SPECIAL PROCEDURES
UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

80 years after Hiroshima/Nagasaki, UN experts reiterate need for global nuclear disarmament amid grave global threats

GENEVA (13 August 2025)– As the world marks the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, UN human rights experts warned that humanity has failed to learn essential lessons from one of history's gravest crimes. They issue the following statement:

"Humanity has failed to learn essential lessons from one of history's gravest crimes.

The nuclear attacks by the United States that claimed 150,000 lives in Hiroshima and 80,000 in Nagasaki was not an isolated act of warfare, but part of a systematic campaign of dehumanisation and annihilation against Japanese civilians during World War II. This included racist propaganda depicting Japanese as vermin and subhuman, the Tokyo firebombing that killed 100,000 civilians, and the internment of Japanese Americans in concentration camps in the United States.

Eight decades later, the United States has never formally apologised or accepted responsibility for the catastrophic consequences and the grave wrong of deploying nuclear weapons against civilian populations in Japan. While a formal apology was eventually issued to Japanese Americans after decades of advocacy, the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain without adequate recognition and reparation.

We express grave concern that similar patterns of dehumanisation persist today. We witness eerily familiar rhetoric in contemporary conflicts, particularly in Palestine, where civilians are labelled 'human animals' and subjected to genocidal violence. The extensive loss of life and massive human rights violations evoke painful parallels with the nuclear attacks on Japan. Of particular concern is Israel's perpetration of these genocidal attacks, while it remains as the sole nuclear power in the Middle East, continuing to threaten regional stability with attacks against most of its neighbouring States, including attacks against nuclear facilities in Iran with unknown radiological and chemical consequences.

Racially marginalised and formerly colonised peoples, such as the indigenous Marshallese Islanders, experience adverse health and environmental impacts to this day, from the nuclear tests conducted by the United States when the Marshall Islands were a UN Trust Territory under its administration.

Nuclear saber-rattling has become disturbingly casual among world leaders, including recent threats exchanged between the world's largest nuclear powers. Despite the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion of 1996 on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, and legal obligations of States under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to engage in negotiations towards elimination of nuclear weapons, no meaningful progress has been made toward this goal.

As the UN Secretary-General clearly acknowledged in his 2023 Report "A New Agenda for Peace", global peace faces unprecedented risks. 'The asymmetries and inequities that exist among and within States, and the structural obstacles that sustain these, are as much a barrier to peace as they are for development and human rights,' he stated. The first goal of this Agenda for Peace is the elimination of nuclear weapons. The human right to peace, which is a precondition for the enjoyment of all human rights, cannot be realised if nuclear weapons continue to exist. Our collective failure, as States and peoples, to take this seriously, threatens the very survival of humanity.

We call for immediate action toward nuclear disarmament, formal acknowledgment of historical crimes such as the nuclear bombing of Japan, and an end to the dehumanising rhetoric that enables mass atrocities against civilian populations worldwide. Enhanced international cooperation and revitalised multilateralism, built upon renewed trust and solidarity, remain our only pathway to addressing the existential challenges confronting humanity."

ENDS

The experts:

- ***Balakrishnan Rajgopal,*** *Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing*
- ***George Katrougalos,*** *Independent expert on the promotion of a democratic and equitable international order*
- ***Gina Romero****, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association*
- ***Cecilia M Bailliet****, Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity*
- ***Attiya Waris,*** *Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt and other related international financial obligations of States on the full enjoyment of all human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights*
- ***Claudia Mahler****, Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons*
- ***Surya Deva****, Special Rapporteur on the right to development*
- ***Mai Sato,*** *Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic republic of Iran*
- ***Marcos A. Orellana,*** *Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes*
- ***Ms Ashwini K.P***, *Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance*
- ***Bina D'Costa (Chair),*** *Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent*
- ***Paula Gaviria Betancur,*** *Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons*
- ***Reem Alsalem****, Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, its causes and consequences.*

Special Rapporteurs/Independent Experts/Working Groups are independent human rights experts appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council. Together, these experts are referred to as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures experts work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN staff and do not receive a salary for their work. While the UN Human Rights office acts as the secretariat for Special Procedures, the experts serve in their individual capacity and are independent from any government or organization, including

OHCHR and the UN. Any views or opinions presented are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the UN or OHCHR.

Country-specific observations and recommendations by the UN human rights mechanisms, including the special procedures, the treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review, can be found on the Universal Human Rights Index https://uhri.ohchr.org/en/.

For inquiries and media requests, please contact: hrc-sr-housing@un.org.

Follow news related to the UN's independent human rights experts on X: @UN_SPExperts.
