

STATEMENT TO THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY REVIEW CONFERENCE
To be delivered by Rebecca A. Shoot on behalf of NuclearAbolitionDay.org
May 1, 2026

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

I speak on behalf of [NuclearAbolitionDay.org](https://nuclearabolitionday.org), an open coalition of civil society organizations launched at the United Nations last July to build cooperation for, and elevate the global impact of, the UN International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

I have the honor to submit to the NPT the Nuclear Abolition Day Appeal, endorsed by more than 600 organizations and 1,200 individuals from 99 countries, including Nobel Laureates, former senior government officials and other political leaders, parliamentarians, local representatives, religious leaders, scientists, academics, youth activists, educators, business leaders, artists and other members of civil society. The appeal was initially presented to the high-level plenary on September 26, 2025, commemorating the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

This appeal is not abstract. It is a collective warning—and a collective demand—for action equal to the risk we face.

Across regions, sectors, and generations, signatories are united by a simple truth: the current trajectory is unsustainable. The risk of nuclear use—by accident, miscalculation, escalation, or intent—remains unacceptably high. The consequences would be catastrophic, immediate, and irreversible.

We meet at a moment of profound instability. This Review Conference takes place against a backdrop of violent conflict involving nuclear-armed states and their allies, and amid growing strain on the multilateral system itself. The cooperative international order—envisioned in the UN Charter and forged in the shadow of nuclear devastation—is being tested in ways that demand both realism and resolve.

Yet the NPT remains a cornerstone global norm—one worth defending – and even in difficult circumstances, a minimal but meaningful agenda is within reach: constraining proliferation; ensuring security and safety of nuclear energy facilities; strengthening transparency and risk reduction in nuclear stockpiles and policies; and sustaining frank, open dialogue among states parties.

But maintaining the regime cannot become a substitute for fulfilling its ultimate purpose.

The appeal therefore sets out five clear, actionable calls:

- First, affirm that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible—without ambiguity.
- Second, advance tangible risk-reduction measures by nuclear-armed and allied states, including standing down nuclear forces and adopting policies to never initiate a nuclear war.

- Third, commit to the global elimination of nuclear weapons no later than 2045—the centenary of the United Nations—and begin immediate, good-faith steps, to achieve it.
- Fourth, cut nuclear weapons budgets and end public and private investments in the nuclear weapons industry.
- And fifth, redirect those resources to what actually sustains human security: strengthening the United Nations, advancing peace and conflict resolution, addressing the climate crisis, and meeting urgent human needs.

Progress will not come from governments alone. The legitimacy, urgency, and durability of disarmament efforts depend on the full inclusion of civil society—across disciplines, geographies, and lived experiences. This means meaningfully engaging youth, women, scientists, faith leaders, and affected communities. It means centering the voices of victims and survivors of nuclear weapons use and testing. It means empowering parliamentarians and local leaders, who translate global commitments into national law and local action.

Encouragingly, we are seeing movement in this direction. The recent preparatory process for a Crimes Against Humanity treaty broadened participation beyond traditionally accredited NGOs—recognizing that more inclusive processes are more effective processes. The same principle should guide our work here.

There is no more fitting moment than this year to act. 2026 marks the 30th anniversary of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons—an opinion that underscored both the profound legal constraints on these weapons and the obligation to pursue and conclude negotiations leading to complete nuclear disarmament. It is also the 80th anniversary of that Court itself—an institution created to uphold the rule of law at the international level, even in the most consequential matters. These anniversaries are not merely symbolic. They are reminders of unfinished commitments—and of promises deferred for far too long.

At a time of rising risk and eroding trust, the choice before us is stark: allow instability to dictate outcomes, or summon the political courage to reinforce law, rebuild cooperation, and advance disarmament with seriousness of purpose.

The appeal we present today reflects a broad and growing global constituency that expects the latter—and that will continue to demand it.

The question is not whether progress is possible. It is whether it will be chosen.

Thank you.