



Tackling conflict  
globally and locally

## **UK & Ireland Mayors for Peace Working Group**

c/o Nuclear Policy Unit, Manchester City Council, Manchester, M60 3NY

**Media release – STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:00, 21<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011**

### **5000+ members - Mayors for Peace reaches important milestone as it continues its campaign for a nuclear weapons free world**

With cities continuing to affiliate at the rate of two or three a day - roughly one thousand a year – the Hiroshima and Nagasaki-led Mayors for Peace is by far the largest and fastest growing direct-membership association of local Councils in the world. Today we announce that we have surpassed the 5000-cities mark and we are marking this milestone in celebration of the annual United Nations International Day of Peace on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2011.

What attracts so many cities to our network?

- **International solidarity with the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki**
- **To support the aims and objectives of the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign**

Hiroshima and Nagasaki are the Founding Cities of Mayors for Peace. Their experiences in 1945 of the destructive power of nuclear weapons lend great force to their opposition to abolish nuclear arms. From 1981 to 2003, 550 cities expressed their solidarity by joining Mayors for Peace. Since 2003, following a decision made at the Mayors for Peace Executive Board in Manchester Town Hall to focus more effort on membership development, thousands of additional cities have been inspired to support the '2020 Vision' of a world free of nuclear weapons by the year 2020 and show the importance of local government to influence this debate.

In the UK and the Republic of Ireland there are 84 member town and cities in the Mayors for Peace. The City of Manchester is a Vice President of Mayors for Peace and has worked closely with the Cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki over the last three decades. It helps to lead the work of Mayors for Peace in the UK and Ireland. It is ably assisted in this by the City of Glasgow, who in 2010 became an Associate Member of the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign Association Board, providing specific leadership for the organisation in Scotland.

Please find attached the list of the 300 new cities that, in the last three months, has taken Mayors for Peace over the milestone of 5000 members (1). It is representative of our network as a whole; a mix of large and small cities from all across the globe. We thank them and welcome them! Also attached is a list that features over 200 major cities (2), half of them capital cities, in our network. Note that these cities represent almost half a billion people; the entire network represents **almost one billion people**.

With such numbers comes responsibility. How can Mayors for Peace contribute to the elimination of nuclear arms? Our foremost task is to never let anyone become complacent about the nuclear threat. All global leaders should feel pressure from cities to act urgently and receive strong backing once they do.

- **Nuclear weapons are an immediate threat to our citizens**
- **Nuclear weapons are an immediate threat to our world**

Nuclear weapons have been deployed because of their capacity to destroy cities. Modern nuclear warheads are capable of annihilating the largest cities in the world. The radiation and blast of the

nuclear explosion instantly kills every living thing within many kilometres. Further away, hundreds of thousands more die from blast wounds and, over the coming months and years, from radiation poisoning.

Locally, everything Councils and local communities have striven to build up over many years would be obliterated in a matter of seconds. The threat to the world as a whole develops more slowly but just as inexorably. Following a nuclear war, all the agricultural systems that sustain our global population of over seven billion people would be crippled by catastrophic climate change. Worldwide famine and pandemic lasting for a decade or more would claim roughly twenty times as many lives as the original explosions, decimating humanity as a whole.

The scientific evidence for this catastrophic global impact is being studiously ignored by military and political leaders. This **reckless endangerment** must be exposed and Mayors for Peace accepts the responsibility to do so. Mayors for Peace will work with those world leaders and like-minded organisations who seek to work for the universal abolition of nuclear weapons as a key part of our **2020 Vision**.

As UK and Irish members of Mayors for Peace, we declare “**Cities are Not Targets!**” not only to protect our own citizens, but also to protect the entire world. We thank our many supporters for helping us mobilise the cities of the world; we now look forward to broadening this great coalition until our goal of a world free of nuclear weapons is realised.

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For more information:

Visit [www.2020visioncampaign.org](http://www.2020visioncampaign.org) or [www.mayorsforpeace.org](http://www.mayorsforpeace.org)

Or telephone +00 43 2243 30639 or Skype 2020visioncampaign to discuss this media release with the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign Secretariat based in Ypres.

For discussion with UK Mayors for Peace representatives contact Manchester’s Mayors for Peace permanent representative, Councillor Mark Hackett on 0161 681 4966 or Glasgow’s Mayors for Peace permanent representative, Councillor Euan McLeod on 07723 341787.

The list of the 300 latest members of Mayors for Peace and the 200 major cities who are members of Mayors for Peace can be located at the following web addresses:

[http://www.2020visioncampaign.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/329\\_new\\_cities\\_affiliations.pdf](http://www.2020visioncampaign.org/fileadmin/user_upload/329_new_cities_affiliations.pdf)

<http://www.2020visioncampaign.org/en/goal-5000-members/citizens-portal.html>