

Appeal for a nuclear-weapon-free Nordic region

To The Nordic Prime Ministers and the Ministers responsible for Nordic Cooperation, as well as the Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers and all parliamentarians in the Nordic Council, as well as the Council Director.

We refer to the Icelandic Presidency's program for the Nordic Council of Ministers 2023; "*The North – A force for peace*" and point to our wish to strengthen the cooperation between Nordic decision-makers and peace organizations from civil society on the development of a Nordic peace policy – as a prerequisite for welfare and sustainable development.

The five Nordic countries have previously had a jointly formulated policy of not accepting the transit or deployment of other countries' nuclear weapons on their territory: some in peacetime, others under all circumstances.

However, as an effect of the war in Ukraine, the Nordic countries are now in the process of changing their security policy. Denmark has terminated its EU defense reservations and Finland has joined, and Sweden is seeking to join NATO. And member states of NATO seem prepared to meet the alliance's demand for increased co-financing.

During the national discussions about NATO membership and the bilateral agreements with US, doubts have arisen as to whether the Nordic governments will maintain their previous opposition to nuclear weapons in their countries.

Norway has already in 2022 signed a supplementary defense cooperation agreement with the United States which includes the permanent placement of American troops and equipment in Norway. Meanwhile Denmark, Finland and Sweden have also started negotiations about the defense cooperation agreements with the US.

Details of the agreements are not yet known, but we fear that the Nordic governments are going to cede national sovereignty, both in terms of general law enforcement in the US bases and in security policy matters, e.g., what types of weapons can be placed in these bases and what military operations can emanate from them.

The question is, will the increased rearmament and militarization give the people of the Nordic countries increased security and safety. We do not think so!

The Nordic Peace Alliance's purpose is to contribute to the development of a sustainable Nordic peace and security policy and therefore calls on our governments to place more emphasis on diplomacy, nonviolent conflict resolution and joint security structures and less on the military components of security policy.

Our Appeal:

We call on the political decision-makers of the Nordic countries to re-assure that they do not accept nuclear weapons stationed in their countries and that the Nordic region therefore should be declared a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

We see the nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world as an important step in the total abolition of nuclear weapons, the goal of both the UN declarations on these: the UN Non-Proliferation Treaty from 1970 and the UN Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty, which has been part of international law since 2021.

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Nordic Peace Alliance

The Coordination committee

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Lisbet Skou, Esbjerg Peace Movement, Denmark,

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Tim Liebenhoff, Norwegian Peace Alliance,

Einar Braathen, Peace initiative 2022, Norway,

Karin Utas Carlsson, Women for Peace, Sweden,

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For information: The Arctic Council and the Baltic Sea Council.