Physicians responding to a grave threat to human health

As the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Cuban Missile Crisis recede into the past, the American public has become complacent about humanitarian harm that nuclear weapons can inflict.

Many experts contend that the likelihood of a nuclear catastrophe has gone up, not down, since the end of the Cold War. This is because of nuclear weapons proliferation to countries like India, Pakistan, and North Korea; tensions between nuclear-armed states; the likelihood of accidents, mistakes, or cyber attacks; and the danger of “non-state actors” acquiring weapons-grade nuclear materials.

PSR Security Program Priorities

Against this backdrop of increasing dangers, Physicians for Social Responsibility promotes human health in these ways:

- Educate Americans— including elected officials, civic leaders, health professionals, millennials and faith-based groups—about nuclear weapons dangers and paths to disarmament
- Directly advocate for United States diplomatic support for international negotiations toward a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty
- Promote sensible national legislation to prevent a new nuclear arms race by reining in U.S. plans for a trillion dollar nuclear weapon spending binge over the next 30 years.

Take Action

- Visit www.psr.org for more information and to download materials.
- Follow PSR Security on twitter: @psrsecurity
- Watch and share PSR’s award-winning 4-minute video, Joining the Conversation on Nuclear Weapons. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3D936QjnBgc&feature=youtu.be

The Humanitarian Impact Initiative


December, 2013: Physicians for Social Responsibility and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War released Nuclear Famine: Two Billion at Risk? (see reverse)

December, 2014: Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in Vienna — 158 countries attended (80% of nations in the world). For the first time, the U.S. and U.K. attended. Pope Francis delivered a compelling case for banning nuclear weapons and Austria launched the Humanitarian Pledge to work to legally prohibit nuclear weapons. By April, 2016, 126 nations had signed onto the Pledge.

June, 2015: At its annual meeting in Chicago, the American Medical Association adopted a PSR-sponsored resolution urging “the U.S. and all national governments to continue to work to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons.”

October, 2015: The United Nations General Assembly established an Open Ended Working Group to address concrete effective legal measures to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.

May, 2016: Four international health federations representing over 15 million health professionals submitted an unprecedented joint statement to the UN Open Ended Working group.

May, 2016: 126 nations requested the UN to “pursue an additional legal instrument” to prohibit nuclear weapons.
We already have a world food crisis: over 870 million are chronically undernourished, living on 1,750 calories or less a day. A nuclear conflict threatens to exacerbate this.

PSR released a report in December, 2013 titled Nuclear Famine: Two Billion People at Risk. In it, PSR physician Ira Helfand, MD documents the climate and economic impacts of a “limited” nuclear war between India and Pakistan, involving 100 Hiroshima-sized detonations. (less than 1% of the world’s arsenals.)

The report highlights the global health consequences that would put 2.3 billion people at risk—due to the drop in world food production—*including in the United States.*

This “limited” nuclear conflict will create a humanitarian catastrophe where the world’s impoverished will be at risk of starvation due to reduced grain production and rising food costs.

**REPORT HIGHLIGHTS:**

- A “limited, regional” nuclear conflict would inject 5 million tons of soot into the upper atmosphere, disrupting the climate and resulting in a decline of global grain production due to:
  - Drastic drops in precipitation
  - Reductions in sunlight
  - Lower temperatures
  - Shorter growing seasons
- Significant reduction in grain production (10-30%) over a 10-year period could lead to panic and hoarding on an international scale, further reducing accessible food.
- Higher mortality rates will affect the poverty-stricken in all countries.

To Download the Report Go To: [www.psr.org → Nuclear Weapons → Resources](http://www.psr.org)

“We cannot afford to be complacent about nuclear weapons. They make our nation less, not more secure. Now is the time to take action. Please join PSR.”