



July 15, 2022

Dear Council Speaker Adams and NYC Council Members,

As New York City based members of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) 2017 Nobel Peace Laureate, we were shocked by the [“nuclear preparedness” PSA](#) produced by the NYC Office for Emergency Management, seen by nearly 750,000 and written about in US media and countries [around the world](#). To give people the false impression that a nuclear attack is survivable and to tell New Yorkers “You’ve got this”, is spreading a lie so harmful that those in charge should issue a formal retraction and resign from their positions. How can such a team be trusted with floods and hurricanes when they invent escape plans that are utterly out of touch with reality?

In an attempt to imagine the unthinkable violence that would ensue if an 800 kiloton nuclear bomb were detonated over midtown, Dr. Lynne Eden, Associate Director for Research at Stanford University’s Center for International Security and Cooperation, offers a sober, evidence-based assessment in [this article](#) published by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

While NYC Emergency Management instructs us to “Get inside fast,” according to Eden “within a few tenths of millionths of a second after detonation, the center of the warhead would reach a temperature of roughly 200 million degrees Fahrenheit, or about four to five times the temperature at the center of the sun. A ball of superheated air would form, initially expanding outward at millions of miles per hour. It would act like a fast-moving piston on the surrounding air, compressing it at the edge of the fireball and creating a shockwave of vast size and power.”

Dr. Eden continues, “The fireball would vaporize the structures directly below it and produce an immense blast wave and high-speed winds, crushing even heavily built concrete structures within a couple miles of ground zero. The blast would tear apart high-rise buildings and expose their contents to the solar temperatures; it would spread fires by exposing ignitable surfaces, releasing flammable materials, and dispersing burning materials. At the Empire State Building, Grand Central Station, the Chrysler Building, and St. Patrick’s Cathedral, about one half to three quarters of a mile from ground zero, light from the fireball would melt asphalt in the streets, burn paint off walls, and melt metal surfaces within a half second of the detonation. Roughly one second later, the blast wave and 750-mile-per-hour winds would arrive, flattening buildings and tossing burning cars into the air like leaves in a windstorm.”

And the NYC Office of Emergency Management tells us “You’ve got this.”

We invite you to join us on Monday, July 18 at 9 AM when NYCAN will gather in City Hall Park where decades ago two great New Yorkers, Bayard Rustin and Dorothy Day, refused to participate in nuclear

weapons civil defense drills because they understood that nuclear war is not survivable and nuclear weapons manifest as instruments of genocide, racism and colonialism. At City Hall Park we will call for:

1. the nuclear disarmament legislation City Council passed in December of 2021 to be implemented;
2. the Office of Emergency Management to delete the PSA from its website and issue an apology;
3. City Council to hold a government oversight hearing about how this happened, how much money it cost tax payers, how to remediate the damage this misinformation has caused, and to consider next steps such as the possible resignation of those responsible.

The disarmament legislation established a New York City Nuclear Disarmament and Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Advisory Committee. Had Mayor Adams implemented this legislation and Commissioner Iscol conferred with the Advisory Committee, this brazen lie issued to New Yorkers about the survivability of a nuclear attack could have been avoided. When the New York City Council passed Int. 1621 and Res. 976 which calls on NYC to divest our pension funds from the production and maintenance of nuclear weapons and for the US Government to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, while reaffirming New York City as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, we became a beacon to the world.

This irresponsible PSA has undermined that leadership, but it is not too late to undo the damage. A corrective should be issued and those responsible should be removed from office. For an expert assessment of what happens when a nuclear bomb explodes over a dense urban area, see [this PSA](#) issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

NYCAN rejects the falsehoods of nuclear survivability as propagated by the Office of Emergency Management's July 11 PSA. "Get inside, stay inside and stay tuned" represents a total lack of understanding of what thermonuclear weapons are and how one 800 kiloton warhead would instantaneously and radically destroy our beloved city, killing millions of New Yorkers in seconds, making any rescue or "preparedness" effort impossible.

New York City bears a powerful responsibility as home to the Manhattan Project that developed the world's first nuclear weapons. In the year that we remember the 40th anniversary of the March and Rally for Nuclear Disarmament and Human Needs when one million people gathered in and around Central Park, NYC once again has the opportunity to send a message to the world that we prioritize human needs over nuclear violence.

Yours sincerely,

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