

Vital Signs

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International
Physicians
for the Prevention
of Nuclear War

Nobel Peace Laureate

The vital role of youth in safeguarding our future

As we confront the immediate danger of nuclear war, we must plan for the future. Delegitimizing and abolishing nuclear weapons is not a sprint but a marathon. Attracting and supporting young activists to grow and sustain our movement is therefore at the top of IPPNW's list of priorities.

For more than 40 years, medical students and young doctors have been central to IPPNW's work. They have led education and advocacy efforts through bike tours and meetings with parliamentarians, presented to other student groups and to high-level government officials, held top leadership positions, and

used their unique perspectives to advance change.

Today, young people are navigating an increasingly unstable world marked by unprecedented violence and risk: catastrophic wars that could easily escalate to the use of nuclear weapons; extreme weather events due to the growing climate crisis; and the rise of unregulated emerging technologies, including the integration of artificial intelligence in war fighting and possibly nuclear command and control. IPPNW medical students and young doctors around the world are using modern tools and strategies to push back against these new deadly realities.

With some ninety percent of Gen Z reportedly active on social media, medical students are using Instagram, TikTok, and IPPNW's Peace and Health Blog to share information with an audience that cannot be reached through traditional

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"One mistake away from catastrophe"

On September 26, at United Nations Headquarters in New York, program director Molly McGinty addressed the High-level Meeting on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. In demanding urgent action to prevent nuclear war, she underscored the fact that a third of the human population would likely starve to death in the aftermath of a so-called limited nuclear war involving just 3% of the world's arsenals. Molly was one of two civil society leaders

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(From left) Seth Sheldon and Melissa Parke of ICAN, Molly McGinty, and Kazakh activist Aigerim Seitenova attend the UNGA in September.

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Nuclear abolition news and updates

For more information, contact Molly McGinty (mmcginty@ippnw.org)

Celebrating peace and climate champions

A packed house at the Ikeda Center in Cambridge, MA was the scene of the annual Global Health and Peace Awards on September 21. IPPNW and Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility (GBPSR) established the awards seven years ago to recognize activists for exceptional work on climate action and nuclear disarmament. The event once again featured a beautiful performance by a quartet from the Longwood Symphony Orchestra.

Our 2024 honorees were Drs. Elaine Scarry and Richard Clapp, both of whom have informed and inspired legions of people to get involved in the movement for a better future through their prolific writing and public speaking.

We also honored Robert Jay Lifton, MD—who turned 98 in May—with our first-ever

Lifetime Achievement Award for his unparalleled contributions to global understanding of the psychopathology of war and nuclearism. Dr. Lifton, a charter member of IPPNW, attended the First IPPNW World Congress at Airlie House, Virginia in 1981, and was a co-editor of IPPNW's groundbreaking book *Last Aid: The Medical Dimensions of Nuclear War*, in 1982.

Among the evening's many inspiring moments was hearing from our Boston-area Nuclear Abolition Youth Awardees for 2024: Maria Udalova, a senior at Brookline High School and advocate with Students for Nuclear Disarmament, and Talia Wilcox, a senior at Tufts University and, Co-President of the newly formed Tufts University Nuclear Activists.

Congratulations to all of our 2024 honorees!



IPPNW Climate Working Group members, including COP delegate Dr. Dennis Opondo (center), presented on the twin threats of nuclear war and the climate crisis at the UN in Nairobi, May 2024.

Disarmament for climate justice

From 11 to 22 November, the 29th UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) will take place in Baku, Azerbaijan. For the second time, with the support of our Climate Working Group, IPPNW is sending an official international delegation—Yusuf Dominic, immediate-past International Student Representative from Nigeria; Dr. Bimal Khadka, IPPNW Board Member from Nepal; Dr. Dennis Opondo, junior doctor and IPPNW Kenya leader; and Laura Wunder, a staff member at IPPNW-Germany—to bring human and environmental health to the table and emphasize the role disarmament must play in climate fora.

[More online at
ippnw.org](https://www.ippnw.org)



The seventh annual IPPNW/GBPSR Global Health and Peace Awards recognized the work of peace and climate activists. From left: IPPNW executive director Michael Christ, Dr. Richard Clapp, Dr. Elaine Scarry, Maria Udalova, Talia Wilcox, IPPNW program director Molly McGinty, and GBPSR executive director Anna Linakis.

The vital role of youth

(Continued from page 1)

means. In the past month alone, students from Germany, Kenya, and the United States used online platforms to amplify their participation in high-level meetings with movement partners, publications in medical journals, and more [see pg. 4-5].

One notable virtual initiative is an ongoing online medical student series hosted by Walusungu Mtonga and Stella Ziegler, IPPNW's International Student Representatives. With sessions ranging from the health impacts of nuclear testing to a skills sharing workshop on writing and publishing op-eds, this bi-monthly series provides an accessible platform for current and prospective IPPNW members to meet and learn from one another despite barriers to travel. In 2025 in the lead up to the Third Meeting of States Parties (MSP) to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), our students will release an online medical student toolkit—written by young leaders, for young leaders—outlining actions students can take to enact change. Building on the work done at the grassroots level, participation in UN disarmament fora remains a cornerstone of our young leaders' efforts.

Since its adoption at the UN General Assembly in 2017, our medical students have been champions of the landmark TPNW. At the Second MSP to the TPNW in 2023, medical students and young leaders comprised a fourth of IPPNW's total delegation. These young leaders presented at official events, coordinated meetings with their State delegations, and co-drafted and presented statements on the floor of the UN. At the upcoming Third MSP, our medical students will build on previous contributions and strengthen their impact within the halls of the UN and beyond.



International Student Representative Stella Ziegler (left), was IPPNW's lead delegate to the WMA General Assembly and Junior Doctors Network meeting in Helsinki, in October. Also pictured are WMA President Dr Lujain Alqodmani and IPPNW Co-President Dr. Kati Juva.

Expanding the voice and impact of our medical students, junior doctors, and young leaders will remain a top priority for IPPNW in the years ahead.

With increased activity comes the need for stronger partnerships. In recent years, our medical students have strengthened collaboration with various youth-led health organizations, including the World Medical Association's Junior Doctors Network (JDN) and the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA). Through joint events and dialogue, these partnerships pool resources and expertise to build the emerging medical voice against nuclear weapons.

Among the many young disarmament activists with whom IPPNW has partnerships, we played a foundational role in the establishment of Youth for TPNW in 2022. Hundreds of students, activists, artists, and leaders aged 18-30 are part of this global network committed to creating a nuclear weapons free world. With IPPNW's support, Youth for TPNW planned the

largest youth-led event at both the First and Second MSP. IPPNW medical students, including Walusungu, continue to serve on Youth for TPNW's Steering Committee and are planning youth activities for the upcoming Third MSP.

IPPNW provides a platform that empowers young people to positively contribute to their future and that of generations to come. Expanding the voice and impact of our medical students, junior doctors, and young leaders will remain a top priority for IPPNW in the years ahead. To stay up to date with their initiatives—including participating in the upcoming COP29, the online toolkit and 3MSP, national campaigning, and IPPNW's 24th World Congress in Nagasaki—follow IPPNW Students on all platforms.

One mistake away

(Continued from page 1)

selected to speak in the well of the UN, along with Aigerim Seitenova, a third-generation Kazakh testing survivor and leader of STOP: Steppe Youth Organization for Peace. "We are just one mistake, one miscalculation, one technical error away from catastrophe," Molly warned, calling on all UN Member States to fulfill "without delay" their disarmament obligations and join the TPNW, as "the best tool we have to achieve the needed safety and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

Follow IPPNW on Facebook and Instagram!



US students address the health threats of nuclear war

Three US IPPNW medical students recently published an article in *Medicine Conflict and Survival* an independent, designated journal of IPPNW, on the need for medical student activism on nuclear weapons. The student leaders call on all medical students to act on a local, university, and global level to enact change and build peace. The authors, Arthur Hale, Devin Kellis, Ghee Rye Lee, and their mentor, Dr. Joseph Hodgkin, challenged their peers with the question: “What are you going to do to create a nuclear weapons free world today?”



[Read and subscribe to MCS](#)



Johan Täng marches during Nuclear Ban week at the UN.

Swedish podcaster engages a new generation

Johan Täng, vice-student representative of Swedish Physicians Against Nuclear War (IPPNW-Sweden), is our newest podcaster under the moniker “Atombombspodden.” His latest show is a conversation with Yerdaulet Rakhmatulla, a young activist from Kazakhstan who is fighting to preserve and expand the knowledge about the terrible legacy of Soviet nuclear testing in his country and to motivate new generation of Kazakhs to join the campaign for a world free of nuclear weapons, including the creation of a new student chapter of IPPNW.

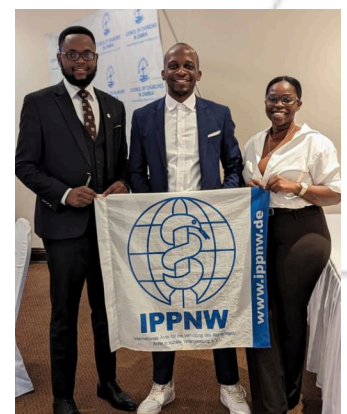
[Listen to Johan's podcast](#)



IPPNW youth in action

Zambian workshop on TPNW universalization

This May, IPPNW Zambia, along with ICAN, the ICRC, and the Council of Churches in Zambia, co-organized a workshop on “Advancing Zambia's ratification of the TPNW.” Stakeholders from various government ministries and civil society groups came together with a shared goal of working towards the ratification of the treaty. Nine IPPNW Zambia medical students and junior doctors participated in the session. IPPNW Co-International Student Representative, Walusungu Mtonga, gave a presentation on the growing danger of nuclear war and the importance of ratifying the treaty for regional peace and global security.



Walusungu Mtonga (left), Charles Bwale, and Nancy Chilufya participated at the workshop in Zambia.

East-West dialogue across new Cold-War lines



Dr. Olga Mironova (top center box on left) has been organizing regular Zoom meetings among young US and Russian health professionals.

Medical students and young doctors from the United States and Russia are extending the work of IPPNW's founders by transcending the current political divide to rebuild bonds of friendship, understanding and professional cooperation. In the 1980s this work was carried out through written correspondence and transatlantic travel. Today's young leaders are meeting monthly via Zoom. IPPNW co-president Dr. Olga Mironova, granddaughter of IPPNW's founding Soviet co-president Dr. Evgeni Chazov, has pioneered this renewed East-West dialogue, part of IPPNW's "Passing the Torch" effort to bolster the new generation of young health professionals in our movement.

Push for African leadership on the TPNW

IPPNW's Regional Vice President for Africa, Dr. Kelvin Kibet from Kenya, attended the African Conference on the Universalisation and Implementation of the TPNW, held in September 2024, which focused on Africa's role in advocating for a nuclear-weapon-free world. Kelvin presented key findings on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear war, in particular the risk of nuclear famine in Africa, and urged Kenya to ratify the TPNW without delay. Organized by South Africa and Austria with support from ICAN and the ICRC, the conference emphasized Africa's pivotal role in championing a nuclear-weapon-free world. African nations have been strong advocates for disarmament. Now, more than ever, their leadership is needed to accelerate global progress toward abolishing nuclear weapons.



Kelvin Kibet (left) describes how nuclear famine would affect Africa at TPNW conference in Ethiopia. Photo: Manayeh Gurmecha, ICRC



[Learn more at IPPNW's Peace and Health blog](#)

An urgent call to step back from the brink of nuclear war

As the risk of nuclear war grows, IPPNW brought together an eminent group of more than 80 Nobel Laureates, medical and scientific leaders, and notable public figures to call on the nuclear-armed states to act with urgency and step back from the brink of global catastrophe.

“Specifically, we call on them to declare unequivocally that they will not use nuclear weapons. We also call on them to sit down together to negotiate a timetable for the elimination of their nuclear arsenals, to establish the necessary verification and enforcement provisions and to join the TPNW, which has already been signed by nearly 100 nations. And we call on them to demonstrate significant progress in these negotiations by the 80th anniversary of the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki next August. We further call on the Secretary General of the United Nations and the leaders of all nations to do everything in their power to facilitate this process,” the statement reads in part.



[Full statement and list of signatories](#)

3MSP announced for 2025

Following the first two successful Meetings of States Parties (MSP) to the TPNW, the third MSP is taking place March 3-7, 2025 at UN Headquarters in New York. IPPNW will send an expert delegation of health professionals and medical students. Contact Program Director [Molly McGinty](#) to learn more and get involved.

World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates

Dr. Ira Helfand delivered a clarion call for nuclear disarmament at the 2024 World Summit of Nobel Peace



Dr. Helfand at the Nobel Peace Laureates summit in Mexico.

Laureates in Mexico in April. As ICAN’s representative to the Summit, Dr. Helfand presented the Laureates’ final declaration, calling for ceasefires in Ukraine and Gaza, and warning that both of these conflicts “carry the potential for escalation to nuclear war which would be the ultimate humanitarian disaster.” IPPNW was represented at the Summit by board chair Ruth Mitchell and Latin American regional vice president Jans Fromow.



[Read the Laureates Declaration](#)

Geneva Office presses case for new WHO health study on nuclear war

IPPNW’s Geneva Liaison Office has made substantial progress advocating that the World Health Organization (WHO) produce a 21st century update of its seminal 1987 report “Effects of Nuclear War on Health and Health Services.”

After a successful meeting with WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus and a special event during the 2024 World Health Assembly (WHA), we have been gathering co-sponsors for a WHA

resolution to authorize the new health study.

One step that is drawing nearly universal support at the UN is providing assistance to communities that have suffered from decades of nuclear weapons testing. Governments need to declassify secret data on the testing programs of the nuclear-armed states. We are advocating that the new WHO study include effects of nuclear testing, a subject that was not addressed in the original study.



Staff and volunteers at the Geneva liaison office.

Modern technologies can be a threat or a valuable tool

An interview with Kanon Nakaishi

Kanon Nakaishi is a third-year medical student at Nagasaki University School of Medicine, student representative of Japanese Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (JPPNW), and a student organizer of IPPNW's 24th World Congress, which will be held in Nagasaki next October.



VS: What inspired you to become involved with the Japanese Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (JPPNW)?

KN: As Japanese, it is essential for us to learn about the victims of the war that took place 80 years ago. Unfortunately, however, the younger generation tends to view war and atomic bombing as past events which may lead to the loss of interest in the threat of armed conflicts around us. Without exception, I was one of them until I visited Israel and Palestine two years ago, where I found that nuclear threat is still a current issue. I felt it was our responsibility, from Nagasaki and Hiroshima, to convey the immense impact of nuclear weapons and to prevent current conflicts from escalating into nuclear war.

VS: We are nearing the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Are there specific actions in Japan aimed to uplift the Hibakusha testimony and

promote nuclear disarmament? How can medical students participate?

KN: Last year, Nihon Hidankyo launched an online exhibition called the “No More Hiroshima and Nagasaki Museum,” where you can learn about the consequences of the atomic bombings and hear testimonies from Hibakusha. Although the exhibition is available in both Japanese and English, I hope medical students can contribute by translating it into their local languages. In particular, explaining the after effects of the atomic bombings requires a certain level of expertise to accurately convey the medical conditions.

VS: You’re on the planning committee of the IPPNW 24th World Congress in Nagasaki, Japan in October 2025. What role will medical students play in the Congress?

KN: Needless to say, the role of students is to be influencers who raise public awareness of nuclear threats. We are planning

to hold a 10-day bike tour from Hiroshima to Nagasaki. By organizing such an impactful event and leveraging social media, we can spread our message to a global audience more effectively. We invite medical students from around the World to join us in Nagasaki—the second and, so far, last city to be destroyed by a nuclear weapon in war—next year for the pre-Congress bike tour, student Congress, and all related activities. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

VS: In light of various emerging crises, including the threat of nuclear war, climate crisis, and unregulated AI, where do you find sources of hope?

KN: In my opinion, education holds the key to solving the crises we currently face. Modern technologies have two sides; they can be a threat or a valuable tool. I believe that education plays a crucial role in determining which technologies we choose and how we use them ethically. As more people become informed and aware of the interconnectedness of human creations, education will play an important role in establishing a global common understanding and enabling better choices.



IPPNW members from Nagasaki, Hiroshima, and Germany gathered at the Peace Park in Nagasaki in September 2023.



The 24th IPPNW World Congress in NAGASAKI

— A World Without Nuclear Weapons —
Nagasaki as the last A-bombed city



The 24th IPPNW World Congress — Main Congress —

Date: **October 2-4, 2025**

Venue: **DEJIMA MESSE, NAGASAKI,
JAPAN**

Hosted by: Japanese Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
Co-hosted by: Nagasaki Prefectural Medical Association

IPPNW urgently needs your support

Our world is closer to nuclear disaster than it has ever been.

IPPNW is sparing no effort to sound a global medical warning: We need urgent action to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Every penny of your donation goes toward eradicating the greatest immediate threat the world has ever known.

Please make your gift today by mailing back your donation card or by donating online at www.ippnw.org/donate.

Witnesses to horror: Hibakusha recognized with highest peace honor

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has awarded the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize to Nihon Hidankyo, a grassroots group of Japanese survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, "for its efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and for demonstrating through witness testimony that

nuclear weapons must never be used again."

As we approach the 80th anniversaries of the atomic bombings, the ceaseless efforts of the Hibakusha to bear witness to the horrors of nuclear war remain central to our common goal of banning and eliminating nuclear weapons.

IPPNW's Dr. Masao Tomonaga, emeritus director of the Japanese Red Cross Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Hospital and an



Dr. Masao Tomonaga (left) with members of Nihon Hidankyo, the 2024 Nobel Peace Laureate.

atomic bomb survivor himself, will attend the Nobel ceremony at the invitation of the Nobel Committee. Dr. Tomonaga is also the president of IPPNW's 24th World Congress Organizing Committee.

IPPNW is a non-partisan federation of national medical organizations in 56 countries dedicated to safeguarding health by working to ban nuclear weapons and to address the impact of militarism and war on human health.

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