

PSR seeks justice for the unwilling, unknowing, and uncompensated victims of nuclear weapons use and testing

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY PASS HISTORIC RESOLUTION SUPPORTING VICTIM ASSISTANCE & ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION FOR PEOPLE AND NATIONS IMPACTED BY NUCLEAR TESTING



INTRODUCTION

On 27 October at the UN General Assembly First Committee - the committee responsible for matters of nuclear disarmament - passed a new resolution "addressing the legacy of nuclear weapons: providing victim assistance and environmental remediation to Member States affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons."

THE RESOLUTION

"Encourages further international cooperation and discussions to assist victims, and assess and remediate environments contaminated by the use and testing of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, including through bilateral, regional and multilateral frameworks, such as relevant treaties."

"Urges that Member States, which have used or tested nuclear weapons or any other nuclear explosive devices, to share, as appropriate, technical and scientific information regarding the humanitarian and environmental consequences of such use and testing with Member States affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons or any other nuclear explosive devices, and calls upon Member States, in a position to do so, to contribute technical and financial assistance, as appropriate;"

"Recognizes that the responsibility to address the harms resulting from a detonation of using or testing a nuclear weapon or any other nuclear explosive device lies, respectively, with the Member States that have done so."

"Requests the Secretary-General to seek the views and proposals of Member States regarding efforts and ongoing needs related to victim assistance and environmental assessment and remediation, and to submit a substantive report, with an annex containing those views, to the General Assembly at its seventy-ninth session, for further discussion by Member States."

SUMMARY

- Introduced by the Republics of Kazakhstan and Kiribati - the co-chairs of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Article 6 and 7 working groups - the resolution seeks to gain wider recognition and support for the important humanitarian clauses of the TPNW.
- The resolution recognizes the consequence of use and testing while emphasizing the importance of victim assistance and environmental remediation to supporting the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- The resolution not only encourages countries to support these causes in their own country but crucially to share resources and technical and scientific information with all affected states.
- This is important due to the historic tendencies of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States to test their nuclear weapons in their former colonial dependencies. The two states bringing forward the resolution have dealt with the devastating impacts of nuclear testing conducted by the Soviet Union and UK/U.S. respectively.
- Nuclear weapons states have a special responsibility to address the harms of testing and use according to Article 7(6) of the TPNW.

THE ISOLATION OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS CARTEL

- 171 countries voted in favor of this remarkable resolution.
- Only France, North Korea, Russia, and the United Kingdom voted against it.
- 6 countries abstained: China, India, Israel, Pakistan, United States, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- This resolution further highlights the isolation of the nuclear weapons states. Acting as global pariah's not only do they hold the world hostage to their militaristic policies but also refuse to accept the gross consequences of their actions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Throughout the First Committee, over 50 state and civil society delegations expressed their support for the TPNW and expressed hopes for the Second Meeting of States Parties in November 2023.
- Indonesia, Brazil, Nepal and Djibouti expressed their intention to ratify the TPNW.