Protocols for Seeking Nuclear Truth with Integrity

Working paper submitted by ICAN on behalf of member organization Nuclear Truth Project

I. Rights, Respect, and Reciprocity: Protocols for Seeking Nuclear Truth with Integrity

1. The Nuclear Truth Project seeks to address the broader issues of nuclear harms in relation to nuclear weapons (use and threat of use), nuclear testing, nuclear power, uranium mining, uranium refining, resultant radioactive waste streams and associated nuclear industries, and the risks to humanity and our living planet. Convening since July 2021, the project participants supported a diverse group of primarily intergenerational, affected community members and Indigenous Peoples to share their personal stories and experiences, which have shaped these protocols.

2. The Nuclear Truth Project recognises that whether viewed as victims or survivors, affected communities are identified around the world as those who have been disproportionately impacted by the environmental, physical, cultural and emotional violence of all aspects of the nuclear industry. This includes nuclear weapons and nuclear power, and related activities such as, mining of uranium, uranium refining, plutonium production, nuclear testing, radioactive waste dumping, and nuclear weapons use and threat of use.

3. Creating protocols that can positively guide respectful, human rights based and reciprocal interactions with affected communities and Indigenous Peoples is vital in this work and an essential moral responsibility.

4. The Nuclear Truth Project recognises that for many First Nations and Indigenous Peoples ceremonial practices, cultural teachings and traditions inform how to walk this earth, and what our responsibilities as human beings are to all forms of life and each other. These understandings help inform how we live in relation to harms visited upon communities affected by nuclear use, testing, and related industries. The lived experiences of those who are impacted by nuclear weapons and related industries based on uranium extraction can also help inform and illuminate the scientific, cultural and political understandings of nuclear activities. Those with lived experience are knowledge holders and provide expert evidence.
5. We recognise protocols as being understandings of how individuals, organisations and communities stay in right relationship with each other, building respectful, reciprocal, and intentional interactions and affiliations. Protocols help us prepare ourselves and our spaces. They help centre the lived experience of those communities in the processes to redress harm. These protocols aim to protect the vulnerable, shield from further trauma and harm, and ensure nuclear justice is centred in the work to redress both historic and any future harms from nuclear activities.

6. Protocols are intended as a guiding framework for working together or approaching affected communities. Protocols are an essential element when working within, alongside or in relation to communities that have been harmed by nuclear experimentation, colonialism and aggression. We hold that effective participation of affected communities is essential in the work to eliminate nuclear weapons. Protocols are also essential for those sectors wishing to engage from outside of affected communities – academics, media, diplomats, governments, activists, aid organisations and others.

7. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), adopted on July 7th 2017, and entering into force on 22 January 2021, recognises the “catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons cannot be adequately addressed, transcend national borders, pose grave implications for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security, and the health of current and future generations.” The TPNW acknowledges that nuclear weapons have caused unacceptable suffering and harm to both victims of the use of nuclear weapons and those affected by the testing of weapons. The TPNW further recognises the disproportionate impact on women and girls, including as a result of ionising radiation, and the disproportionate impact of nuclear-weapon-related activities on Indigenous Peoples. The TPNW encompasses positive obligations towards victim assistance and environmental remediation.

8. We advocate that those working towards nuclear truth and nuclear justice within, alongside or in relation to victims/survivors, First Nations and Indigenous Peoples and affected communities should undertake to consider and establish practices that follow these basic protocols:

II. Nuclear Truth Project Protocols

9. Rights:
   • Protect cultural continuity
   • Ensure attribution and copyright of all knowledge shared
   • Prove free, prior and informed consent for engagement, including the rights to refusal, withdrawal, and anonymity
   • Practice respectful communications and consultations
   • Take responsibility for your work with and alongside impacted communities, its impacts and follow through
   • Work with an understanding of established Indigenous rights frameworks (for example as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), and any local protocols and practices of the communities themselves
10. Respect:

• Centre the lived experience of victims/survivors, First Nations/Indigenous Peoples and affected communities with respect

• Recognise that nuclear activities have inflicted considerable losses for many affected individuals and communities, including intergenerational traumas and harms

• Do nothing that foreseeably creates further harm or compounds existing harms

• Commit to deep listening practices

• Ensure principles of equity

• Work with spirit and integrity

• Be mindful of the need for translation or interpretation as well as for literacy requirements for affected community members

• Protect personal information and data and maintain confidentiality as requested by the individuals or community

• Develop clear and consensual protocols on the collection, use, reproduction, and dissemination of information as fits the communities and local laws

• Ensure intellectual and cultural property rights are addressed

• Take care to learn and follow relevant practices around use of imagery

• Publish or platform only with the explicit and written consent of the person/people concerned

• When approaching communities or individuals, demonstrate transparency in your motives, practices and outcomes

• From within communities, work to prepare ourselves and our spaces to be open and safe

• Recognise that for many communities, the connection between people, animals and all living creatures, and the lands, air, oceans and waters are inseparable from one another in responsibility and care

11. Reciprocity:

• Build respectful, reciprocal (two way) and positive relationships, while avoiding extractive and colonial relationships

• Seek out any opportunities for revenue sharing, local consultations, and donations

• Recognise that information and data (including stories, research, other) collected from individuals and communities involves knowledge transfer and production, and as such is a resource that has impacts for the communities

• Work to ensure all data is collected with the safeguards described above and ensure that the material is transferred to the community members or representative organisations as well as the individuals who provided the stories and research materials

• Work with a collaborative intent

• Recognise that researchers and others are accountable to those communities they are working alongside, for, or with

• Build capacity wherever possible, providing any opportunities for local work, study, assistance and skill building
12. The Nuclear Truth Project recognises the importance of developing materials in as many languages and forms as possible, particularly for impacted communities. As such, we intend to work with community members to effectively translate and distribute these protocols in languages as required by communities wherever possible, including in writing and where feasible in recordings. www.nucleartruthproject.org

13. Should you have any questions regarding this working paper, please contact protocols@nucleartruthproject.org