

## **WILPF Statement on the 63rd anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki**

6 and 9 August mark the anniversaries of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States. Two nuclear weapons, dropped deliberately by the world's military superpower on these cities in Japan, killed 200,000 civilians by the end of 1945 and many more through cancer, mutations, and birth defects in the years that followed; sparked an arms race of insane proportions; and helped shape the hyper-militaristic world order with which we are now collectively plagued.

On 6 and 9 August, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) remembers with horror the destruction and devastation wrought upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And every day of the year, WILPF works to prevent nuclear weapons from ever being used again through our project Reaching Critical Will, which helps increase the preparation and participation of non-governmental organizations in disarmament diplomacy by providing information, analysis, and primary documents.

The development and maintenance of nuclear weapons have an ongoing legacy of destruction, the burden of which has primarily been borne by marginalized people around the world, especially indigenous peoples. Land previously used for nuclear testing often retains radioactive contamination and the infrastructure for military colonization. Meanwhile, the military-industrial complex benefits from ongoing development and maintenance of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.

Today, approximately 27,000 nuclear warheads exist, most of them in the arsenals of the permanent five members of the Security Council—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—the countries supposedly in charge of maintaining international peace and security. The governments of most of these states have plans to modernize their nuclear weapons or delivery systems, in continuing violation of Article VI of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which says, “Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.” Three states outside of the NPT—India, Israel, and Pakistan—also possess nuclear weapons, and five non-nuclear weapon states—Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey—host approximately 240 US nuclear weapons on their soil under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Strategic Concept, also in violation of the NPT.

WILPF works to expose the threat that the hypocritical policies of these states pose to the world and to generate commitment to an alternative future, a world without nuclear weapons. WILPF urges all governments and citizens to unconditionally reject all arguments put forward for the continued existence of nuclear weapons and encourages everyone to work for the elimination of all nuclear arsenals and for the redirection of nuclear weapon expenditures to meet environmental, social, cultural, health, and educational needs.

WILPF calls on all NPT nuclear weapon states to fully implement their Treaty obligations and to cease modernizing their arsenals as a step toward the good faith pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the ultimate goal of a nuclear weapon free world. We also call on nuclear weapon states that are not party to the NPT—India, Israel, and Pakistan—to verifiably disarm their nuclear weapons and join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states. We call on all states to support in word and action the ratification and negotiation of relevant treaties, including the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, a fissile materials treaty, and a nuclear weapons convention.

For more information about WILPF's work on nuclear disarmament, please go to [www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org).