

AUSTRIA



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Statement

by

Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz

**Plenary Meeting to Commemorate the International Day for
the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

**New York
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Dear Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for organising today's meeting and for giving me the opportunity to speak on the occasion of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

I believe that the debate on nuclear weapons has shifted.

On the one hand, the **Russian-Ukraine-crisis** and other geopolitical events have underscored the urgency of nuclear disarmament.

On the other hand, there is **growing international momentum and focus** on the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons.

At the recent **NPT Review Conference**, I had the honour to present **on behalf of 159 States a joint statement** on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

I regret that this conference failed to reach an agreement.

But it had the **positive effect of putting the humanitarian consequences firmly into the centre of international discussions**.

Furthermore, the **Humanitarian Pledge** that emerged from the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons last December has been formally endorsed by 116 States. This support is very encouraging.

The Humanitarian Pledge is a **call for urgent disarmament efforts** and it is a **call to cooperate in efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons**.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The **Vienna Agreement on Iran** offers for the first time in years a glimmer of hope. It is a vivid proof that dialogue and negotiation can achieve progress.

It is a **crucial contribution to nuclear non-proliferation.**

But it is not sufficient! I firmly endorse the words of Secretary General Ban Ki-moon that “there are no right hands for the wrong weapons”.

70 years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons still pose one of the most serious threats to humankind.

As his holiness Pope Francis said last Friday: An ethics and a law based on the threat of mutual destruction – and possibly the destruction of all mankind – are self-contradictory and an affront to the entire framework of the United Nations”.

I couldn't agree more!

Our goal therefore must be to achieve a **world without nuclear weapons!**

I can assure you
that Austria will continue to work closely with all interested stakeholders and
that we will continue to **push for concrete and credible progress in the fight**
against weapons of mass destruction!

Thank you for your attention.