (LAW not War), a civil society coalition of over 100 organizations.

Finally, we welcome the statements of G20 Leaders adopted at their Summit in Bali (and in subsequent G20 Summits) that '*the threat or use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible'*. This statement should be affirmed and implemented by the NPT. **It provides fertile ground for the NPT to take up the recommendation made in our Appeal to establish a subsidiary body to explore the replacement of nuclear deterrence with common security.**

In an increasingly inter-connected and globalized world, there is less need and higher risks to nuclear deterrence – whereas Common Security has much greater potential and relevance to meet current and emerging security issues, reduce tensions, resolve international conflicts and ensure sustainable peace.

Thank you.

(Please find the full appeal and list of endorsers attached to the written version of this statement which is accessible at www.unfoldzero.org).

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Common Security and Nuclear Deterrence:

How to replace the current reliance on nuclear weapons with sustainable security for all.

Appeal to the 2023 and 2024 Prep Coms for the 11th NPT Review Conference

Initiated by Basel Peace Office, UNFOLD ZERO, World Future Council and World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy

Endorsed by 170 organizations from 38 countries.[1] See end of the statement for the list of endorsers.

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Introduction

The very first resolution of the UN established the objective to achieve the global elimination of nuclear weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). This objective was affirmed as an obligation in the Non-Proliferation Treaty adopted in 1970. Commitments to implement this objective have been made by States Parties to the NPT in successive Review Conferences. However, this objective remains unfulfilled.

[1] Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Chile, Czechia, DRC, Egypt, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Haiti, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Mexico, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Uganda, UK, USA, Yemen.

Campaigns to highlight the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and the illegality of their threat and use have helped to develop restraint on actual use - nuclear weapons have not been detonated in armed conflict since 1945. But these campaigns have had little if any impact on the production, possession and deployment of nuclear weapons – which continues today fueled by a $100 Billion per year global budget.

Indeed, there are currently nine nuclear armed countries and another 37 countries that rely on nuclear deterrence. Although a numerical minority amongst UN member states, these countries together comprise most of the northern hemisphere and nearly 2/3rds of the world's population.

The primary reason for the reliance on nuclear weapons by such a significant number of countries is because nuclear deterrence is perceived by them as providing security, especially from acts of aggression. Nuclear weapons will therefore continue to be a part of security doctrines until the nuclear armed and allied states can be confident that the security provided by nuclear weapons is no longer necessary, or that nuclear deterrence can be replaced by alternatives which are credible. Common Security could provide such credible alternatives, and therefore make a vital contribution to building the framework for the peace and security of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Common security

Common security is an approach to achieving national security by taking into account one's own security needs and also the security of other nations, including one's adversaries. It is based on the assumption that sustainable national security cannot be obtained by undermining or threatening the security of others, but rather on resolving conflicts with one's adversaries and ensuring that the security of all is upheld. It relies on diplomacy, negotiation, mediation, arbitration and on the application of international law to ensure fairness and security for all.

Common security does not rule out national defence and some reliance on military power for security. However, a common security framework places a much greater emphasis on conflict resolution and international law, reserving military approaches to the last resort in response to aggression if all other methods fail and in strict adherence to the UN Charter.

The United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe are examples of two international organizations established on common security principles. The UN Charter, for example, prohibits the threat or use of force by UN member states and requires international conflicts to be resolved peacefully through "*negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements or other peaceful means of their own choice.*" The Helsinki Act (1975) upon which the OSCE was established, includes similar obligations. The Lisbon Declaration on a Common and Comprehensive Security Model for Europe for the twenty-first century, adopted by the OSCE in 1996, elaborates further on the Common Security framework of the OSCE.

Common security, aggression and nuclear deterrence

The common security approaches and mechanisms outlined in the UN Charter, Helsinki Final Act and Lisbon Declaration can be used to resolve international conflicts before they escalate to the level of armed conflict. They can also be used instead of nuclear deterrence to address aggression, the threat of aggression and other threats to the peace and serious violations of international law. Better utilization of common security approaches could therefore assist the transition from nuclear deterrence to non-nuclear security.

However, there are many challenges, unanswered questions and issues of confidence in making such a transition.

In order to facilitate the replacement of nuclear deterrence with common security, we recommend the NPT establish a subsidiary body to outline the full range of theoretical and actual security threats which nuclear deterrence is designed to address, explore common security and conventional military

alternatives to nuclear deterrence to address these threats, and make recommendations on the transition from nuclear deterrence to non-nuclear security.

Non-nuclear states already rely for their security on common security (and conventional military forces). Their experience could be useful to nuclear-armed and allied states in making the transition to non-nuclear security. Of particular value could be the experience of States which relied on nuclear weapons and have already made the transition to non-nuclear security (such as Kazakhstan, New Zealand and South Africa).

Building confidence in Common Security – the UNGA and ICJ

Unfortunately, the credibility of Common Security is challenged by the veto power of the Five Permanent members in the UN Security Council (P5) which provides each of them with a tool to block action in response to acts of aggression or threats to peace arising from them. However, the P5 do not generally have veto power to block action of other UN bodies, in particular the UN General Assembly and the International Court of Justice.

The adoption in April 2022 of the UNGA resolution "*Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council"*, has strengthened the process for the UNGA to act in the face of aggression or threats to the peace. This authority of the UNGA to act when the Security Council is blocked was first used in the Uniting for Peace Resolution during the Korea War and has more recently been exercised in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The UNGA has taken a number of actions including declaring the invasion to be an act of aggression in violation of the UN Charter and declaring that the annexation by Russia of Ukrainian territories is invalid and illegal.

The International Court of Justice has demonstrated in numerous contentious cases and advisory opinions that it can address aggression (including the threat or use of nuclear weapons), territorial conflicts and other threats to the peace. Increased use of the court in such cases – and increased acceptance of the jurisdiction of the ICJ – would build confidence in the capacity of common security to replace nuclear deterrence.

We encourage all States that have not done so to declare their acceptance of ICJ jurisdiction. We welcome the Declaration on promoting the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice which 33 countries have endorsed, and we welcome also the civil society initiative entitled Legal Alternatives to War, Towards universal jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice.

Common security, nuclear deterrence and the Russian invasion of Ukraine

The Russia/Ukraine conflict has demonstrated that nuclear deterrence, while potentially rational on paper, can fail or be rendered useless in real life situations. President Putin tried to use nuclear deterrence as a coercive tool to prevent Western military support for Ukraine. This failed. Military aid has poured into Ukraine, undeterred by the nuclear threats, and has been a major reason for the failure of Russia to subjugate Ukraine. From the other side, the United States government realized that making counter nuclear threats against Russia would be escalatory and dangerous. This stimulated the United States to explore and implement non-nuclear responses to the Russian nuclear threats.

These realizations also led to the remarkable statement in the G20 Leaders Bali Declaration that '*The threat or use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible*'. **This statement should be affirmed and implemented by the 11th NPT Review Conference.**

These developments provide fertile ground for the NPT to take up our recommendation to establish a subsidiary body to undertake a situation-specific evaluation of the roles of nuclear weapons in conflicts and the common security/conventional alternatives to nuclear weapons in each of these situations. Indeed, in an increasingly inter-connected and globalized world, nuclear deterrence already has much less utility - combined with very high risks - whereas **Common Security** has much greater potential and relevance to meet

current and emerging security issues, reduce tensions, resolve international conflicts and ensure sustainable peace.

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Endorsing organizations

- *Actions communautaires pour le Développement de la Femme (Democratic Republic of Congo)*
- *The Åland Islands Peace Institute (Åland Islands Finland)*
- *All Souls Nuclear Disarmament Task Force (USA)*
- *Alternatives pour une Culture Républicaine et Démocratique (France/DRC)*
- *Anglican Pacifist Fellowship (USA)*
- *Anglican Pacifist Fellowship NZ (New Zealand)*
- *Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace (New Zealand)*
- *Arab Center for Cyberspace Research (Egypt)*
- *Arab Human Security Network (Egypt – International)*
- *Asociación Española para el Derecho Internacional de los Derechos Humanos (Spain)*
- *Association des Medicines Français pour la Prevention de la Guerre Nucleaire, IPPNW (France)*
- *Association of Swiss Lawyers for Nuclear Disarmament (Switzerland)*
- *Association of World Citizens (France – International)*
- *Baltimore Nonviolence Center (USA)*
- *Bangladesh NGOs Network for Radio and Communication (Bangladesh)*
- *Basel Peace Office (Switzerland)*
- *Blue Banner (Mongolia)*
- *Bolcris International (Nigeria – International)*
- *Canadian Peace Initiative (Canada)*
- *Canadian Pugwash Group (Canada)*
- *Center for Peace and Global Governance (USA)*
- *Center for Political Ecology (USA)*
- *Cercle Vivi Hommel (Luxembourg)*
- *Christian CND (UK)*
- *Citizens for Global Solutions (USA)*
- *Civilian Peace Service Canada (Canada)*
- *CND Cymru - Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Wales*
- *Cultural Youth Movement Education Foundation (Nigeria)*
- *Democracia Global (Argentina)*
- *Democracy Today (Armenia)*
- *Democracy Without Borders (Germany – International)*
- *Disability Peoples Forum (Uganda)*
- *Federal Union (UK)*
- *Fellowship of Reconciliation Germany*
- *Finnish Christian Peace Association (Finland)*
- *Foundation for Global Governance & Sustainability*
- *G100 Defence and Security Wing (Sweden – International)*
- *Gender, Peace and Security (UK)*
- *Genesee Valley Citizens for Peace (USA)*
- *Global Alliance for Ministries and Infrastructures for Peace*
- *Global Coalition for limitation of Armaments*
- *Global Peace Alliance BC Society (Canada)*
- *Global Rights (Nigeria)*
- *Global Security Institute (USA)*
- *Green Hope Foundation*
- *Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action (USA)*
- *Group of 78 (Canada)*
- *Hawai'i Institute for Human Rights (USA)*
- *Health of Mother Earth Foundation (Nigeria)*
- *Hitma Organization for Cultural and Social Development (Kurdistan Region of Iraq)*
- *Home for Humanity Movement for Human and Planetary Regeneration*
- *Human Survival Project (Australia)*
- *Initiatives pour le désarmement Nucléaire (France)*
- *Institute for Cultural Diplomacy (Germany/USA)*
- *Institute of Global Peace and Sustainable Governance (Australia)*
- *International Affairs and Disarmament Aotearoa Committee (New Zealand)*
- *International Center for Multi-Generational Legacies of Trauma (USA – International)*
- *International Community for Georgia Development and thee Progress (Georgia)*
- *International Forum for Understanding (UK)*
- *International Philosophers for Peace*
- *Internationaler Versöhnungsbund Österreichischer Zweig*
  International Fellowship of Reconciliation Austria
- *Interfaith Communities United for Justice & Peace (USA)*
- *KAIROS Salmon Arm BC (Canada)*
- *Keen and Care Initiative (Nigeria)*
- *Long Valley Health Center (USA)*
- *Sisters of Loretto Community (USA)*
- *Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights (Egypt)*
- *Malaysian Youth Diplomacy (Malaysia)*
- *Mali Peace and Security Network (Mali)*
- *Marrickville Peace Group (Australia)*
- *Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns (USA)*
- *Merseyside Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (UK)*
- *Minnesota Peace Project (USA)*
- *Mouvement pour une alternative non violente (France)*
- *Movement for the Abolition of War (UK)*
- *Multifaith Voices for Peace & Justice (USA)*
- *Mundo sin guerras y sin violencia (Chile)*
- *My World Mexico (Mexico)*
- *National Coalition of Civil Society Organizations (Liberia)*
- *National Council of Turkish Women (Turkey)*
- *National Forum for Human Rights (Yemen)*
- *NGO Committee on Disarmament, Peace and Security (USA)*
- *NoFirstUse Global (Czech Republic – International)*
- *Nonviolence International (USA – International)*
- *Nuclear Free Peacemakers (New Zealand)*
- *Ohio Nuclear Free Network (USA)*

- *Oregon PeaceWorks (USA)*
- *Pax Christi Australia*
- *Pax Christi Korea*
- *Pax Christi Northern California (USA)*
- *Pax Christi-Pilipinas*
- *Pax Christi Scotland*
- *Pax Christi USA*
- *Peace Action Wisconsin (USA)*
- *Peace and Justice Task Force of the Parliament of the World's Religions (USA – International)*
- *Peace Child (UK - International*)
- *Peace Culture Village (Japan)*
- *Peace Depot (Japan)*
- *Peace Education Center (USA)*
- *Peaceworkers San Francisco (USA)*
- *Peace Network Korea (South Korea)*
- *Peace Union of Finland (Finland)*
- *PeaceWomen across the Globe (Switzerland - International)*
- *People for Nuclear Disarmament (Australia)*
- *Physicians for Social Responsibility – IPPNW Switzerland*
- *Physicians for Social Responsibility, Western North Carolina chapter (USA)*
- *Proposition One Campaign for a Nuclear-Free Future (USA)*
- *Pugwash-France (France)*
- *Religions for Peace Canada*
- *Religions pour la Paix – Québec (Canada)*
- *Rideau Institute (Canada*)
- *Roots Action (USA)*
- *Saving Humanity and Planet Earth – SHAPE (Australia – International)*
- *Science for Peace (Canada)*
- *Scientists for Global Responsibility (Australia)*
- *Scientists for Global Responsibility (UK)*
- *The Simons Foundation (Canada)*
- *South Asia Peace Alliance (India – Regional)*
- *South Country Peace Group (USA)*
- *Southern Anti-Racism Network (USA)*
- *Sustainable Common Security (Canada)*
- *Tavistock Peace Action Group (UK)*
- *Uganda Peace Foundation (Uganda)*
- *Ukraine War Environmental Consequences Work Group*
- *Union des Amis Socio Culturels d'Action en Développement (Haiti)*
- *UNFOLD ZERO (Switzerland – International)*
- *Union of European Federalists (France)*
- *Union of Italian Scientists for Disarmament (Italy)*
- *Union Pacifiste de France (France)*
- *United Nations Association of Australia*
- *United Nations Association (UNA) of Fiji*
- *United Nations Association of Los Angeles (USA)*
- *United Nations Association (UNA) of New Zealand*
- *UNA-USA Davis Chapter (USA)*
- *UNA-USA East Bay Chapter (USA)*
- *UN-USA Golden Empire - Grass Valley (USA)*
- *UNA-USA Silicon Valley (USA)*
- *UNA-USA Mid-Peninsula Chapter (USA)*
- *UNA-USA Monterey Bay Chapter (USA)*
- *UNA-USA Northern California Division (USA)*
- *UNA-USA of San Diego (USA)*
- *UNA-USA Southern California Division (USA)*
- *United Sustainability Group (Germany)*
- *Uniting for Peace (UK)*
- *Universal Peace Federation (UK)*
- *Utah Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (USA)*
- *Veterans for Peace Hector Black Chapter (USA)*
- *Veterans for Peace Linus Pauling Chapter (USA)*
- *Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility (USA)*
- *Western WA Fellowship of Reconciliation, Seattle Chapter (USA)*
- *Westminster United Nations Association (UK)*
- *WE The World (USA – International)*
- *WFM Youth Forum (Japan)*
- *Wimbledon Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament-Disarmament Coalition (UK)*
- *Women Against War (USA)*
- *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (USA)*
- *Women's Federation for World Peace International UN Office Vienna (Austria)*
- *World Academy of Art and Science (USA – International)*
- *World Beyond War Aotearoa (Aotearoa-New Zealand)*
- *World Citizens Association of Australia (Australia)*
- *World Federalist Movement Canada (Canada)*
- *World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy*
- *World Federalist Movement Int. Members Organization*
- *World Future Council*
- *World's Youth for Climate Justice (Netherlands – International)*
- *WPC Media Private Limited (Sri Lanka)*
- *Yorkshire CND (UK)*
- *Young World Federalists (Switzerland – International)*
- *Youth Fusion (Czech Republic – International)*
- *80,000 Voices (UK)*