

Voices for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons

Submission to the Secretary-General's report on Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation
(A/RES/78/31)

Voices for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons (<https://www.voices-uri.org/>) is a Cooperation Circle of the United Religions Initiative (URI), founded in 2008. It brings together people from diverse faith and spiritual traditions committed to a nuclear-free world. Our primary initiatives are Nuclear Prayer Day (August 6), inaugurated in 2022, and the Gorbachev-Schultz Legacy Youth Award, both designed to raise awareness about nuclear disarmament and empower people, particularly youth.

From July 2023 to June 2025, we've conducted numerous youth-centered activities to promote disarmament and non-proliferation:

1. Nuclear Prayer Day 2023 marked our second annual observance, calling on individuals and organizations to reflect on their deepest hopes for peace. We featured youth voices, including Kehkashan Basu of Green Hope Foundation, and announced the winner of the 4th annual Gorbachev-Schultz Youth Award, Yogev Von Kundra—a grassroots activist, social worker, and peace educator from Appalachia.
2. Also in August 2023, we participated in the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago. There, we led two workshops and hosted a booth, engaging attendees—including youth—on faith-based action for nuclear abolition.
3. For Nuclear Prayer Day 2024, we hosted a Zoom event titled “Spiritual Power: Hope in Action for Nuclear Weapons Abolition,” spotlighting diverse and youthful perspectives on the urgent need to eliminate nuclear weapons. During the event, Venessa Hanson was named the 2024 Youth Award winner for her work at the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), where she has led educational and social media initiatives targeting youth engagement.
4. In 2025, we launched monthly assemblies toward Nuclear Prayer Day beginning in March to explore the nuclear threat through varied lenses—including women's leadership, environmental impact, and stories about nuclear weapons in literature. In March, we also co-hosted a Zoom event with the Charter for Compassion, featuring past Youth Award recipients and their ongoing contributions.

Through these initiatives, Voices continues to uplift youth voices and promote interfaith, intergenerational action toward a peaceful, nuclear-free future.