
Though 50 years have passed since the United States ceased testing nuclear weapons in the Marshall Islands, many residents still suffer from the long-term health effects. There has been no “durable solution” to the displacement of communities or long-term measures to tackle the consequences of the testing. Nuclear testing has been proven to affect basic human rights in communities, including the right to food, adequate housing, and health.

Studies of the human health effects of exposure to fallout and remaining nuclear waste in the Marshallese environment has shown documented health problems, such as changes in red blood cell production and subsequent anemia, metabolic and related disorders; immune system vulnerabilities; osteoarthritis and other musculoskeletal degeneration; cataracts; cancers and leukemia; miscarriages, congenital defects, and infertility.

If nuclear weapons were to be used again, through testing, intentional use, or accidentally, the humanitarian consequences would be catastrophic. In addition to direct fatalities, the situation in Marshall Islands highlights that any survivors of the horrendous effects of a nuclear explosion would endure immeasurable suffering and it would be a clear violation of international law, including both human rights law and international humanitarian law.

WILPF has worked for total disarmament since its creation, and constantly call for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. WILPF therefore calls on all states to:

- welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur on Toxic Waste and take this opportunity to highlight the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the testing and use of nuclear weapons; and
- support the Republic of the Marshall Islands in receiving assistance to deal with the profound environmental, health, and human rights consequences of the nuclear testing. We urge states to call for national, bilateral, and international commitment to support and sustain a new generation of Marshallese medical practitioners, environmental health and remediation scientists, and citizen scientists whose determinant actions sustain a healthy Marshallese way of life.

In addition, we also call for all nuclear possessing states to submit publicly their research and information about the impact of their nuclear testing on local communities.