

UN Disarmament Week**From: António Guterres**

Disarmament must be brought back to the centre of our common efforts for peace and security.

Disarmament Week seeks to promote awareness and better understanding of disarmament issues and their cross-cutting importance. Starting on 24 October, the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, the week-long annual observance was first called for in the Final Document of the General Assembly's 1978 special session on disarmament ([resolution S-10/2](#)). In 1995, the General Assembly invited governments, as well as NGOs, to continue taking an active part in Disarmament Week ([resolution 50/72 B](#), 12 December 1995) in order to promote a better understanding among the public of disarmament issues.

Throughout history, countries have pursued disarmament to build a safer, more secure world and to protect people from harm. Since the foundation of the United Nations, disarmament and arms control have played a critical role in preventing and ending crises and armed conflict. Heightened tensions and dangers are better resolved through serious political dialogue and negotiation—not by more arms.

Weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, continue to be of primary concern, owing to their destructive power and the threat that they pose to humanity. The excessive accumulation and illicit trade in conventional weapons jeopardize international peace and security and sustainable development, while the use of heavy conventional weapons in populated areas is seriously endangering civilians. New and emerging weapon technologies, such as autonomous weapons, imperil global security and have received increased attention from the international community in recent years.

Measures for disarmament are pursued for many reasons, including to maintain international peace and security, uphold the principles of humanity, protect civilians, promote sustainable development, foster confidence and trust among States, and prevent and end armed conflict. Disarmament and arms control measures help ensure international and human security in the 21st Century and therefore must be an integral part of a credible and effective collective security system.

The United Nations continues to celebrate the efforts and involvement of a range of actors contributing to a safer, more peaceful common future through disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation efforts.

In a world threatened by weapons of mass destruction, conventional arms and emerging cyberwarfare, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres presented a [new agenda for disarmament](#) to save humanity, save lives and secure our common future.

GDAMS 2023 Appeal · War Costs Us the Earth

From: Global Campaign on Military Spending
Global Days of Action on Military Spending – April 13 to May 9, 2023

The world's militaries are responsible for roughly five percent of global Greenhouse Gas emissions, however their carbon footprint, as well as the various other ways that they contribute to climate breakdown, are rarely scrutinised. Our governments currently spend more than US\$2 trillion on militarisation, but military expansion is inconsistent with efforts to reach essential emissions targets and will exacerbate, not stem, the climate emergency. War and armed conflict lead, not only to death and destruction, but also to environmental devastation and climate breakdown. Although our governments may argue that such “defence” spending is necessary, it will ultimately render us defenceless in the face of the existential threat posed by the climate crisis.

Global heating poses a major and sustained risk to our planet's climatic cycles and the resultant weather-related disasters often exacerbate existing injustices – and this can lead to conflict for access to land and basic resources, as well as forced displacement. Tackling Climate change must involve dealing with other structural problems such as poverty, economic shocks and weakened institutions. This is particularly true in regions that have contributed the least to the climate crisis, yet are impacted the most by its devastating consequences.

As well as their carbon footprint, the world's military structures also contribute to the climate crisis in other key ways:

- Crucially, military spending diverts resources away from essential environmental and social spending, including initiatives to slow the speed of climate change, deal with loss and damage and to respond to weather emergencies.
- Military structures in the form of national armies, militarised police forces or private security companies are often deployed to protect the fossil fuel industry. This sector is one of the largest producers of GHG and military protection of it makes it complicit in these emissions.
- Although we urgently need to protect our ecosystems from environmental destruction, all too often when environmental activists take steps to safeguard their lands, rivers and seas, they are violently repressed by militarised security structures including the police, private security companies and, at times, the army.
- The nexus between fossil fuel and extractivism, and armed conflict and war is well documented, from the colonial period to the wars of today.
- More and more people are being forced from their homes due to extreme weather events brought about by climate change. In the same way that the border security apparatus currently contains

(Continued page 2)

(From page 1) **War Costs Us the Earth**

people and stops them from reaching safety or seeking asylum, the military will likely be further deployed to keep out those fleeing climate-related disasters.

– Moreover, the arms industry, which in many ways is the backbone of militarism, invests significant time and finance in corporate lobbying to advance its own profit-driven agenda. In recent years it has used the climate crisis as an opportunity to position itself as a key player in designing ‘greener’ weapons and has lobbied for more funding to be earmarked for that purpose. This approach prolongs and deepens the logic that drives militarism and war.

Political leadership has focused on hawkish politics and sabre-rattling, stoking tension and fear, instead of cultivating international relations based on mutual trust, diplomacy and cooperation – three components that are essential to tackle the global nature of the climate threat. Funds that could be used to mitigate or reverse climate breakdown, and to promote peaceful conflict transformation, disarmament and global justice initiatives, are instead being spent on militarising an already over-militarised world.

We urgently call on governments to:

- change course and focus on rapid, deep cuts to military spending, driving an arms race and fuelling war;
- demilitarise public policy including policies designed to tackle the climate crisis;
- implement human and common-security-centred policies that protect people and planet and not the profit-driven agenda of the arms and fossil fuel industries;
- create governance structures and alliances based on mutual trust and understanding, cooperation and true diplomacy, where conflict is resolved through dialogue, not war.

The opportunity cost of doing otherwise just can’t get any higher.

War costs us the Earth.

Politicians should wear ‘sponsor jackets’ like Nascar drivers, then we know who owns them.

Robin Williams

What reward should a good deed bring you? Only the joy you receive by performing it. And any other reward lessens the feeling of this joy.

Leo Tolstoy

Treated radioactive wastewater set to be released in ocean worries businesses in Japan

Mari Yamaguchi: The Associated Press Published July 24, 2023

IWAKI, JAPAN - Beach season has started across Japan, which means seafood for holiday makers and good times for business owners. But in Fukushima, that may end soon.

Within weeks, the tsunami-hit Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant is expected to start releasing treated radioactive wastewater into the sea, a highly contested plan still facing fierce protests in and outside Japan.

Residents worry that the water discharge, 12 years after the nuclear disaster, could deal another setback to Fukushima's image and hurt their businesses and livelihoods.

"Without a healthy ocean, I cannot make a living," said Yukinaga Suzuki, a 70-year-old innkeeper at Usuiso beach in Iwaki about 50 kilometres (30 miles) south of the plant. And the government has yet to announce when the water release will begin.

While officials say the possible impact would be limited to rumours, it's not yet clear if it will be damaging to the local economy. Residents say they feel "shikataganai" -- meaning helpless.

Suzuki has requested officials hold the plan at least until the swimming season ends in mid-August.

"If you ask me what I think about the water release, I'm against it. But there is nothing I can do to stop it as the government has one-sidedly crafted the plan and will release it anyway," he said. "Releasing the water just as people are swimming at sea is totally out of line, even if there is no harm."

The beach, he said, will be in the path of treated water travelling south on the Oyashio current from off the coast of Fukushima Daiichi. That's where the cold Oyashio current meets the warm, northbound Kuroshio, making it a rich fishing ground.

The government and the operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings, or TEPCO, have struggled to manage the massive amount of contaminated water accumulating since the 2011 nuclear disaster, and announced plans to release it to the ocean during the summer.

They say the plan is to treat the water, dilute it with more than a hundred times the seawater and then release it into the Pacific Ocean through an undersea tunnel. Doing so, they said, is safer than national and international standards require.

Suzuki is among those who are not fully convinced by the government's awareness campaign that critics say only highlights safety. "We don't know if it's safe yet," Suzuki said. "We just can't tell until much later."

The Usuiso area used to have more than a dozen family-run inns before the disaster. Now, Suzuki's half-century old Suzukame, which he inherited from his parents 30 years ago, is the only one still in business after surviving the tsunami. He heads a safety committee for the area and operates its only beach house.

Suzuki says his inn guests won't mention the water issue if they cancel their reservations and he would only have to guess. "I serve fresh local fish to my guests, and the beach house is for visitors to rest and chill out. The ocean is the source of my livelihood."

The March 11, 2011, earthquake and tsunami destroyed the Fukushima Daiichi plant's cooling systems, causing three reactors to melt and contaminating their cooling water, which has since leaked continuously. The water is collected, filtered and stored in some 1,000 tanks, which will reach their capacity in early 2024. (Continued page 3)

Our Mission

The Boundary Peace Initiative represents people of diverse backgrounds officially brought together in 2002 because of our mutual concern for the rise in world conflict. Our mandate is to participate in multilateral non-violent conflict resolution in support of global human rights, ecological and environmental sustainability and international law through education, sharing of information, dialogue and activism locally and globally. We encourage and seek your participation in our mutual work for true peace based on social justice, equality, accountability, integrity, honour, respect, etc in order to build a better world today and future generations.

BPI web site: www.boundarypeaceinitiative.org

For info contact Laura at (250) 444-0524 or (250) 442-0434 or email: L4peace@telus.net.

UN International Days

Oct. 1: International Day of Older Persons

Oct. 2: World Habitat Day & International Day of Non-Violence

Oct. 10: World Mental Health Day (WHO)

Oct. 11: International Day of the Girl Child

Oct. 13: International Day for Disaster Risk Reduction

Oct. 15: International Day of Rural Women

Oct. 16: World Food Day

Oct. 17: International Day for the eradication of Poverty

Oct. 24-30: Disarmament Week

Oct. 24: United Nations Day & World Development Information Day

Oct. 29: International Day of Care and Support

(From last column) **Treated radioactive wastewater** which makes pre-release sampling of the water important for data analysis, said University of Tokyo environmental chemistry professor Katsumi Shozugawa.

He said the release can be safely carried out and trusted "only if TEPCO strictly follows the procedures as planned." Diligent sampling of the water, transparency and broader cross-checks - not just limited to IAEA and two labs commissioned by TEPCO and the government -- is key to gaining trust, Shozugawa said.

Japanese officials characterize the treated water as a tritium issue, but it also contains dozens of other radionuclides that leaked from the damaged fuel. Though they are filtered to legally releasable levels and their environmental impact deemed minimal, they still require close scrutiny, experts say.

TEPCO and government officials say tritium is the only radionuclide inseparable from water and is being diluted to contain only a fraction of the national discharge cap, while experts say heavy dilution is needed to also sufficiently lower concentration of other radionuclides. (Continued page 4)

(From page 2) **Treated radioactive wastewater**

The government and TEPCO say the water must be removed to make room for the plant's decommissioning, and to prevent accidental leaks from the tanks because much of the water is still contaminated and needs retreatment.

Katsumasa Okawa, who runs a seafood business in Iwaki, says those tanks containing contaminated water bother him more than the treated water release. He wants to have them removed as soon as possible, especially after seeing "immense" tanks occupying much of the plant complex during his visit few years ago.

An accidental leak would be "an ultimate strikeout ... It will cause actual damage, not reputation," Okawa says. "I think the treated water release is unavoidable." It's eerie, he adds, to have to live near the damaged plant for decades.

Fukushima's badly hit fisheries community, tourism and the economy are still recovering. The government has allocated 80 billion yen (US\$573 million) to support still-feeble fisheries and seafood processing and combat potential reputation damage from the water release.

His wife evacuated to her parents' home in Yokohama, near Tokyo with their four children, but Okawa stayed in Iwaki to work on reopening the store. In July, 2011, Okawa resumed sale of fresh fish -- but none from Fukushima.

Local fishing was returning to normal operation in 2021 when the government announced the water release plan.

Fukushima's local catch today is still about one-fifth of its pre-disaster levels due to a decline in the fishing population and smaller catch sizes.

Japanese fishing organizations strongly opposed Fukushima's water release, as they worry about further damage to the reputation of their seafood as they struggle to recover. Groups in South Korea and China have also raised concerns, turning it a political and diplomatic issue. Hong Kong has vowed to ban the import of aquatic products from Fukushima and other Japanese prefectures if Tokyo discharges treated radioactive wastewater into the sea.

China plans to step up import restrictions and Hong Kong restaurants began switching menus to exclude Japanese seafood. Agricultural Minister Tetsuro Nomura acknowledged some fishery exports from Japan have been suspended at Chinese customs, and that Japan was urging Beijing to honour science.

"Our plan is scientific and safe, and it is most important to firmly convey that and gain understanding," TEPCO official Tomohiko Mayuzumi told The Associated Press during its plant visit. Still, people have concerns and so a final decision on the timing of the release will be a "a political decision by the government," he said.

Japan sought support from the International Atomic Energy Agency for transparency and credibility. IAEA's final report, released this month and handed directly to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, concluded that the method meets international standards and it's environmental and health impacts would be negligible. IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi said radioactivity in the water would be almost undetectable and there is no cross-border impact.

Scientists generally agree that environmental impact from the treated water would be negligible, but some call for more attention on dozens of low-dose radionuclides that remain in the water, saying data on their long-term effect on the environment and marine life is insufficient.

Radioactivity of the treated water is so low that once it hits the ocean it will quickly disperse and become almost undetectable,

(Continued next column)

WHAT'S UP?

There are no events planned for October by the BPI but if something arises we will let people know. Thank you for your ongoing support throughout our 21 years of existence. We look forward to working with our local community and beyond to create a safe space for peaceful living and harmony to grow and expand beyond our imagination.

Survivors of Doukhobor children taken to the New Denver **Residential School** in the 1950s are asking for our support for their deceased family members, for survivors and themselves to have a voice at the Government table. They are asking that the promised apology also include the implementation of the recommendations put forward by the Ombudsperson's report.

For a digital copy of a template letter and more information please email:
lostvoicesofnewdenver@gmail.com



Voice your opinion to the Prime Minister and all MPs. Free postage: {Name of MP}, Parliament Buildings, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0A6

Go to the Government of Canada website for MP email and phone contact at:
<http://www.canada.gc.ca>

The BPI welcomes your input. Articles may not be common consensus of members. To submit articles contact Laura at **250-444-0524 or 250-442-0434** or email **L4peace@telus.net**.

The BPI is an affiliate of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, Peace Pledge Union, Abolition 2000, CNANW and works with various local and global peace, social justice and environmental groups.

(From page 3) **Treated radioactive wastewater**

"If you ask their impact on the environment, honestly, we can only say we don't know," Shozugawa, referring to dozens of radionuclides whose leakage is not anticipated at normal reactors, he says. "But it is true that the lower the concentration, the smaller the environmental impact," and the plan is presumably safe, he said.

The treated water is a less challenging task at the plant compared to the deadly radioactive melted debris that remain in the reactors, or the continuous, tiny leaks of radioactivity to the outside.

Shozugawa, who has been regularly measuring radioactivity of groundwater samples, fish and plants near Fukushima Daiichi plant since the disaster, says his 12 years of sampling work shows small amounts of radioactivity from the Fukushima Daiichi has continuously leaked into groundwater and the port at the plant. He says its potential impact on the ecosystem also requires closer attention than the controlled release of the treated water.

TEPCO denies new leaks from the reactors and attributes high caesium in fish sometimes caught inside the port to sediment contamination from initial leaks and rainwater drainage.

A local fisheries cooperative executive Takayuki Yanai told a recent online event that forcing the water release without public support only triggers reputational damage and hurts Fukushima fisheries. "We don't need additional burden to our recovery."

"Public understanding is lacking because of distrust to the government and TEPCO," he said. "The sense of safety only comes from trust."

Do the Math

By: Robert Macrae: Castlegar, BC

In the 07-Sep-23 edition of the *West Kootenay Advertiser*, journalist Trevor Crawley's quotes Conservative MP John Brassard, "banks are going to have a role, potentially with increased amortization periods as homeowners needing to renew their mortgage look to reign in costly payments."

Do the math: increasing amortization payments is very costly for homeowners. The median Castlegar house price is \$482,000, a buyer makes a 20% down payment and mortgages the balance (\$385,600) at 5.25%. If the amortization period is 25 years, monthly payments are \$2,297.86. Total interest paid after 300 months is \$303,757.96. If the amortization period is 30 years, monthly payments drop modestly to \$2,115.82, but total interest paid after 360 months skyrockets to \$376,094.96 (a \$72,336.99 or 24% hike). Those are after tax dollars the homeowner could have saved for retirement: a steep price for a \$182.04 or 8% cut in monthly mortgage payments.

Increased amortization periods are a gift to financial institutions paid for by homeowners, the people the Conservatives claim they want to help. Who needs that kind of help?

A better solution to lower high housing prices is to increase the supply of affordable (cost recovery) housing. The private sector won't undertake affordable housing projects because their goal is to maximize profits for their investors: no profit potential, no private sector investment. To increase the supply of affordable housing (for seniors, the marginalized, low income working families, etc.) a government would build and manage enough publicly owned affordable housing to reduce the demand for private housing. When private housing demand falls, its cost will fall: simple supply and demand economics. Tax dollars invested in affordable housing are recovered in rent.

Increased amortization periods are a cash transfer from homeowners to financial institutions. Publicly owned affordable housing recovers tax dollars invested and lowers private housing costs.