



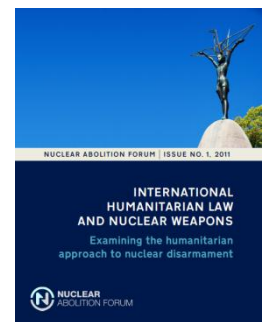
**NUCLEAR  
ABOLITION FORUM**  
Dialogue on the Process to Achieve and  
Sustain a Nuclear Weapons Free World

New York,  
21 October 2011

The *Nuclear Abolition Forum: Dialogue on the Process to Achieve and Sustain a Nuclear Weapons Free World* was launched at the Baha'i UN Office today, alongside the release of the inaugural edition of the Forum's periodic magazine.

The Forum is a joint project of eight leading organizations, Albert Schweitzer Institute, Global Security Institute (GSI), International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA), International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation (INESAP), International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), Middle Powers Initiative (MPI), Pugwash (Canada and Denmark branches) and the World Future Council (WFC). An additional sixty-four disarmament experts serve as consultants. It is hosted by the WFC's London Office.

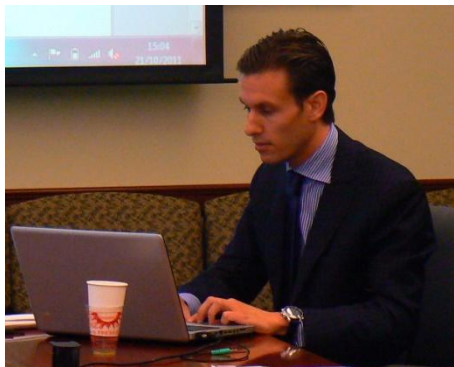
The Forum consists of a [dedicated website](#) for posting articles and discussing key nuclear abolition aspects and initiatives, and a periodical (available in hardcopy and as online PDF), which will focus on specific issues and elements (technical, legal, institutional and political) for achieving and sustaining a world free of nuclear weapons. The inaugural issue of the magazine has as its theme the **application of International Humanitarian Law to nuclear weapons** and comprises articles from a range of experts. Please click [here](#) to download the pdf. Hard-copies are available from the [UN Office](#) of the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Arms and the [London Office](#) of the World Future Council. Donations to cover postage and packaging are appreciated.



In his [opening remarks](#) at the launch event, the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Sergio Duarte, highlighted the appropriateness of the Forum's first issue to focus on the application of international humanitarian law to nuclear weapons. "Victor Hugo once wrote that 'You can resist an invading army; you cannot resist an idea whose time has come'—and IHL surely represents one of those ideas," Ambassador Duarte remarked. He went on to "welcome the emphasis placed by the architects of the Nuclear Abolition Forum in rekindling and sustaining a dialogue over fundamental questions relating to the achievement of nuclear disarmament," and "commend it not just to all who already support abolition, but to all who still have an open mind to learning about what it has to offer, which is considerable."

Founder of the Nuclear Abolition Forum, Alyn Ware, gave some insight into the rationale behind its establishment. "The vision for a nuclear-weapons-free world has recently been advanced by leaders and high-level officials of key countries, including those possessing nuclear weapons. However, there are many challenges that need to be overcome and questions still to be addressed in order for governments to agree to abolish nuclear weapons. This independent forum provides a space to discuss, explore and find solutions to these issues."





Director of the Forum, Rob van Riet, explained what the Forum entails and how some of its interactive features work. “The Forum essentially does three things: first, it offers information on nuclear abolition-related issues; second, it provides a platform for users to share their thoughts on such issues; and third, it facilitates and fosters debate on some of these issues.” Mr. van Riet explained how next to the website, each edition of the Forum’s periodical will focus on a specific issue, the rationale behind this approach being that “edition-by-edition such key nuclear abolition aspects will be examined and critiqued, thereby paving the way for building the framework for achieving and sustaining a nuclear weapon-free world.”

John Burroughs of the Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy, who was Expert Editor for the inaugural issue, took the audience through the edition and noted how a focus on international humanitarian law can help move the debate “from national security to human and environmental security, from military requirements and doctrines to effects on human beings, their societies, and their environments, and from controlling the weapons to abolishing them.” In addition, he underlined the political opening for making progress on advancing such humanitarian approaches to nuclear disarmament, noting the Final Document of the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, which declared that the Conference



*“expresses its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and reaffirms the need for all states at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.”*



Finally, Reto Wollenmann, Counsellor at the Swiss Mission to the UN in Geneva, talked about how governments could benefit from having an independent forum devoted to fleshing out key aspects to nuclear abolition. He highlighted the importance of governments and civil society working together on advancing nuclear disarmament and expressed the hope that the Forum could facilitate such cooperation. Mr. Wollenmann noted to the readiness of the Swiss government to partake in the Forum.

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