

# Factsheet

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## Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons 8-9 December 2014



*click picture*

**Experts estimate there are approximately 16,300 weapons at some 98 sites in 14 countries. The Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, 8 and 9 December 2014, will consider the consequences in the event they were used, either accidentally or deliberately.**

### Environmental Consequences

*A limited nuclear war would pose a worldwide threat and a superpower exchange would be catastrophic. The work of Owen B. Toon, Alan Robock, and Richard P. Turco, published in [Physics Today 2008](#), with subsequent focus by [Robock and Toon](#) on a 'local war' between India and Pakistan, remain the definitive studies.*

Nuclear winter was an important factor in ending the nuclear arms race. In an interview in 2000 former Soviet Union leader [Mikhail S. Gorbachev](#) said, "the environment has been greatly damaged by the nuclear arms race. Models made by Russian and American scientists showed that a nuclear war would result in a nuclear winter that would be extremely destructive to all life on Earth; the knowledge of that was a great stimulus to us, to people of honor and morality, to act in that situation.

*A model simulating how the earth would look after a nuclear exchange.*

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) plays a leading role in the current humanitarian impact discussion. Its governing council in a 2011 [resolution](#) emphasized "the incalculable human suffering that can be expected to result from any use of nuclear weapons," their threat to the environment and future generations, and the lack of any adequate capability to the humanitarian consequences.

Evaluations of the impact of nuclear weapons are not publicly available from the five nuclear weapons states. An exception is this fact sheet from the [United States Department of Homeland Security](#) published in 2005.

Global famine threatening two billion people could result from a limited, regional nuclear war in the South says this 2014 [report](#) from [International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War \(IPPNW\)](#), based on new data.

According to the [International Law and Policy Institute](#) most stages in the development, testing and production of nuclear weapons have an environmental impact the reports.

The [Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization](#) cites more than 2,000 nuclear tests since 1945. They dispersed large amounts of radioactive material into the environment.

<http://atomicreporters.com/>