

UN secretary-general warns of nuclear annihilation



United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres speaks to the media at the start of the tenth annual review of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty at UN headquarters on August 01, 2022 in New York City. (Photo by AFP)

United Nations, August 2 (RHC)-- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, has warned that the world is in danger with humanity being only one misstep away from "nuclear annihilation."

"Today, humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation," Guterres warned at the opening of the 10th review conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the UN's headquarters in New York which was held after a two-year delay due to the COVID pandemic.

Citing ongoing conflicts across the globe, Guterres said the world faced "a nuclear danger not seen since the height of the Cold War", and warned that the current global crises "with nuclear undertones" had the potential to escalate into a nuclear war.

"We have been extraordinarily lucky so far. But luck is not a strategy. Nor is it a shield from geopolitical tensions boiling over into nuclear conflict," he said. The UN chief urged all nations to "put humanity on a new path towards a world free of nuclear weapons."

"Eliminating nuclear weapons is the only guarantee they will never be used," the UN chief insisted. The NPT, which the signatories review every five years, was established with the aim to prevent the spread of nuclear arms, promote complete nuclear disarmament and extend cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

However, the signatories were unable to reach any agreement on substantive issues at the last review conference which was held in 2015. "The world can never be safe as long as any country has nuclear weapons," said Beatrice Fihn, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, who was in New York to attend the NPT conference.

"And the NPT recognizes this," she noted, adding further that, "It's the reason that the treaty exists. And now states, parties more than ever need to act."

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