

**Presentation by Marzhan Nurzhan**  
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*Convener, Abolition 2000 Youth Network*

**9th June at Peace Palace - 10 minutes**

Dear Distinguished guests, your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

*I would like to thank Petra Keppler of Bertha von Suttner Peace Institute and team of organisers of the event.*

*It is a pleasure and honour for me to be here at this special place - Peace Palace and on this special occasion of Bertha von Suttner`s birthday commemorating the 175th anniversary. She was the first woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her dedication and contribution for a peaceful world. She firmly stood for peace and justice and called for disarmament, so do I. The knowledge and experience of past can help us to learn for construction of a better presence and future. Therefore, I would like to share an example and story of my homeland.*

**Kazakhstan nuclear legacy was a primary reason of my involvement for peace and passion for nuclear disarmament**

My country experienced horrors of nuclear tests for 4 decades during the USSR times from 1949 until 1989. The consequences of those tests resulted in humanitarian tragedy affecting almost 2 million people causing transgenerational impact on health, environmental damage, socio-economic loss and stagnation in the eastern part of Kazakhstan at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site or Semey polygon. The polygon`s territory is equal to the size of Belgium or Israel.

**I believe in strength of human power and cooperation - experience of my country serves as an inspiration for me demonstrating that grassroots movement can achieve success**

Despite Soviet ruling and influence on conduct of nuclear tests, the grassroots anti-nuclear movement "Nevada-Semey" guided by poet Olzhas Suleimenov led peaceful non-violent actions demanding the closure of polygon and cease of tests. This movement turned into global campaign engaging people from all over the world and in particular uniting population of those residents in Nevada (test site) in the US and Semey in Kazakhstan - both under the radiation suffering from cancer, severe health problems and even facing early death. These humanitarian consequences are to continue for many years for future generations to come.

## **Here I would like to draw attention to different effect of nuclear weapons on women and children**

According to scientific studies, it is proven that effect of nuclear weapons on women and children are being impacted severely and more than men. Most of the women due to high level of radiation experience difficulties to deliver healthy child and in general bear the negative consequences on women health. A huge increase in miscarriages, babies born without arms, or with only one eye or with two heads or with other birth abnormalities. For newborn children it is hard to survive due to birth abnormalities and deformities, and many die at a very early age.

## **Nobel Peace Prize: organisations and individuals**

In this regard, last year ICAN was awarded Nobel Peace Prize for publicizing humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. Noteworthy to acknowledge other organisations and individuals for nuclear disarmament which were given Nobel Peace Prize such as Joseph Rotblat and Pugwash, IPPNW - International Physicians for the Prevention of nuclear war and Barack Obama. Many of these organisations and people have been inspired by the example of Bertha von Suttner.

International Peace Bureau in particular, which was co-founded by Bertha von Suttner. Another 12 leaders of IPB went on to receive the Nobel Peace Prize after her, including Sean MacBride who as IPB President in the late 1970s initiated the International Lawyers Appeal Against Nuclear Weapons which paved the way for the historic International Court of Justice case against nuclear weapons in 1995. These organisations, including some prominent individuals, serve an example of how effective and powerful grassroots movement can be towards achieving global peace and saving the world.

## **While serving as coordinator for CIS countries for Parliamentarians for nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, I have facilitated release of women appeal**

To commemorate the anniversary of Bertha von Suttner`s 175th birthday 50 women legislators PNND members around the world released appeal titled *Common security for a sustainable and nuclear-weapon-free world*. In this appeal they have highlighted that '*As women representatives, we are proud of our home countries and our national identities, but we also recognize a common humanity. We recognize the need to collaborate in building a peaceful, secure, sustainable, and just world.*'

PNND first five co-presidents were all women from different geostrategic regions and backgrounds who demonstrated leadership in reaching beyond their national borders and security backgrounds to forge a vision and cooperation for common security.

Important to recognise the Women's International Day for Peace and Disarmament, and the UNSC resolution on Women Peace and Security. The purpose of highlighting the role of women in peace and disarmament is to ensure their participation in order to maximise the possibilities for peace.

### **Abolition 2000 Youth Network - role of young people for peace and security**

As a young women, I believe that leadership must be taken for a peace and positive changes on global challenges. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the role of young people for peace and security. Youth participation, inclusion and empowerment can be instrumental in achieving peace and security as it was highlighted in the UNSC Resolution on "Youth, peace and security". Moreover, young people possess skills such as creativity, openness to the new experiences, flexibility and readiness to cooperate. These skills are to be essential for building capacity to work for safe peaceful just and sustainable world.

Current youth and our children are to be considered as future generations. We face two global challenges such as climate change and nuclear weapons which are to be inherited and to bear the implications of them. Therefore, it is necessary to engage young people to tackle these issues in the present time and with the present generation in order to protect and save the planet and achieve nuclear abolition by that ensuring that present and future generations have the right to live in a sustainable habitable Earth and safer world free of nuclear weapons.

Abolition 2000 is the international global network working for a global prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons and for the promotion of renewable energy. The Network provides a forum for the exchange of information and development of joint initiatives and campaigns. It has over 1000 member-organisations and many individual members, and has been nominated five times for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Abolition 2000 has had many achievements, one of which has been the establishment of an International Renewable Energy Agency with over 170 member-countries. The Agency demonstrates that it is possible to achieve energy needs without nuclear energy or fossil fuels.

There is also youth network under Abolition 2000 which I am convener of that provides a forum for networking and building cooperation between various youth-led nuclear disarmament initiatives around the world, and with youth working on other related issues of peace and sustainable development. The youth network also provides opportunities to bring youth voices on nuclear disarmament into key international forums such as the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union which is the organisation of the world's parliaments.

In my capacity as convener, I speak about youth, peace and disarmament at various international events at the United Nations Vienna, Geneva and New York. For example, in 2017 I was invited by the President of UN General Assembly to be the youth representative of global civil society to deliver a speech to the UN General Assembly on the International day for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Last year during an international youth conference in Prague, that I organised, we adopted a youth appeal calling world leaders to participate at the highest level in the upcoming UN High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament, to sign the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (if they have not already done so), adopt other nuclear risk reduction measures such as no-first-use and in general to support global peace and security.

The Youth appeal was sent to Presidents, Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers and UN Ambassadors of most of the countries of the world, and we received many responses from them. In addition, youth appeal was also presented at international events such as Inter Parliamentary Union Assembly, Preparatory Conference of States Parties to the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and given personally to diplomats, government officials, parliamentarians, young people, representatives of academia and other organisations in numerous informal settings.

The outgoing UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that, "the world is over armed, and peace is underfunded", which is why civil society organisations have launched the Move the Nuclear Weapons Money campaign, to shift the \$100 billion annual nuclear weapons budget to be instead spent on peace, ending poverty, protecting the climate and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This campaign and the other campaigns to abolish nuclear weapons, are strong manifestations of the call by Bertha von Suttner to 'Lay down your arms and let the peace rise.' I encourage you to join us.

Thank you