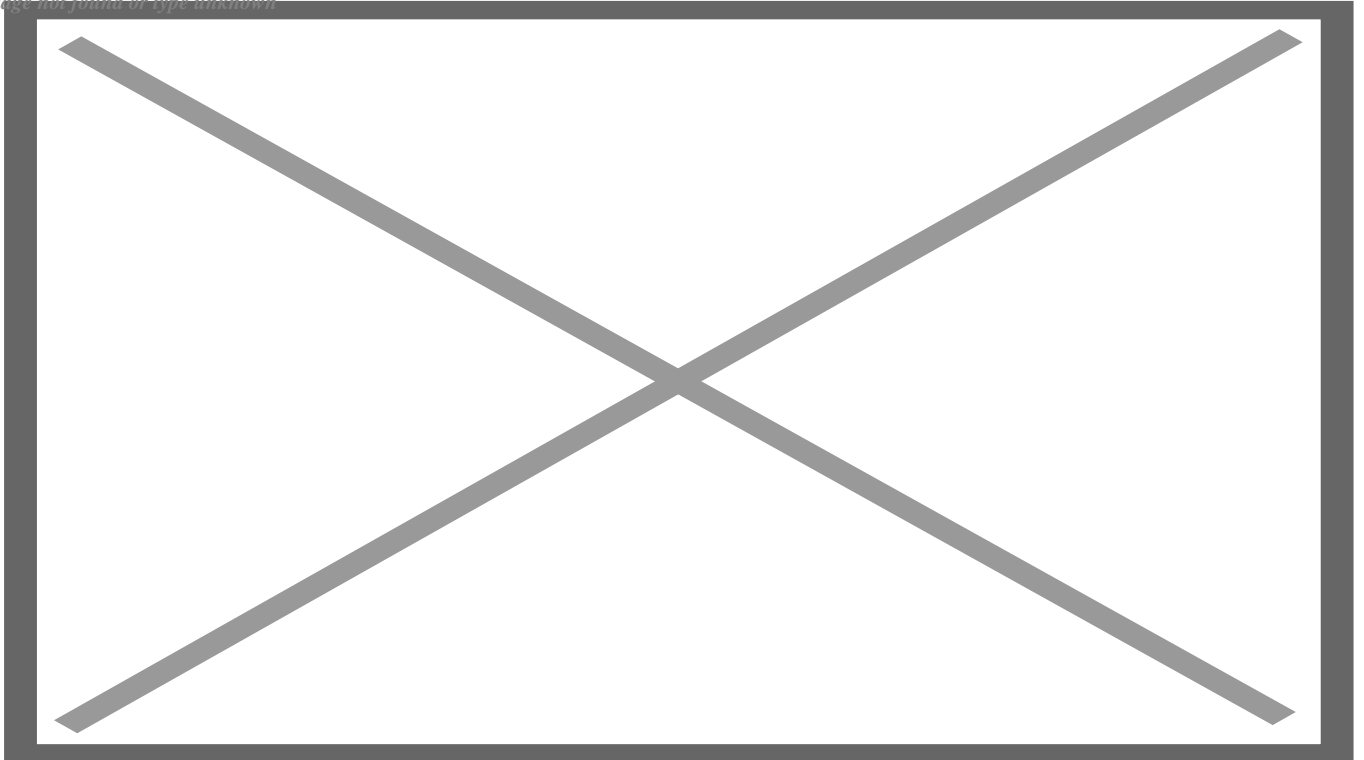


UN chief calls for saving the planet from nuclear danger

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UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

United Nations, August 29 (RHC)--UN Secretary-General António Guterres called for defending health, human survival, and the planet in his message on Monday on the occasion of the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

Nuclear tests have long poisoned our planet's natural environment and the species and people who call it home, Guterres said in a statement released by the office of his spokesman, Stéphane Dujarric.

He said the celebration represents a global recognition of the catastrophic and persistent damage caused in the name of the nuclear arms race.

He called for the world to establish a legally binding ban on all nuclear testing once and for all.

Given the current risks, it is "time for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enter fully into force, backed by an effective verification system," he stressed.

The Secretary-General added that such weapons have no place, nor do they guarantee any victory or security; by design, their only outcome is destruction.

He regretted that the world was "held hostage to these devices of death for a long time".

Let us ensure the end of testing now and forever and make nuclear weapons a thing of the past, once and for all, he concluded.

The Tenth Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty ended on August 26 after three weeks of discussions. Guterres warned at the opening session of the meeting that geopolitical tensions are reaching new heights and that humanity "is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation".

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