



ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross

Council of Delegates 2011: Resolution 1

26-11-2011 Resolution

Working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons

Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Geneva, Switzerland, 26 November 2011

The Council of Delegates,

deeply concerned about the destructive power of nuclear weapons, the unspeakable human suffering they cause, the difficulty of controlling their effects in space and time, the threat they pose to the environment and to future generations and the risks of escalation they create,

concerned also by the continued retention of tens of thousands of nuclear warheads, the proliferation of such weapons and the constant risk that they could again be used,

disturbed by the serious implications of any use of nuclear weapons for humanitarian assistance activities and food production over wide areas of the world,

believing that the existence of nuclear weapons raises profound questions about the extent of suffering that humans are willing to inflict, or to permit, in warfare,

welcoming the renewed diplomatic efforts on nuclear disarmament, in particular the commitments made by States at the 2009 United Nations Security Council Summit on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament, the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Treaty Between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms,

welcoming also the commitments made by States at the highest levels in the above fora to create the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons through concrete actions in the fields of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament,

recalling the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which confirmed that the principles and rules of international humanitarian law apply to nuclear weapons and concluded that the threat or use of such weapons would generally be contrary to the principles and rules of international humanitarian law,

drawing upon the testimony of atomic bomb survivors, the experience of the Japanese Red Cross Society and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in assisting the victims of the atomic bomb blasts in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the knowledge gained through the ongoing treatment of survivors by the Japanese Red Cross Atomic Bomb Survivors Hospitals,

bearing in mind the resolutions on weapons of mass destruction in general and the abolition of nuclear weapons in particular, adopted by the International Conferences of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 1948,

1952, 1957, 1965, 1969, 1977 and 1981 and by the Council of Delegates in 2009, and the statements on nuclear weapons made by the President of the ICRC to the Geneva diplomatic corps in April 2010 and by the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to Nobel laureates in Hiroshima in November 2010,

convinced that the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) has an historic and important role to play in efforts to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons,

1. *emphasizes* the incalculable human suffering that can be expected to result from any use of nuclear weapons, the lack of any adequate humanitarian response capacity and the absolute imperative to prevent such use;

2. *finds* it difficult to envisage how any use of nuclear weapons could be compatible with the rules of international humanitarian law, in particular the rules of distinction, precaution and proportionality;

3. *appeals* to all States:

- to ensure that nuclear weapons are never again used, regardless of their views on the legality of such weapons,

- to pursue in good faith and conclude with urgency and determination negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement, based on existing commitments and international obligations,

4. *calls on all* components of the Movement, utilizing the framework of humanitarian diplomacy:

- to engage, to the extent possible, in activities to raise awareness among the public, scientists, health professionals and decision-makers of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, the international humanitarian law issues that arise from such use and the need for concrete actions leading to the prohibition of use and elimination of such weapons,

- to engage, to the extent possible, in continuous dialogue with governments and other relevant actors on the humanitarian and international humanitarian law issues associated with nuclear weapons and to disseminate the Movement position outlined in this resolution;

Resolution co-sponsors:

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