



# Basel Peace Office

*Advancing international peace and security through  
the abolition of nuclear weapons*

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## Basel Peace Office President's Report 2023

Again, as President of the Basel Peace Office, I refer readers to the activities and publications, as listed in the report of the BPO director, Mr. Alyn Ware. I'd like to express my thanks to him and the deputy director, Ms Marzhan Nurzhan for the excellent work done this year, particularly in the context of the preparation and organization of the 2023 Basel Intergenerational Forum and PACEY awards.

Both the Intergenerational Forum and the PACEY (Peace, nuclear Abolition and Climate Engaged Youth) Award were successful and emphasized the intergenerational dialogue. As before, the two events took place in the context of the Basel Peace Forum (BPF) organized by Swisspeace. They were substantially supported by the organisation Youth Fusion.

The PACEY Award is growing and becoming more recognised. We were really pleased and honoured that from 2023 the evangelical church of Basel decided to financially support an additional PACEY award, which now allows us to award three youth projects with a prize each of 5000 Euros. The 2023 PACEY prizes went to winning youth groups in Georgia, the Democratic Republic of Kongo and a network operating in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region. For details refer to the BPO director's summary.

My hope of starting a discussion on the feasibility of a so called Nuclear- weapons Free Zone for Europe (NWFZ E), as mentioned in my 2022 report, did not progress in 2023. Despite most of the Global South now being covered by regional nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, it seems just about impossible to discuss A European NWFZ option under current political circumstances. However, we will continue to review this internally with the possibility of a European NWFZ taken forward in the future.

Disappointing is another demand, namely the fact, that our country still has not signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). And this, although requested by both chambers of the Govt in Bern and many Swiss citizens. But there is perhaps a chance for that next year, and we surely will stick with our demand.

The war between the Ukraine and Russia continues to dominate the news and influence the life and death of thousands of young Ukrainian and Russian soldiers. We all consider this an enormous tragedy, which up to now seemed to go on without end. Only very recent news these days talk about the prospect of possible first peace negotiations to take place in Switzerland, one day prior to the World Economic Forum in Davos this coming January 2024.

For two months a 2<sup>nd</sup> war has been raging in Israel, involving Gaza. But skirmishes are also taking place in the Westbank between nervous Israeli settlers and Palestinian farmers. In Israel/Palestine, and in the European war, there still looms the possibility of further escalation. While these current wars in theory are out of the focus of interest of the BPO, I'd like to remind us that in both conflicts one of the participants is a nuclear power. For this reason, and given the objectives of the BPO, we must be worried about the current high-risk geopolitical situation.

**Prof Dr Andreas Nidecker MD**  
*President, Basel Peace Office*