



Science for Peace

November 18, 2022

President's Column



Dear members,

The 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) is currently being held in Egypt. In the opening speech, the UN General Secretary Antonio Guterres said “We are in the fight of our lives, and we are losing. Greenhouse gas emissions keep growing. Global temperatures keep rising. And our planet is fast approaching tipping points that will make climate chaos irreversible. We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator. The war in Ukraine, other conflicts, have caused so much bloodshed and violence and have had dramatic impacts all over the world.”

The attendance of COP27 includes elected leaders and activists of civil society from all the countries around the world. In principle, this would offer the opportunity to reach important agreements towards the drastic reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. However, there are worrying signs that developed countries, and in particular the US, are not ready to fulfill their promises to provide the funding necessary to finance the energy transition in developing nations. These nations, which, unlike the industrial countries, are not responsible for the accumulation of greenhouse gases, are the most vulnerable to the natural disasters triggered by climate change.

The results of the presidential elections in Brazil celebrated on October 30th

have brought good news for the fight against global warming. Opposition candidate Lula da Silva defeated right wing incumbent Jair Bolsonaro. During his previous two terms in office from 2003 to 2010, Lula garnered international recognition for promoting sustainable development, lifting millions out of poverty while at the same time sharply reducing deforestation of the Amazon. By contrast, Bolsonaro curbed the enforcement of environmental laws, which allowed for a drastic increase in the deforestation of the Amazon, which is the largest tropical forest of the world and a major CO2 sink.

On November 7th Science for Peace hosted a Webinar with Dr. Maria Stephan: "Nonviolence and the Quest for Democracy: How to Resist Authoritarianism Everywhere". Our next Webinar, on November 29th, 5 to 6 PM, will have as speaker Emily Gilbert, a Professor at the University of Toronto. The title of her talk is: Militarization and Climate Change.

Jorge Filmus
President, Science for Peace

Upcoming Events



**EMILY GILBERT, A
PROFESSOR AT UNIVERSITY
OF TORONTO AND VICE-
PRINCIPAL OF UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE, STUDIES
SECURITISATION AND
MILITARIZATION WITH
RESPECT TO BORDERS, THE
ECONOMY AND CLIMATE
CHANGE.**

SCIENCEFORPEACE.ORG



**MILITARIZATION AND
CLIMATE CHANGE
SPEAKER: PROF EMILY GILBERT**

**TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 29TH
5-6PM EST ON
ZOOM**

**REGISTER HERE:
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/3NMHK3PZ](https://tinyurl.com/3nmhk3pz)**

Register

Recent Events

DR. MARIA STEPHAN

NOVEMBER 7TH
5-6 pm ET on
Zoom

<https://bit.ly/3TaJDR3>

Nonviolence and the Quest for Democracy: How to Resist Authoritarianism Everywhere



<https://www.scienceforpeace.org>



Maria Stephan is an award-winning author and organizer whose work in academic, public service, and non-profit sectors has focused on the role of nonviolent action and peacebuilding in advancing human rights, democracy, and sustainable peace in the US and globally.

How do we resist authoritarian tendencies in countries throughout the world in a nonviolent manner? What tactics are most effective? Is nonviolent action inherently democratic? Maria Stephan is an award winning author and organizer whose work in academic, public-service, and non-profit sectors has focused on the role of nonviolent action and peacebuilding in advancing human rights, democracy, and sustainable peace in the US and globally.

[View video](#)

Recent Articles



science for peace

Richard Sandbrook: **In a Time of Crisis, how Can Science for Peace Be Effective?**

Humanity faces the gravest crisis in its short history. Our leaders are unwilling or unable to grapple effectively with two looming catastrophes: escalating climatic disasters and growing arsenals of increasingly deadlier nuclear arsenals, combined with rising tensions among nuclear powers. Authoritarian tendencies throughout the world make matters worse, as far-right deniers and conspiracy theorists rise to the fore.

[Read More](#)



Aidan Oliver: **Not So Quiet on the Northern Front: Arctic Environmental Cooperation and Geopolitical Conflict**

Near the end of the Cold War, through a famous speech by none other than the President of the USSR, Mikhail Gorbachev advanced a new vision for the Arctic, stating: Let the North of the globe, the Arctic, become a zone of peace. Let the North Pole be a pole of peace. (Gorbachev, 1987)

[Read More](#)



I was born and raised in Toronto, with my family having emigrated from the Ukraine in 1998. Graduating from the University of Toronto, I completed a major in International Relations and two minors in political science and French studies. I was drawn to Science for Peace for several reasons; whether it was because I was looking for ways to continue to develop my research and writing skills after graduation, or to learn about pacifism and peace activism. But primarily, I wanted to find ways in which I could contribute to the mission of SfP, as I discovered that my personal passion for peace overlapped greatly with those of the organization- a passion that has only strengthened in its resolve given recent international events. With that in mind, I was accepted as an intern in the spring of 2022, and invited back as one of the 2022/23 Junior Fellows, a role in which I have written articles and conducted research on behalf of both the Critical NATO and Nuclear Weapons Working Groups.

Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

When it comes to the myriad of existential threats currently plaguing the international community, the threat of nuclear annihilation has made a concerning come back. “Humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation.” This was one of the opening remarks made by United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres, on the first day of the 10th Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), a gathering of over 190 states, held August 2022 in New York City.

Delayed by the pandemic for over a year, it was the successor to the previous conference of 2015, which failed to result in much progress. Despite this past disappointment, there was hope that this year would be different. Held amid a backdrop of war on the European continent, and a year in which members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) collectively spent millions on major modernization programs for their nuclear arsenals, the stage was seemingly set for much needed dialogue on nuclear disarmament.

To be fair, some progress was made. Dialogue was a positive development, with many delegations stating that the conversations held resulted in a strengthening of international unity on non-proliferation, encouraged peaceful nuclear cooperation and highlighted the importance of the NPT for future disarmament. For instance, the representatives of several Arab states (and Iran) were able to discuss the importance of a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East, and how that would require Israeli cooperation and accession to the Treaty. Furthermore, all UNSC powers explicitly denounced nuclear proliferation and expressed ways in which their respective nations have worked towards arms reduction. The UK, for instance, stated that it has approximately halved its stockpile since the end of the Cold War. London has also de-targeted and de-alerted many of its warheads, meaning that any launch would take days instead of minutes.

Concerning the reduction of the world’s two largest nuclear arsenals, those of Russia and the United States, the two powers made some encouraging pronouncements. They renewed pledge to continue to fully implement the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and “to pursue negotiations in good faith on a successor framework to the new START before its expiration in 2026, in order to achieve deeper, irreversible, and verifiable reductions in their nuclear arsenals.” Such statements, especially when they are being made at a time of heightened tensions resulting from the Russo-Ukrainian War, are not inconsequential.

Despite these positives however, the Conference nonetheless fell short of what many hoped it would achieve. As was the case in 2015, the delegations failed to produce a final outcome report. While technically blocked by the Russian delegation, the reality was a bit more nuanced. Amendments by the Russians were proposed to several paragraphs which referred to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant crisis; however procedural timing issues meant that the Conference President was unable to incorporate such suggestions. Russian objections to the document aside, several other delegations were also not satisfied with the report. Specifically, the delegations of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Holy See, and seven member states of the New Agenda Coalition denounced the document on its lack of substance or of any meaningful commitment to disarmament. The documents also lacked any acknowledgement of the humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons, despite powerful presentations delivered by nuclear victims from the Pacific Island nations of Kiribati and Japan. Suffice it to say, nuclear weapons continue to exist within the arsenals of all nine nuclear nations, with no realistic disarmament framework in sight.

Indeed, the 10th Review Conference left much to be desired. This lack of progress however, while disheartening to many, ought to not to discourage peace activists. The world has arrived at a precipice of nuclear catastrophe arguably not seen since the early 1980s, and it is vitally important that the powers of the day continue to engage in meaningful, dialogue about reduction and de-escalation. It is also equally important that civil society continues to both advocate and pressure said powers towards nuclear dialogue, non-proliferation, and eventual disarmament, as the alternative would be far too costly for human civilization to bear.

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