

# THE BLACK MIST AND THE BAN



Image: Ngintaka by Larissa Ngila Hughes

## Mass Civil Society Statement

October 2023

**70 years ago on 15 October 1953 the first nuclear weapon tested on mainland Australia was detonated at Emu Field, south of the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY) lands of South Australia, as part of Operation Totem.**

**No consent was sought or given by any Anangu (Aboriginal people), in the region for the use of their lands.**

The two explosions of Operation Totem measured the equivalent yield of the bomb that destroyed the city of Hiroshima. The “black mist” fallout of Totem 1 rolled silently with a toxic smell, across the landscape, poisoning the ground, plants, animals and people.

So began the devastating, intergenerational and ongoing health impacts for those caught in the path of the ‘black mist’ fallout.

Today, the threat of nuclear weapons use is escalating, exacerbated by war, regional conflicts and a changing geopolitical climate. The continued possession of nuclear weapons by nine nations poses grave- humanitarian, human rights and major climate risks.

Use of even a small portion of global nuclear stockpiles would cause nuclear winter, agricultural collapse and catastrophic harm to life on this planet.

As Australia pursues nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS agreement, it is now more vital than ever for our nation to demonstrate its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament by joining the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

This is also the most effective and durable course of action to ensure that nuclear powered submarines will not lead to nuclear weapons stationed in or acquired by Australia, and that our nation ceases to contribute to the justification, threat and possible use of nuclear weapons by AUKUS members or others.

Since its entry into force in January 2021, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has strengthened the existing disarmament architecture, working in harmony with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and other binding instruments to further stigmatise and outlaw the world's most catastrophic weapons.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is the first treaty to set out a clear direction for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and to provide a framework for supporting survivors of nuclear weapons use, including the remediation of impacted environments. It is supported by the vast majority of our Pacific and South-East Asian neighbours.

**We urge Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons without delay and initiate the process of Australia ratifying it and adhering to its obligations, including to seek universalisation and assist nuclear victims and impacted environments.**

The trauma of the past cannot be undone, but we have the desire, ability and responsibility to create a peaceful and safer future.

**Seventy years on from the first mainland nuclear explosion, let us put an end to any involvement with nuclear weapons, now and forever.**

Endorsed by  
132 civil  
society  
groups



This civil society statement, released on 15th October 2023, marks 70 years since the first mainland nuclear weapons test in Australia.

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## List of Endorsing Groups:

- 350.org Australia
- ActionAid Australia
- Aid/Watch
- Alice Springs Peace Action Think Tank (ASPATT)
- Amnesty International, Australia
- Arab Australian Federation
- The Australia Institute
- Australian Anti-AUKUS Coalition (AAAC)
- Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition
- Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
- Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
- Australian Conservation Foundation
- Australian Education Union
- Australian Lawyers for Human Rights
- Australian Manufacturing Workers Union WA
- Australian Nuclear Free Alliance
- Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF)
- Australian Red Cross
- Australian Reforming Catholics
- Australian Services Union (ASU)
- Australians for Justice
- Australians for War Powers Reform
- Ballarat Regional Trades and Labour Council
- Beyond Uranium Canberra
- Blue Mountains Peace Collective
- Bob Brown Foundation
- Buddhist Council of NSW
- Cairns and Far North Environment Centre
- Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament
- Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, Office of Justice and Peace
- Catholic Religious Australia
- Catholics for Renewal
- Christians for Peace Newcastle
- Climate Emergency Australia
- Climate Justice Union
- The Climate Reality Project, Australia & Pacific
- Communist Party of Australia
- Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist)
- Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU)
- Conservation Council ACT Region
- Conservation Council of South Australia
- Conservation Council of Western Australia
- Currie Country Social Change Aboriginal Corporation
- Doctors for the Environment Australia
- Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education
- Electrical Trades Union (ETU)
- Environment Centre of the Northern Territory
- Environment Victoria
- Evatt Foundation
- Extinction Rebellion SA
- Fairfield Uniting Church, Melbourne
- Finance Sector Union (FSU)
- Foundation for Young Australians
- Friends of the Earth Australia
- Geelong Trades Hall
- The Green Institute
- Green Music Australia
- Greenpeace Australia-Pacific
- Greens NSW
- Gundjehmi Aboriginal Corporation
- Health Services Union (HSU)
- Healthy Futures
- Hills Peace Group, WA
- Hunter Peace Group, NSW
- ICAN Aotearoa New Zealand
- ICAN Australia
- Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN)
- Independent Education Union, NSW/ACT
- Indigenous Peoples' Organisation, Australia
- Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea
- International Women's Development Agency
- Legacy of the Atomic Bomb-Recognition for Atomic Test Survivors (LABRATS)
- Lawyers for Peace
- Let's Talk Peace, Ballarat
- Maritime Union of Australia (MUA)
- Marrickville Peace Group, NSW
- Medical Association for the Prevention of War
- Missionaries of the Sacred Heart Justice and Peace Centre
- National Council of Churches in Australia
- National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU)
- National Union of Students (NUS)
- Nillumbik Climate Action Team, VIC
- No AUKUS Coalition Vic
- No Nuclear Subs SA
- NSW Teachers' Federation
- Nuclear Free Western Australia
- Nuclear Truth Project
- Oxfam Australia
- Pacific Conference of Churches
- Pax Christi Australia
- Peace Movement Aotearoa
- People's Climate Assembly
- Psychologists for Peace
- Public Health Association of Australia
- Quakers Australia
- Queensland Conservation Council
- Quit Nukes
- Rail, Tram and Bus Union, Victoria
- Religions for Peace Australia
- Remembering and Healing Inc
- Rising Tide
- Roman Catholic Diocese of Parramatta
- Scientists for Global Responsibility, Australia
- Sea Shepherd, Australia
- SEARCH Foundation
- Shepparton Interfaith Network
- Soka Gakkai International, Australia
- Solidarity
- South Coast Labour Council
- Stop AUKUS WA
- Sydney Anti-AUKUS Coalition
- Sydney Peace and Justice Coalition
- Sydney Peace Foundation
- Tomorrow Movement
- Top End Peace Alliance
- Union Aid Abroad - APHEDA
- Unions Northern Territory
- Unions Shoalhaven
- Unions Tasmania
- Unions Western Australia
- United Australian Palestinian Workers
- United Nations Association of Australia
- United Workers Union (UWU)
- Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress
- Uniting Church in Australia Assembly
- Uniting Church in Australia, Vic/Tas Synod
- Victorian Trades Hall Council (VTHC)
- Vote Earth Now
- Wage Peace
- Wollongong Against War and Nukes
- Women's Environmental Leadership Australia (WELA)
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Australia
- Yankunytjatjara Native Title Corporation



*Endorsed by 132 organisations - Peace - Environmental - Social Justice - Youth - Aid & Development - Health - Legal - Religious & Interfaith - Union - First Nations*



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Yankunytjatjara Native Title  
Aboriginal Corporation ICN 4480

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