



February 21, 2023

## Open Letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau

### Confronting the Nuclear Threat

**A year later, the attack on Ukraine has confirmed the nuclear threat to be real, imminent, and existential.**

Dear Prime Minister,

With the world challenged by climate disasters, pandemics, regional wars, growing numbers of refugees, food insecurity and more, Russia's attack on Ukraine has driven the nuclear threat out of the political shadows, exposing yet another crisis that is real, imminent, and existential.

President Vladimir Putin's direct and implied threats to use nuclear weapons have shocked and angered the world, with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg calling the threats "dangerous and irresponsible." President Joe Biden has warned that Armageddon would be the inevitable result once the nuclear threshold was crossed.

The five permanent members of the UN Security Council (US, Russia, UK, France, China) have declared that "a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought." The G20 recently stated that "the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is inadmissible." Two measures designed to help prevent the "inadmissible" from happening are no-first-use commitments and the de-alerting of strategic nuclear weapons.

Therefore, Prime Minister, we call on the Government of Canada to:

1. Urge NATO and its three nuclear weapon state members (US, UK, and France) to commit never to be the first to launch a nuclear attack, and to work toward universalizing that commitment (which China and India have already made); and
2. Encourage the United States and Russia to take all their strategic nuclear weapons off high alert (of the nine states with nuclear weapons, only the US and Russia maintain dangerous high-alert deployments).

We also urge you to publicly acknowledge the current nuclear crisis and call on all states with nuclear arms to honour the norm against nuclear weapons use that has been respected for the 77-years since the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

[www.nuclearweaponsconvention.ca](http://www.nuclearweaponsconvention.ca)

Adopting these measures alone would, of course, not end the nuclear crisis, but it would make the world safer. It would diminish the likelihood of escalation to nuclear use in a conventional war. It would radically reduce the risk of the inadvertent launch of strategic nuclear weapons in response to false warnings of attack. It would also encourage a geopolitical environment more conducive to further progress in nuclear disarmament.

There will never be an easy time to mitigate and eventually eliminate the nuclear weapons threat to our planet; it is vital to act now.

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21 février 2023

## **Lettre ouverte au premier ministre Justin Trudeau**

### **Affronter la menace nucléaire**

#### **Une année plus tard, l'attaque contre l'Ukraine vient confirmer que la menace nucléaire est bien réelle, imminente et existentielle.**

Monsieur le Premier Ministre,

Dans ce monde déjà lourdement éprouvé par des désastres climatiques, des pandémies, des guerres régionales, un foisonnement de réfugiés et l'insécurité alimentaire, l'attaque russe en Ukraine a propulsé la menace nucléaire à l'avant-scène politique, provoquant encore une autre crise bien réelle, imminente et existentielle.

Les menaces tant expresses qu'implicites du président Vladimir Poutine de recourir aux armes nucléaires ont causé choc et colère partout dans le monde, le secrétaire général de l'OTAN, Jens Stoltenberg, qualifiant ces menaces de « dangereuses et irresponsables ». Le président Joe Biden a prévenu que l'Armageddon serait le résultat inévitable du franchissement du seuil nucléaire.

Les cinq membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU (É.-U., Russie, R.-U., France, Chine) ont rappelé qu'« une guerre nucléaire ne peut être gagnée et ne doit jamais être engagée ». Le G20 a déclaré récemment que « le recours aux armes nucléaires, ou la menace d'un tel recours, est inadmissible ». Parmi les mesures envisagées pour écarter la réalisation de l'« inadmissible », deux d'entre elles figurent depuis longtemps à l'agenda du désarmement : les engagements de non-recours en premier à l'arme nucléaire, et la diminution du niveau d'alerte des armes nucléaires stratégiques.

En conséquence, Monsieur le Premier Ministre, nous engageons le Gouvernement du Canada à prendre les mesures suivantes :

1. presser l'OTAN et ses trois États membres nucléarisés (É.-U., R.-U. et France) de s'engager à ne jamais être les premiers à lancer une attaque nucléaire, et de s'investir dans l'universalisation de cet engagement (que la Chine et l'Inde ont déjà donné);
2. encourager les États-Unis et la Russie à retirer toutes leurs armes nucléaires stratégiques du niveau d'alerte élevé (des neuf pays nucléarisés, seuls les États-Unis et la Russie maintiennent un niveau d'alerte élevé dangereux).

Nous vous pressons également de reconnaître publiquement la crise nucléaire actuelle et d'engager tous les pays nucléarisés à honorer la norme de non-recours aux armes nucléaires qui a été respectée tout au long de ces 77 dernières années depuis les bombardements de Hiroshima et de Nagasaki.

L'adoption de ces mesures ne suffira pas, bien évidemment, pour mettre fin à la crise nucléaire, mais elle augmenterait la sécurité mondiale. Elle diminuerait les probabilités d'une escalade nucléaire dans le cadre d'une guerre conventionnelle. Elle réduirait radicalement le risque d'un déclenchement accidentel d'armes nucléaires stratégiques en réaction à de fausses alertes. Elle favoriserait aussi un environnement géopolitique plus propice au progrès en matière de désarmement nucléaire.

Ce ne sera jamais tâche facile de diminuer, jusqu'à sa disparition complète, la menace nucléaire à l'échelle planétaire; il est essentiel d'agir maintenant.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur le Premier Ministre, l'expression de nos sentiments les plus respectueux.

Sincerely,

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