

## Annual Report to the City Council

### The Nuclear Disarmament and Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone Advisory Committee

---

Local Law 7 of 2022 established a five-year advisory committee focused on nuclear disarmament and reinforcing New York City's commitment to being a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone (NWFZ).

The committee, chaired by Commissioner Zach Iscol of New York City Emergency Management (NYCEM), is comprised of seven members appointed by the Mayor and the Speaker of the City Council. All members of the Committee have been appointed as of November 2023.

The committee is tasked with conducting a thorough review of the City's stance on nuclear weapons. Its responsibilities include drafting a resolution supporting the City's status as a nuclear weapons-free zone, defining the parameters of such a zone, and proposing mechanisms to educate communities about the impacts of nuclear weapons.

This annual report summarizes the activities and progress of this committee for 2023.

### Nuclear History and Ongoing Environmental Remediation in New York City

---

New York City (NYC) has a significant historical connection with nuclear activities, including being the original headquarters of the Manhattan Project during World War II. The subsequent decades witnessed several nuclear-related endeavors within city limits, including nuclear weapons production activities and stationing of nuclear warheads in and around the city. The legacy of this history underscores the importance of our present-day commitment to nuclear disarmament, environmental remediation, and divestment.

Ongoing environmental remediation efforts continue to address the consequences of past nuclear activities, emphasizing the City's dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of its residents. To emphasize stance against nuclear weapons and their proliferation, NYC continues to prohibit entrance of nuclear-armed and -capable vessels into the harbor. As this committee works to reaffirm New York City's commitment to remaining a nuclear-weapons free zone, understanding and acknowledging this historical context guides our efforts in completing our work.

The establishment of the New York City Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone reflects a commitment to promote the removal of nuclear weapons from the world's arsenal's, which threaten all of humanity with generational catastrophic environmental and societal consequences. Initiated by Resolution 364 in 1983, this declaration prohibits the production, transport, storage, placement, or deployment of nuclear weapons within New York City's boundaries. In 2021, the Council passed Resolution 976, which reaffirmed the City's Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone and joined the Cities Appeal of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), calling on the US government to join the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The resolution also called on the City's Comptroller to divest from and avoid any financial exposure to companies involved in the production and maintenance of nuclear weapons. This committee

operates in alignment with these resolutions, working to reaffirm, reinforce and update the scope of the NWFZ.

## **Committee Structure and Appointments**

---

The Committee is Chaired by Commissioner Zach Iscol and NYCEM's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives (CBRNE) Planning Program Manager, Kayla Sossin, is the Chair Delegate.

In January 2023, the Mayor's Office appointed three members to the Committee: Dr. Mark Maiello, the Radiological Projects Program Manager at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Dr. Irwin Redlener, Pediatrician, Children's Advocate, Public Health Analyst and Disaster Expert; and Dr. Alex Wellerstein, Professor and Historian of Science at the Stevens Institute of Technology.

In August 2023, the City Council appointed Dr. Kathleen Sullivan, Director of Hibakusha Stories and disarmament advocate, and Dr. Matthew Breay Bolton, Professor of Political Science at Pace University and disarmament advocate, following with the appointment of the final member, Lillian Adams, Senior Outreach Coordinator for the Union of Concerned Scientists, in November 2023.

## **Meeting Schedule**

---

The committee began meeting in April 2023. Due to a delay in appointments, the full committee was not present until November 2023. The decision to convene without the full committee was made with consideration for the limited-term designed by Local Law 1621. Enacted in January 2022, this Advisory Committee is set to complete its term in 2027. No members were appointed until January 2023.

The committee convened in April, June, September, and November. The initial meetings set the stage for defining the scope and goals, while the subsequent sessions saw the active involvement of the expanded committee, fostering collaborative discussions and decision-making.

## **Committee Progress**

---

Throughout 2023, the Committee has worked together to interpret and define the mission set out in Local Law 1621. The following outlines the goals and progress made this year.

### **Defining a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone**

The Committee has discussed how to reaffirm and update the definition of a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Progress has been made in determining this definition to support the development of a draft resolution reaffirming NYC as a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone.

### **Reaffirming New York City's Support for a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone**

The committee has agreed to draft a new resolution reaffirming NYC as a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone, using the 1983 and 2021 Resolutions as a guide. Throughout 2023, the committee has reviewed the 1983 and 2021 Resolutions, gathered new and historical information, and has collaborated to determine an updated scope.

### **Public Education Campaign**

The committee is working to design the framework for a robust public education campaign to inform communities about the impacts of nuclear weapons and the need for nuclear disarmament. This campaign will utilize various channels, including social media, community events, and educational workshops.

### **Community Engagement**

In November, the committee heard from experts in the field of nuclear threats. The meeting included presentations by Mitchie Takeuchi, a Second Generation Hibakusha from Hiroshima, Elizabeth Talerman, CEO of the Nucleus Group and Dr. Arjun Makhijani, President of the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research. Committee members explored the importance of centering the experience of victims of nuclear weapons, social norms, reframing discussions, and institutional frameworks to promote nuclear disarmament. The meeting concluded with reflections on feasible steps, the potential impact of city initiatives, and the need for diplomatic efforts to control and reduce nuclear weapons globally.

The lessons learned from this meeting will be used to inform the work of the committee, particularly in the drafting of an updated resolution and the development of a public education campaign framework.

### **Conclusion**

---

The Nuclear Disarmament and Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone Advisory Committee has made great progress in 2023. As we look toward 2024, we will continue to move forward with our mission and scope, prioritizing progress and collaboration within our committee and with external stakeholders. We further will work to recommend that NYC use its considerable influence to actively promote reaffirmation of all relevant expired, active, and new treaties that would limit and control nuclear weapons worldwide. We believe that this advisory committee will play a crucial role in shaping and reinforcing the City's position on these vital issues.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this report. We look forward to your support in pursuing a world free of nuclear weapons, ensuring a safer and more secure future for our great city.