

Ankara Declaration on IPPNW Middle East Core Group Meeting: Strategies for Peace and Health in the Nuclear Free Middle East

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) representatives from Israel, Iran, Egypt, United States, UK, France, Germany, Netherlands, Hungary and Turkey met in Ankara, Turkey, on December 8th to 10th 2011 to address the issues of peace, health and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

The Middle East (ME) region is experiencing a turbulent period. There are political instability, ethnic and religious conflicts, economic difficulties and external military interventions causing detrimental effects on the health and well-being of the citizens of the Middle East.

We as health professionals have responsibilities to respond to these unacceptable conditions which have caused large scale suffering and loss of human life, and we are concerned that the existing conflicts could escalate into the use of weapons of mass destruction.

We call for:

1. Sincere commitment of governments for peaceful resolution of conflicts without use of military force; and using diplomacy and the rule of international law.
2. We demand that all signatories to NPT to ratify and observe their responsibilities immediately.
3. Noting the published reports that there are nuclear weapons in Israel and tactical NATO nuclear weapons in Turkey, and there concerns that Iran is developing nuclear weapons; and there are possible chemical and biological weapons in the ME countries, governments should immediately start negotiations to establish a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone -Middle East (WMDFZ-ME) including nuclear, chemical and biological weapons; and take measures to strengthen the implementation of chemical weapons convention (CWC) and biological weapons convention (BWC). We demand that all governments immediately start negotiations for to establish a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC). We call for the development of regional International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) activities.
4. We oppose the plans for deploying Missile Defense Systems including those recently positioned in Turkey. They must be removed at once as the system escalates the danger of nuclear proliferation.
5. We demand the strict observation of the landmines convention.
6. Cease the supply of small arms, conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction (or the components of such) in the region.
7. The construction of nuclear power plants is a threat to the health of people and the environment of the ME as well as a stimulus to nuclear weapons proliferation. The ME is a primary earthquake region. Considering the bitter lessons of the Fukujima Catastrophe and past accidents such as Chernobyl, we call for an immediate abandoning of nuclear plant construction programs. The establishment of the renewable energy alternatives to nuclear power should be promoted.
8. There are immense public health problems in the communities of the ME and primary health care programs have suffered from financial restriction and ongoing conflicts. We demand the immediate reallocation of military funding to health budgets.
9. All efforts should be exerted by all governments and institutions to immediately end Israeli-Palestine/ Jewish-Arab conflict through peace negotiations and initiatives including the Arab Peace Initiative.

List of Signatories (in alphabetical order):

Abraham Behar, IPPNW-France, Mediterranean Commission Former President
Ahmed Saada, IPPNW-Egypt, Middle East Vice-President
Arielle Denis, ICAN Europe Coordinator - Geneva
Ernesto Kahan, IPPNW-Israel
Herman Spanjaard, IPPNW-Netherlands, Speaker of the International Council
Lars Pohlmeier, IPPNW-Germany, European Vice-President
Leila Moein, IPPNW-Iran, Medical Student Representative
Liz Waterston, IPPNW-United Kingdom
Patrice Sutton, IPPNW-USA
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