

## **When War Scars the Planet: Environmental Damage Caused by Nuclear and Uranium Weapons**

*University of Bayreuth, January 29, 2026*

*FZA, Kongressraum U.01*

### **0. Frame**

There is an obvious link between war and the destruction of the environment as dramatically and most recently demonstrated by the wars in Gaza and Ukraine, or, historically, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Certain categories of weapons are especially destructive leading to long-term and severe health and environmental damage. On top, this relates to nuclear weapons and their tremendous humanitarian consequences, but, with different dimensions, mention can also be made of so called conventional weapons like uranium, or depleted uranium (DU) weapons.

The university event is aiming at providing a closer look at this relationships, and at mechanisms to counter these dangers and challenges and to get rid of this weaponry altogether.

### **1. Nuclear weapons**

Nuclear weapons cause destruction far beyond the moment of explosion. In this workshop, we will examine the long-term consequences of nuclear weapons for people and the environment – especially the effects of the more than 2.000 nuclear weapons detonations for testing purposes around the world. These weapons were detonated in (former) colonies, on the lands of indigenous people, First Nations and political minorities. Using concrete examples from various test sites, we will examine how radioactive contamination continues to damage ecosystems, destroy livelihoods and affect the health of entire communities. We will also discuss the political and colonial power relations that made these test programs possible, as well as questions of responsibility, remembrance and justice. The workshop invites critical discussion and mutual exchange.

IPPNW, the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (<https://ippnw.de/>), is an international medical organization dedicated to the abolition of nuclear weapons. By raising public awareness about the devastating effects of these weapons, IPPNW turned what

was exclusively a military and political issue into a principal health concern. Beyond this central issue, IPPNW advocates peaceful conflict resolution, international treaties, and socially responsible medicine.

**Speaker:** Juliane Hauschulz is a nuclear disarmament consultant at IPPNW Germany and a board member of ICAN Germany. She studied Peace Research at the University of Tübingen and wrote her thesis on emotions in nuclear weapons discourse.

## **2. Uranium weapons**

The topic will be introduced by screening the film “Toxic NATO – Srdan Aleksic’s Long Way To Justice” describing the use of DU weapons in Southern Serbia 1999, its consequences and the legal fight of lawyer Aleksic to help victims. DU weapons, or ammunition, generate long-term environmental and health damages because of chemical and radiological toxicity. Their use violates international law of various branches (International Humanitarian, Human Rights and Environmental Law) amounting to war crimes.

ICBUW, the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons ([www.icbuw.eu](http://www.icbuw.eu)), strives at enforcing this law backed by campaigning and lobby work as well as by providing a consultation and help system for DU victims. The final aim consists in completely outlawing DU weaponry through an international convention like the ones on landmines and cluster munition. Unfortunately, the Ukraine war has led to undermining existing legal and humanitarian constraints, including a kind of “DU renaissance”. ICBUW engages in upholding and further developing the legal regime, *inter alia*, by using human rights protection procedures, and supporting UN efforts like the resolution process of the UN General Assembly on the issue.

**Speaker:** Prof. Dr. Manfred Mohris acting as Co-Chair of ICBUW; he is a founding member of the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA) and a (former) Red Cross Expert. As international lawyer he is specializing in Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, and focusing on issues of implementation of international legal standards and on links among various branches of law as well as on networking and exchange.

## **3. Discussion, exchange, conclusions**

In the concluding discussion, we will bring together the perspectives of the day and compare the effects of nuclear weapons and uranium munitions on people, the environment and society. We will highlight the similarities and differences between these weapons, as well as their long-term health and environmental consequences. We will place particular emphasis on the links between international efforts to ban nuclear weapons and uranium munitions: which actors, arguments and strategies overlap – and where are the differences?

In addition, we will discuss the challenges posed by current political developments as well as the role of (international) law that are giving momentum to the campaign against these weapons. Finally, we will look ahead: what forms of campaigning, education and public

relations work (including media, art, film) already exist, what successes have been achieved, and how can these initiatives be further expanded and linked together? What about scientific research and studies? The discussion will provide space for critical questions, exchange and shared perspectives for future engagement and cooperation.

## **When War Scars the Planet: Environmental Damage Caused by Nuclear and Uranium Weapons**

**January 29, 2026**

**Location: FZA, Kongressraum U.01**

### **Program:**

**14:00 – 14:45** A workshop exploring the long-term health, environmental, and social consequences of nuclear weapons testing, with a focus on colonial power relations, responsibility, and justice. (IPPNW Juliane Hauschulz)

**14:45 – 15:00** Break

**15:00 – 15:45** The session features a screening of *Toxic NATO – Srdan Aleksic's Long Way to Justice* on the lasting impacts of depleted uranium weapons, followed by exchanging on ICBUW's work to support victims and to promote international legal prohibition. (ICBUW Prof. Dr. Manfred Mohr)

**15:45 – 16:00** Break

**16:00 – 16:30** Discussion (Moderated by Egle Stakeliunaite, MSc. student from University of Bayreuth)

### **The event is supported by:**

