



Preventing war, including nuclear war, and strengthening international mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflicts

Submission from Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace, Basel Peace Office, UNFOLD ZERO and World Future Council for the Peace and Security theme, Global Futures Forum and UN Summit of the Future

PROPOSAL:

We propose that priorities for the *Global Futures Forum*, *Peoples Pact for the Future* and the *UN Summit of the Future* include **Preventing war, especially nuclear war and strengthening international mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of conflicts**. These priorities should be advanced by the *Peoples Pact for the Future* and the *UN Summit of the Future*:

1. **Affirming the inadmissibility** of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, and **calling on** all nuclear armed states to operationalize this by adopting no-first-use policies, taking all nuclear forces off alert and ending the stationing or deployment of nuclear forces in foreign territories;
2. **Highlighting the obligations** under the UN Charter to refrain from the threat or use of force in international relations and to resolve international disputes through peaceful means including by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.
3. **Calling on all UN member states** to accede to the compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice for disputes which are unable to be resolved through other peaceful means, and **setting a goal** of 2035 to achieve universal acceptance of such compulsory jurisdiction.
4. **Reaffirming the mandate of the UN General Assembly** to act in order to prevent or respond to acts of aggression when the Security Council fails to do so.

BACKGROUND

- Addressing the threat of use of nuclear weapons

On January 24, 2023 the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists set the hands of the Doomsday Clock to [90 Seconds to Midnight](#) indicating the extremely high level of risks of potential nuclear war, climate collapse and other existential threats to current and future generations.

Leaders of the G20 countries, meeting in Indonesia last November, recognized the increased risk of nuclear war and affirmed in the [Bali Leaders' Declaration](#) that "*the threat or use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible.*" This should be reaffirmed by the Global Futures Forum and UN Summit of the Future. But just words are not enough. The nuclear armed and allied states should implement/operationalize this by:

- a) *Adopting no-first-use policies*. No-first-use policies are an important step back from the nuclear brink to ensure that nuclear war is never initiated. Adoption of no-first-use policies also opens the door to negotiations by the nuclear armed and allied states for the total abolition and elimination of nuclear weapons. See [Why no-first-use](#), by [NoFirstUse Global](#), a coalition of over 90 organizations from around the world;

- b) *Taking all nuclear forces off alert.* Currently Russia and the United States have hundreds of their nuclear weapons primed and ready for use within minutes on ‘launch-on-warning’ operational readiness. This increases the risk of nuclear war through accident, miscalculation or crisis escalation;
- c) *Ending the stationing or deployment of nuclear forces in foreign territories;* USA currently deploys nuclear weapons in five NATO countries. Russia has indicated that they might deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus.

- **Reaffirming UN Charter obligations**

UN Member states are obliged under the UN Charter to refrain from the threat or use of force in international relations and to resolve international disputes through peaceful means including by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice. These obligations need to be constantly highlighted in order to remind governments to adhere to them, and to empower civil society to ensure that their governments don’t waver from them.

- **Compulsory jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice**

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the world’s primary legal body for ensuring compliance with international obligations, including obligations under the UN Charter prohibiting the threat or use of force and requiring countries to resolve their disputes in peaceful ways. All UN member countries are parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice (UN Charter Article 93) and accept that the International Court of Justice is the ‘*principal judicial organ of the United Nations*’ (UN Charter, Article 92). However, only 73 countries currently accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ (See [Declarations of Acceptance of ICJ jurisdiction](#)) for any legal dispute (a much larger number accept compulsory jurisdiction involving disputes under specific treaties).

[Note that this recommendation is advanced in more depth in the proposal [Peace Constitutions and ICJ jurisdiction to implement the UN Charter prohibition on war](#)].

- **UN General Assembly acting to prevent/address aggression**

UNGA Resolution 76/262 entitled [Standing mandate for a General Assembly debate when a veto is cast in the Security Council](#), was adopted in light of Russia’s veto power to block UN Security Council actions to address their illegal invasion of Ukraine. This mandate of the UN General Assembly to take action to prevent aggression or respond to acts of aggression should be affirmed by the Global Futures Forum and the UN Summit of the Future in order to ensure the UNGA undertakes such action in similar situations in the future.

About the organizations:

Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace

www.facebook.com/nzpeacelaw

Aotearoa Lawyers for Peace (ALP) is an organization of lawyers and law students from Aotearoa (New Zealand) working to abolish nuclear weapons, increase respect for international law and abolish war. ALP is the New Zealand affiliate of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, and is a founding partner of UNFOLD ZERO, which promotes United Nations initiatives for nuclear disarmament.

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Basel Peace Office

www.baselpeaceoffice.org www.facebook.com/BaselPeaceOffice

Basel Peace Office is a coalition established by five Swiss and four international organizations to advance the peace and security of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Basel Peace Office makes connections between inter-related issues – including peace, the climate, nuclear disarmament, human rights and sustainable development - and builds cooperation amongst key constituencies including mayors, parliamentarians, religious leaders, academics, youth/students, women, lawyers, medical professionals, government officials and UN entities.

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UNFOLD ZERO

www.unfoldzero.org www.facebook.com/unfoldzero

UNFOLD ZERO is a platform established by a coalition of eight international organizations for promoting United Nations initiatives and processes for achieving the peace and security of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

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World Future Council

www.worldfuturecouncil.org www.facebook.com/wfc.goodpolicies

The World Future Council (WFC) was established to promote effective policies to ensure a peaceful and sustainable future. WFC consists of 50 eminent global change-makers from governments, parliaments, civil society, academia, the arts and business who have already successfully created change. They are supported by a staff of experts that work with the councillors to identify, develop, highlight and spreading effective, future-just solutions for current challenges humanity is facing.

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