



Joint Appeal for the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons September 26, 2026

The United Nations, which was established more than 80 years ago, affirmed nuclear disarmament as a top priority in its very first resolution, [A/Res/1\(1\)](#).

In 2013, frustrated at the lack of progress, the UN General Assembly declared September 26 as the *International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons* ([A/Res/68/32](#)). This [international day](#) serves to enhance public awareness and education about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and the necessity for their total elimination. Annually on September 26, the UN also holds a high-level meeting of world leaders to discuss “urgent and effective measures” to achieve global nuclear disarmament.

The designation of this date is not arbitrary: one of many times humanity has come perilously close to nuclear war was September 26, 1983, at the height of the Cold War. A nuclear war was narrowly averted when Colonel Stanislav Petrov, Duty Officer at a Russian nuclear early warning facility, broke protocol by not affirming to senior command an apparent incoming ballistic missile attack from the United States (later confirmed as a false alarm). Two years later, the countries at the brink [jointly declared](#) that “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.” This commitment has been reaffirmed in intervening years, including in a [statement by the P-5 states in 2022](#) and in the [Pact for the Future](#) adopted by consensus at the [UN Summit of the Future](#) (September 2024).

However, today the risk of nuclear war by accident, miscalculation, crisis escalation, or malicious intent, is higher than ever with the [Doomsday Clock](#) ticking closer to midnight than in 1983. The use of nuclear weapons by any of the nine nuclear-armed States or their nuclear allies would have catastrophic human, economic, and environmental consequences. The use of just a small fraction of the 12,300 nuclear weapons in the world’s stockpiles could end life as we know it. In addition, the [\\$100 billion USD spent annually on nuclear weapons](#) is sorely needed to support [peacemaking, environmental protection, and other urgent needs of humanity and the planet](#), as expressed through the Sustainable Development Goals.

The world’s highest court, the International Court of Justice, [affirmed](#) that the threat and use of nuclear weapons is generally illegal and that there is a universal obligation for states to negotiate in good faith to achieve comprehensive nuclear disarmament. States currently relying on nuclear weapons for their security have an obligation to replace these policies with approaches based on international law and common security, as outlined in the UN Charter.

The *Pact for the Future* includes commitments to prevent nuclear war and achieve the global elimination of nuclear weapons. UN Member States should use the opportunity of the *International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons* and UN High Level Plenary Meeting on September 26 to announce concrete plans to achieve these goals.

We, the undersigned, therefore call on leaders, legislators, and officials at all levels of governance (local/municipal, states, countries, and regional bodies) to:

1. Affirm that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible;
2. Advance tangible measures by nuclear-armed and allied States to implement this obligation, including standing down nuclear forces and adopting policies never to initiate a nuclear war;
3. Pledge to achieve the global elimination of nuclear weapons no later than the UN’s centennial anniversary in 2045, and immediately undertake actions, including through multilateral negotiations, to implement this pledge;
4. Cut nuclear weapons budgets, and end public and private investments in the nuclear weapons industry; and
5. Redirect these funds to strengthen the United Nations, advance peacekeeping and conflict resolution, accelerate steps to protect the climate, and meet human and economic needs as required under Article 26 of the UN Charter.

No time is better than 2026, the 81st anniversaries of the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the establishment of the United Nations, to undertake these actions to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world to protect current and future generations.

Click [here](#) to endorse the Appeal. For more information visit [Nuclear Abolition Day](#).
