

CFFP Policy Brief

A feminist take on nuclear weapons in Germany

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1. Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has brought war back to Europe, causing millions of people to flee and triggering a global food shortage (see Strubenhoff 2022). With a nuclear-armed state attacking an independent, nuclear-free state,¹ the discussion of nuclear weapons and deterrence has reached new prominence.

The war has also turned public opinion in Germany for the first time in decades. Most of the population now either favours hosting nuclear weapons in Germany or modernising and even increasing them (Infratest Dimap 2022).² At the same time, optimism has grown among (feminist) civil society that the new government, elected in late 2021, would challenge the status quo of nuclear weapons in Germany and proactively advocate internationally for nuclear disarmament - especially after both the Greens and the Social Democrats demanded the removal of US nuclear weapons in their election campaigns. The Greens even promoted the ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The new German government has also committed itself to a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) - an intersectional approach to foreign and security policy that prioritises the security of people over the security of states - in its coalition deal.

So, what will Germany's nuclear weapons policy look like going forward? As this policy brief outlines, to align with an FFP, three elements must be considered: Firstly, FFP requires listening to local civil society and the people and communities impacted by the decision to host nuclear weapons. In the case of Germany, this means listening to local activists in Büchel (Rhineland Palatinate), where US nuclear weapons are stationed. Secondly, FFP further requires looking at the issue of nuclear weapons in all its complexity and recognising its interlinkages with colonialism, the climate crisis, or reproductive justice, which activists have long raised, often feminists, youth, and affected communities. Finally, FFP requires prioritising (nuclear) disarmament and demilitarisation to achieve sustainable feminist peace.

This policy brief argues that to bring its nuclear policy in line with an FFP, Germany needs to radically alter its position both on hosting nuclear weapons and advancing nuclear disarmament internationally. This includes centring feminist civil society in the nuclear discourse and a commitment to an intersectional approach that considers the interlinkages between nuclear policy and any foreign and security policy areas that impact people's everyday lives.

“Youth organisations play an essential role in advancing nuclear disarmament across the world. Young people instinctively look to the future and see what can be rather than what is. Listening to young people can bring foreign policy the imagination, compassion, and long-term thinking it currently lacks.”

- Youth for TPNW

We will explain why nuclear weapons are a feminist issue before providing a more detailed assessment of Germany's current nuclear policy. Lastly, the policy brief presents concrete policy recommendations to bring Germany's FFP in line with intersectional feminist approaches towards nuclear disarmament.

It is important to note that our work and this policy briefing build on the work of feminist and peace scholars, feminist civil society, and activists around the globe. We want to specifically acknowledge the work of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), *Initiativkreis gegen Atomwaffen in Büchel*, and the campaign *“Büchel ist überall! atomwaffenfrei.jetzt”* (“Büchel is everywhere! no nukes.now”, authors' translation).

¹ Ukraine transferred thousands of former Soviet nuclear warheads to Russia, becoming a completely nuclear-free state by 2001. The country has never possessed a nuclear weapons arsenal of its own (ICAN 2022a).

² In 2021, a Greenpeace-commissioned poll found that 82 percent of the German population were in favour of a complete removal of nuclear weapons on German ground (Greenpeace 2021). However, a June 2022 poll proved a significant change within public opinion, finding 52 percent of the German population were in favour of US nuclear warheads in Germany; 40 percent in favour of hosting them; and 12 percent in favour of their modernisation and increase in number (Infratest Dimap 2022).

Status Quo of the international nuclear world order

Nine states in total possess nuclear weapons, and disarmament efforts have stalled for years now. As of January 2022, 12705 nuclear warheads exist worldwide (SIPRI 2022: 15), more than 11000 (more than 90) in the possession of Russia and the US. Even before the Russian war in Ukraine, one could witness strong (nuclear) armament through investment in and modernisation of arsenals, and a militarised (nuclear) discourse (see Neuneck 2019). As SIPRI reported in its 2022 yearbook, all nuclear-armed states are deploying or developing new systems increasing the nuclear warhead ceiling and reducing transparency (UK); launching new nuclear programmes (France); expanding arsenals (India and Pakistan); modernising nuclear arsenal (Israel); prioritising nuclear weapons as part of national security (North Korea); and generally lacking transparency (China and Russia) (ibid 14-17). In 2021, during a pandemic and in the midst of the climate crisis, all nine nuclear-armed states spent \$82.4 billion on nuclear weapons (ICAN 2022b: 4), that is \$156,841 per minute (ibid.). This militarisation took place despite nuclear weapons hardly being present in most discourses in Western states in years (Neuneck 2019: 431). Yet, the topic was never really off the table. On the contrary the nuclear order today is less predictable and more unstable than during the Cold War.

Info Box 1

2. Why Nuclear Weapons are a Feminist (Foreign Policy) Issue

Before we analyse Germany's current approach to nuclear weapons, we discuss why nuclear weapons and nuclear policy are feminist issues in the first place and the intersectional implications and need for gender-responsive approaches to nuclear weapons.

2.1 Dismantling militarised masculinity, the realist security paradigm, and the idea of nuclear deterrence

Why a gender-responsive approach? Gender as a social construct influences thought and politics by ordering identities, behaviour, and activities according to expectations of what is considered feminine/female and masculine/male.³

Identities, behaviour, and activities perceived as masculine are valued higher than those considered feminine (ibid; Connell 1987; Peterson 1992). In this way of thinking, 'being a real man' is linked to the willingness and ability to use weapons and even kill (see Acheson 2018). This idea of militarised masculinity feeds into neo-realist thinking, one of the most dominant schools of thought within International Relations.

(Neo-)Realism assumes that because of the supposedly anarchic and hostile nature of the international system, states only prosper and survive if they strive for autonomy, dominance, military power, and technology (cf. Waltz 1959, 1979). Security is seen as state-centric, taking precedence over individual or human-centric security (see Aggestam et al. 2019; Tickner 1993), and can only be defended militarily. The realist security paradigm is legitimised by masculine behaviour and values (cf. Enloe 1989:199f), with nuclear weapons being seen as "*normal instruments of security*" (see Scheyer and Standtke-Erdmann 2020).

According to militarised masculinity combined with neo-realist theory, nuclear weapons represent (military) power, strength, and dominance.⁴ Conversely, demilitarisation, disarmament, peace, and negotiation are devalued and viewed as feminine traits: weak and naive (cf. Young 1990). As these perceptions are dominant, and no country wants to seem weak or naive, it remains a considerable challenge to push governments to commit to disarmament or take significant action towards demilitarisation.

³ It is important to note that gender and its associated attributions are culturally and temporally variable, but almost always valued differently (cf. Sjoberg and Tickner 2013). We define gender as a spectrum and oppose the gender-binary and the reproduction of dualistic thinking by mentioning only male/female. At this point, we use the dichotomy only to dismantle the realist assumptions and paradigms (see below) benefitting from binary assumptions and narratives. We write the binary in italics to underline that it is not a naturally given fact but a concept being socially constructed.

⁴ Just as Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn, and R.W. Connell (2004: 3) write in their Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities, we understand masculinity as "explicitly gendered" and "socially constructed, produced, and reproduced rather than as somehow just "naturally" one way or another".

Ever since the Cold War, many policymakers and experts have justified the alleged impossibility of complete disarmament and the relevance of nuclear weapons for (inter-)national security through the so-called deterrence theory, which is closely related to (Neo-)Realism and its theoretical underpinnings. The deterrence doctrine's core is paradoxical. Simply put, it argues that nuclear weapons keep us safe because they are so destructive that no country would dare use them and consequently sticks to international norms. It postulates that there would be too much at stake to launch a nuclear weapon as the attacked state would always be able to strike back. Consequently, it would be rational for both states not to use nuclear weapons. Following this logic, states must always ensure nuclear parity, in other words, rearming when opponents rearm to retain 'second-strike capability'. Under this doctrine, nuclear disarmament and any questioning of the global nuclear order appear naive or 'irrational' (a stereotypical 'feminine' trait).

It is an illusion to believe that established discourse, negotiations, and treaties around nuclear weapons are not already gendered and racialised (Brown & Considine 2022: 1250). While the TPNW may be the first treaty to take a gender-sensitive approach, other treaties, such as the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), demonstrate a clear white, cis-hetero, male, Western perspective. With no mention of gender, these existing policies build upon the dominant, seemingly neutral depiction of nuclear weapons that excludes women, racialised people, youth, and Global South perspectives and wrongly assumes their security is automatically guaranteed, as demonstrated in the following sections.

2.2 Feminist (foreign policy) perspectives make it clear: nuclear weapons do not guarantee safety

Looking at nuclear weapons from an intersectional feminist perspective means challenging dominant assumptions about security, highlighting how gendered perceptions and norms influence concepts of security and nuclear policy, and focusing on the implications of nuclear weapons on marginalised people. It then quickly becomes apparent that nuclear weapons only benefit a few powerful states while endangering the vast majority of human beings and the environment, particularly marginalised communities.

However, we must first discuss where nuclear weapons are being tested. France, for instance, conducted 193 nuclear tests in its former colony, Polynesia, until 1996, leaving the local population suffering health and environmental damage until today. The testing of nuclear weapons on colonised grounds and racialised bodies can be understood as nuclear colonialism. Secondly, we

need to consider the gendered consequences of testing and using nuclear weapons and policy-making around nuclear weapons, including the deeply gendered effects of radiation on people with a uterus (increases in stillbirths, miscarriages, premature birth, congenital disabilities and growth disorders) are still poorly researched.⁵ At the same time, women and other marginalised groups are systematically excluded from discussions on nuclear policy.⁶ There is no inclusive public debate in nuclear-armed states and their allied countries when it comes to nuclear weapons. On the contrary, civil society's concerns and feelings of insecurity are not taken seriously or being ignored by policymakers. This is also the case for Germany, where (feminist) civil society and the peace movement have been fighting against US nuclear weapons on German territory for decades (see chapter 3).

"The intersectional perspective is very important too and embraced by many young people. Together with youth and civil society, policymakers should establish a peace logic instead of a security logic in the sense of a Feminist Foreign Policy." - Silvia Maria Bopp Pressehütte und Friedenswerkstatt Mutlangen e.V.

Moreover, victims of nuclear weapons also experience grave discrimination. For example, women Hibakusha faced higher risks of illness and death and a greater extent of social discrimination and exclusion (Owens 2020). Other factors, such as age, play a huge role too. For example, radiation and its carcinogenic effects pose a more significant threat to younger people, especially girls (ibid.). The issue of nuclear weapons also directly impacts the climate and the environment. Any detonation of a nuclear bomb would be a climatic and environmental disaster: hurricane-force winds triggering wildfires, released carbon transforming the climate (likely freezing it dramatically), poisoned and/or burned crops or a destabilised marine food chain leading to food insecurity, and a destroyed ozone layer allowing more UV radiation. This would endanger humans, plants, and animals - all life on Earth (Meyer 2022). Furthermore, the connection between nuclear weapons and irreversible damage to the climate and environment is not a 'what if' question. Through the contamination of land and water through uranium mining, nuclear testing and nuclear waste, nuclear weapons always threaten the climate, even when they are not in use (Sanders-Zakre 2020).

FFP can be a tool to shape foreign and security policy so that it protects people and the planet. Both the climate crisis and nuclear weapons impact marginalised people the most. Tackling both is an inherently feminist issue.

⁵ For example, see ICAN Germany 2019a.

⁶ See, e.g.: UNIDIR 2019, and ICRC 2020.

3. What about Germany? Between a nuclear-weapons free world, Nuclear Deterrence, and US Nuclear Weapons in Germany

In this section, we will outline Germany's ambivalent position towards nuclear weapons, which is in contrast to the position of feminist civil society. Even if the war in Ukraine has somewhat shifted the opinion of the German population of nuclear weapons as security guarantors, the anti-nuclear (weapons) movement is strong and vital for feminist peace.

3.1 German Nuclear Sharing, NATO and the Idea of Nuclear Deterrence

As a NATO member since 1955 and a strong ally of France and the US (both countries possessing nuclear weapons), Germany is part of the so-called NATO nuclear sharing (see Info Box 2). Currently, it hosts an estimated 20 US nuclear warheads

(B-61 aerial bombs) at Büchel Air Base (Atomwaffen A-Z 2022).⁷ The weapons are a crucial element of NATO's nuclear deterrence strategy, "linking or coupling U.S. strategic nuclear forces to the protection of NATO" (Pifer 2021: 2). The German government often argues that to participate in the Nuclear Planning Group⁸ and have a say within the NATO internal debate about nuclear policy, it has to remain a host of US nuclear weapons. This argumentation is incorrect. Countries can in any case participate in respective consultations without hosting nuclear weapons (Pifer 2021: 2). Currently, all 30 NATO members (except France) are part of the Nuclear Planning Group, with only five engaging in nuclear sharing and three possessing nuclear weapons (NATO 2022a).

Nuclear Sharing within the NATO – US-Nuclear Weapons at Büchel Air Base, Germany

Since NATO's foundation, nuclear weapons have always played a key role in the military alliance in terms of deterrence as well as national and collective security. NATO itself states it is "committed to arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, [...] as long as nuclear weapons exist, it will remain a nuclear alliance" (NATO 2022b). Through the principle of nuclear sharing, members are under the so-called nuclear umbrella - a guarantee by the NATO nuclear weapon states (NWS) to "prevent coercion and deter aggression" (NATO 2022c) defend their non-nuclear allies. Thereby, nuclear sharing can, as in the case of NATO members Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey, include the storage of (US) nuclear weapons on their territory (ICAN n.d.) and entail the maintenance of technical equipment required for their use, amongst all so-called Dual-capable aircraft (DCA) (NATO 2022c). The German army owns the nuclear-capable Tornado aircrafts. This means that after approval by the NATO Nuclear Planning Group and authorisation by the US President (the U.S. controls the nuclear warheads until they are used), the German army would drop a nuclear bomb over the designated area (ibid.).

Info Box 2

Moreover, Germany has also been stressing the (realist) security dimensions and 'protective' nature of nuclear weapons in national policies by arguing that nuclear weapons keep people safe because they deter enemies (deterrence argument) (CFFP and WILPF 2021:12, White Paper on Security Policy and the Future of the German Army 2016: 65). In the 2016 German White Paper on Security Policy and the Future of the German Army, the German government expresses its loyalty to and reliability on NATO and connects the

alliance's nuclear capability to it being a 'solidarity community'. According to the White Paper, Germany identifies as part of this community and "can only protect its territory and open society through the alliance" (White Paper 2016: 25, authors' translation). As opposition parties at the time, the Left and the Green parties advocated for an end to nuclear sharing and the procurement of new DCAs and demanded that the government sign the TPNW (German Parliament 2020; German Parliament 2021).⁹

⁷ The B-61 aerial bombs stationed in Büchel have 13-times the power of the bombs dropped in Hiroshima (see Atomwaffen A-Z 2022).

⁸ "The Nuclear Planning Group acts as the senior body on nuclear matters in the Alliance and discusses specific policy issues associated with nuclear forces" (NATO 2022a).

⁹ Back in 2010, there had even been a cross-parliamentary group motion made by the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP and the Green Party calling upon the German government to strongly commit to the withdrawal of US nuclear weapons from Germany (German Parliament 2010).

Nevertheless, in 2022, the parties now in government, the Green Party, SPD, and FDP have not yet altered Germany's position on nuclear weapons, which remains ambivalent. Federal Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock has remained committed to a nuclear-weapons free world, even after Russia invaded Ukraine. In the 2021 Annual Disarmament Report (ADR), published in 2022, she states, „Russia's war in Ukraine and its blatant threat to use weapons of mass destruction can only strengthen our resolve for disarmament. The goal of a world without nuclear weapons remains right; we must not abandon it now“ (ADR 2021: 2, authors' translation). However, the report also highlights Germany's NATO nuclear sharing obligations and stresses the importance of nuclear deterrence (ibid.: 28).

The German government plays an important role in upholding the international nuclear order. By continuing to host nuclear weapons and reinforcing that nuclear deterrence is working (even after a nuclear-armed state attacked a nuclear-free state which enjoys a 'substantial' partnership with NATO), Germany is undermining its goal of pursuing a nuclear-weapons free world. As discussed in the next section, a similar conclusion can be drawn concerning Germany's understanding of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

3.2 Holding on to “business as usual”: Germany's ignorance of the NPT's shortcomings

Germany signed the NPT in 1969 and legally renounced its possession of nuclear weapons.¹⁰ Ever since, Germany has underlined its compliance with the NPT, describing it as *“the basis of the nuclear order”*, and stating that the *“Federal Government is pursuing the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons within the framework of the NPT”* (ADR 2021:12). Although being *“the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States”* (UN Web TV 2022), the NPT, other than the TPNW, does not ban nuclear weapons per se nor explicitly questions existing unjust power structures between nuclear-armed and non-nuclear armed states. On the contrary, it legally enshrines the 'nuclear order' of the Cold War: it prohibits nuclear weapons for non-nuclear armed states, and nuclear-armed states are only obliged to *“pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control”* (Article 6 NPT). The desolate situation or deadlock of international disarmament negotiations and

ongoing nuclear modernisation by nuclear-armed states (see Info Box 1) underline this provision's weakness. It also does not acknowledge the catastrophic gendered, humanitarian, and environmental risks and implications of nuclear weapons.¹¹

“It is completely contradictory to want to achieve feminist goals in political action and foreign and security policy and to support nuclear weapons and their existence at the same time.” - Anna Hauschild, Executive board of the German section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

These shortcomings prompted over 120 non-nuclear armed states and civil society to promote the stigmatisation of nuclear weapons, which they finally achieved when the TPNW came into force in January 2021. Highlighting the catastrophic humanitarian implications of nuclear weapons - instead of emphasising the alleged security benefits of nuclear weapons for states - was also at the centre of the so-called Humanitarian Pledge (Austrian Federal Ministry of European and International Affairs 2014, 2016), one of the main achievements of a series of Humanitarian Conferences. These conferences were organised by civil society and non-nuclear armed states (Humanitarian Initiative) and laid the groundwork for the negotiations that finally led to the adoption of the TPNW in 2017 (for example, see Bolton and Minor 2016). They led the nuclear discourse away from its previous state-centricity, enabled a new focus on the gendered humanitarian risks and effects of nuclear weapons, and included marginalised voices and affected communities like the Hibakusha.

3.3 Actively hindering international disarmament efforts

Germany participated in the Humanitarian Conferences between 2013 and 2014 and welcomed the 'humanitarian framing' of the nuclear debate. However, Germany did not sign the Humanitarian Pledge but boycotted the negotiations on the TPNW, even rejecting multilateral disarmament negotiations in 2017 for the first time (Hall 2017). At the time, the German government acted against the population's will, as three out of four people wanted Germany to participate (Xanthe Hall in ICAN Germany 2017).¹² In its ADR 2019, the German government even stated that a *“prompt nuclear weapons ban was not useful to make progress in achieving or in really achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world”* (ADR 2019: 16, authors' translation). This opinion firstly shows that, once again, civil society and affected communities were not heard, and secondly, that the German

¹⁰ In the literature, the so-called Two Plus Four Agreement of 1990 is seen as the starting point of the Federal Republic's stance against the use and possession of nuclear weapons.

¹¹ In the final document of the NPT Review Conference 2010 and for the first time in the history of the NPT, the States Parties explicitly acknowledged the humanitarian risks of nuclear weapons, see: NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I): Part I, lit. 80, I.A. lit. v.

¹² Xanthe Hall is the co-founder of ICAN Germany and President of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW).

government was determined enough to pursue the said goal. By framing the TPNW as 'not useful', Germany also helped increase the divide between non-nuclear armed and nuclear-armed states. It denied the feminist security approach's possibility of implementation and even its legitimacy.

Moreover, the German government has played the NPT and the TPNW, the two major international treaties in the field, against each other, arguing they were incompatible. Not only have all the 68 States Parties and 91 Signatories of the TPNW been reaffirming their disagreement with this stance (most recently at the NPT 2022 Review Conference, see ICAN 2022c). The Academic Office of the German Parliament has also clearly stated that the treaties are not contradictory but complementary (Research Services of the German Parliament 2021: 36).

With the new government in place, a silver lining has appeared. Germany participated as an observer during the First Meetings of States Parties to the TPNW in Vienna in June 2022 - a welcome step called for by many civil society actors, including CFFP. The Foreign Minister's tone is noticeably different from her predecessors. Although making clear that Germany will not sign or ratify the TPNW anytime soon - something CFFP eagerly challenges - the minister committed to highlighting the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons (e.g., victims' assistance) and focusing on the gendered impacts of radiation (German Federal Foreign Office 2022). These are all laudable steps, statements, and promises - yet there is much work to do if the German government wants to stop playing an active role in upholding the nuclear world order and, instead, constructively work towards a nuclear-weapons free world. At the NPT Review Conference in August 2022, Federal Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that "there is a lot at stake - for us and for future generations", and that the German government wanted to cooperate, also with States Parties to the TPNW to mitigate the consequences of nuclear weapons and to pursue gender-specific disarmament approaches (German Federal Government 2022).

Civil society and activists have been fighting for a nuclear-weapons free world courageously since nuclear weapons existed. The next section presents the broader German society's stance on nuclear weapons in Germany. Secondly, drawing on various interviews with (political youth) organisations, activists, and other civil society experts working on nuclear disarmament,¹³ we focus on anti-nuclear (weapons) engagement, particularly in Büchel, its successes and the ongoing challenges civil society has been facing.

3.4 German civil society's stance on nuclear weapons

Historically, German civil society has been against nuclear weapons, and the literature observes a stable "anti-nuclearism and anti-militarism" (Davis and Jasper 2014:23, cf. Müller 2003; Volpe and Kühn 2017). This was emphasised by a YouGov poll commissioned by ICAN in 2019, which showed that 68 percent of the German population favoured Germany signing the TPNW, and 67 percent wanted US nuclear weapons removed from German territory (ICAN 2019). In 2021, 83 percent were against US nuclear weapons on German territory (ICAN 2021: 31).¹⁴ Given the pending renewal of the nuclear-capable 'Tornado' aircraft (see Info Box 2), German nuclear sharing had shortly become a topic of public and media discussion. However, since the beginning of Russia's war against Ukraine, a very small majority (52 percent) has been in favour of German nuclear sharing (Tagesschau.de 2022).¹⁵ We find this is connected to the increasing fear and insecurity many people (very understandably) feel and by the overwhelmingly militarised discourse described above - designed to look for militarised solutions.

3.5 "Büchel ist überall!" - Resistance against nuclear weapons in Büchel and beyond

In Büchel, where the US nuclear weapons are stored, and in other parts of Germany, civil society has been continuously mobilising against nuclear (re)armament and nuclear weapons per se. Among many other initiatives, the German national campaign "Büchel ist überall! atomwaffenfrei.jetzt" ("Büchel is everywhere! no nukes.now", authors' translation), an ever-growing network of over 80 member organisations part of the international anti-nuclear weapons movement, has been fighting for a nuclear weapons-free world and the immediate withdrawal of all nuclear weapons on German territory for over 20 years (cf. Atomwaffen A-Z n.d.; Network of the German Peace Movement n.d.). In addition to uncountable human chains, open letters, demonstrations, and lobbying to advocate for these goals and Germany's signing of the TPNW, civil society has also been organising multi-day action camps with activists from all over the world in Büchel (atomwaffenfrei.jetzt n.d.; Pressehütte Mutlangen n.d.) because "*only a world without nuclear weapons will be a safe world*" (ICAN Germany 2022).

Elke Koller, who lives in Büchel and has been one of the driving forces of the campaign and its local branch, "Initiativkreis gegen Atomwaffen" ("Initiative against Nuclear Weapons", own translation),

¹³ The interviews were conducted between June and November 2022.

¹⁴ In the above-mentioned survey, ICAN refers to the "Greenpeace survey on nuclear weapons and Nuclear Weapons Treaty" (Greenpeace 2020).

¹⁵ The representative intratest-dipmap survey was commissioned by the ARD political magazine panorama. It is also important to highlight that people in East and West Germany have different opinions on nuclear sharing today: In the West, 56 percent of Germans are in favour of it, in the East only 38 percent. On the contrary, in the East, 54 percent are in favour of ending German nuclear sharing (ibid.)

explains that she feels extremely endangered permanently due to the nuclear weapons in her hometown. Many other residents felt the same way, as Koller knows from conversations, especially since the increase in terrorist attacks in recent years and the current nuclear threats from Russian President Putin: *“It doesn’t even have to come to the extreme, i.e., nuclear war, one nuclear accident is enough and we would be the first to be affected by the detonation.”*

Despite ongoing engagement, Koller and others do not feel their concerns are being taken seriously by politicians, neither locally nor on a state level. According to Koller, local politicians generally kept quiet about nuclear weapons, ignored the threats, and had always argued there would be a loss of about 1,000 jobs at Büchel Airbase if nuclear sharing was to end. As a result, the anti-nuclear weapons campaign has also faced headwinds from the local population. However, as Koller argues, withdrawing nuclear weapons would not necessarily mean a close-down of the air base. Moreover, instead of side-lining the concerns of the anti-nuclear weapon movement and reinforcing the fears of other local citizens, a feminist approach to Foreign Policy would find solutions to secure jobs and *“free the population that is being held hostage by nuclear weapons”*, as Koller describes the burdensome situation in and around Büchel.

Despite the state parliament of Rhineland-Palatinate supporting the TPNW in a resolution passed in 2019 (ICAN Germany 2019b), which is a “punctual success” for the campaign and a sign to the federal government (Koller 2022¹⁶), civil society in Büchel feels side-lined. In line with an intersectional feminist (foreign policy) perspective, activists in Büchel like Elke Koller demand that FFP shall be reflected in actions as well as rhetoric: *“Instead of permanently prioritising the German commitment to NATO, it must finally be made clear that nuclear weapons are of no military use - the one shooting first will always die second - and make our world less safe. Germany must take the first step, also in terms of a commitment to a nuclear weapons-free Europe”* (Koller 2022).

3.6 Political ignorance of critical voices and the exclusion of young people

The experience of local activists in Büchels is no exception. Indeed, feminist civil society and organisations working on the topic have difficulties being taken seriously by policymakers because of the gendered nature of the (realist) security discourse that disregards any other approaches as naive and irrational. The techno-strategic ‘expert’ discourse framed around nuclear weapons and the deliberate ignoring of critical voices from civil society or those affected also means that German society is not (made) aware of the risks of nuclear weapons, especially for the younger generation in Germany and beyond, who would suffer the longest or are already suffering from the use and testing of nuclear weapons, are generally not transparently informed about these risks by the government or public institutions (as our interviews with youth and civil society organisations confirmed). Indeed, the German government has never officially acknowledged that US nuclear weapons are stationed in Germany (DW 2020). The issue of nuclear weapons is also missing from the curriculum in schools. This means that young people can only form an opinion on nuclear weapons if they gather the information themselves; they are barely considered or included in knowledge dissemination and production about nuclear weapons.

“Many, especially young people, might think that one has to be technically very well-informed, educated and trained to ‘be allowed’ to discuss nuclear weapons - a mechanism patriarchy uses to exclude critical, feminist voices from the political discussion.” - Anna Hauschild

To date, it is only due to local, national, and global initiatives like Pressehütte Mutlangen,¹⁷ Youth for TPNW, or ICAN that young people (e.g., through youth delegations, workshops at schools or meetings with affected communities) are actively included in the discourse around nuclear weapons.

4. Steps towards a true Feminist Foreign Policy in Germany

Given the overall destructive nature of nuclear weapons, the inherently patriarchal, racist, and colonial discourse around nuclear weapons, and the longstanding resistance of local civil society in Germany (but also elsewhere), it is clear that **any Feminist Foreign Policy, and thus German Feminist Foreign Policy, needs**

to actively pursue the goal of a nuclear-weapons free world and oppose nuclear weapons in any form.

To do so, we recommend the following steps:

¹⁶ This source refers to the interview we conducted with Elke Koller in November 2022.

¹⁷ The grassroots organisation Pressehütte Mutlangen works for peace, disarmament, social justice and democracy. It is locally rooted on a historic site of the German peace movement, the former location of the US Pershing II nuclear missiles. Today, this is the place where Pressehütte shows ways of successful non-violent resistance, e.g. in the form of workshops with civil society or campaigns (Pressehütte Mutlangen n.d.).

5. What to do? Our Policy Recommendations¹⁸

5.1 Implementing Feminist Foreign Policy - rhetorically and practically¹⁹

Short-term steps

- Include a commitment to working with NATO partners towards withdrawing nuclear weapons from Germany and reemphasise the goal of a nuclear weapons free world in the new National Security Strategy.
- Promote the compatibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and TPNW in multilateral fora (ICAN 2021), especially with its fellow NATO allies.
- Assume observer status at the Second Meeting of TPNW States Parties, which will take place in New York City in 2023, by March 2023. Encourage the other 15 members of the Stockholm Initiative²⁰ to participate in the Meeting (Meier 2021).
- Continuously raise awareness of the catastrophic humanitarian, ecological, and often racialised impacts of nuclear testing, accidents, and attacks in multilateral fora, including at the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which take place every five years (IAEA 2021).
- Politically and financially support international support of victims and survivors, including descendants of nuclear testing and other forms of nuclear colonialism, by contributing to the establishment of an international trust fund as discussed in the Vienna Action Plan (Art. 29).

Mid-term to long-term steps

- In cooperation with feminist civil society, establish a national or international initiative to support people affected by uranium mining.
- Oppose any efforts towards creating a European deterrence umbrella or acquiring shared European nuclear weapons.
- Advocate reducing the role of nuclear weapons in NATO's security strategy and encourage other NATO members to end nuclear sharing.
- Co-develop an alternative security concept for NATO with like-minded member states that are more appropriate for the contemporary security challenges the alliance is faced with to actively steer NATO towards becoming a "non-nuclear alliance" (ICAN 2021: 99). In particular, reach out to those NATO members, whose populations overwhelmingly support joining the TPNW (ICAN 2021).
- Arrange for the immediate withdrawal of all US nuclear weapons from Germany.
- Sign and ratify the TPNW.

¹⁸ These recommendations also build on the work or partly recall recommendations and claims by feminist civil society and feminist or peace scholars or activists like ICAN, Youth for TPNW, Foundation for the Rights of Future Generations, Know Nukes Tokyo, Leona Morgan, Hibakusha activists and organisations like Hibakusha Stories, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and Reaching Critical Will (RCW), and many more

¹⁹ For further recommendations regarding Germany's support of the TPNW in particular, see our 2021 CFFP Briefing "How the next German government can support the TPNW": <https://centreforfeministforeignpolicy.org/s/CFFP-Policy-Brief-EN-V3.pdf>.

²⁰ The Stockholm Initiative, founded in 2019 in Sweden, aims to advance nuclear disarmament, to strengthen the NPT and to build bridges between nuclear-armed states and those not owning nuclear weapons (German Federal Foreign Office 2021). For further information see German Federal Foreign Office 2020.

Centring civil society in nuclear policy and raising public awareness

- Establish an easy-to-access fund that provides core support for feminist activists and groups working on (nuclear) disarmament by November 2023 to support them in advocacy for their positions within the nuclear policy community.
- Actively inform the German public about the dangers and impacts, financing, rationale, and background of US nuclear weapons in Germany, at least yearly.
- Establish a working group, 'Feminists in Nuclear Policy', to create a space for feminist civil society, affected communities, researchers, and policymakers (including government representatives) to exchange and develop strategies for shifting the nuclear narrative and entering nuclear policy discussions. The working group would discuss how to communicate nuclear disarmament as part of (feminist) peace.
- Develop an educational plan and programme in collaboration with and support of civil society organisations and, in particular, youth activists to raise awareness and increase knowledge about nuclear weapons in Germany through German school curricula.
- Foster and promote intergenerational dialogue through government-funded educational programmes.
- Regularly engage with local activists in Büchel, Germany, and foster regular exchange between activists, scientists, and policymakers in inclusive and easily accessible roundtables and civil dialogues.
- Create at least two positions of civil society advisors and observers in nuclear policy decision-making who are to be consulted by the Federal Foreign Office regularly. They should also work as institutionalised mediators between civil society and nuclear policy experts within the government.
- Offer and support affected Indigenous and marginalised communities, survivors, and victims of nuclear weapons, including the production and testing of nuclear weapons, and youth activists to participate in international conferences and disarmament fora. Ensure and facilitate these groups have easy access to and agency in nuclear discourses and decision-making processes.

Fostering intersectional feminist knowledge production on nuclear policy

- Commission feminist research on uranium mining, its impacts and gender implications, and the role of German/European companies.
- Establish and fund research grants for feminist and Indigenous knowledge production on nuclear policy, specifically on the links between nuclear policy and reproductive justice, decolonisation, and the environment.
- Launch a fellowship for young experts and professionals working on the links between climate and environmental justice and nuclear policy.

5.2 A note to civil society

Throughout our research and work, we have noticed that although (local) civil society has ambitiously fought nuclear weapons being stationed in Büchel - and we respect every single activist dedicating their time and resources to the cause - there are limited connections or acts of solidarity with anti-nuclear fights elsewhere, especially those led by historically marginalised groups. The approaches and attempts to connect anti-nuclear conflicts with anti-colonial and antiracist struggles remain negligible. From an intersectional feminist perspective, demands to get rid of US nuclear weapons in Germany should be connected and in solidarity with affected communities of nuclear testing, those still fighting for self-determination and decolonisation, and the many ongoing fights that have been leading the way. They should also be connected to the fight for this planet and the environment.

6. Conclusion

The ongoing war and Russian aggression in Ukraine have seemingly shifted the public's stance on nuclear weapons within Germany and significantly shaped the nuclear policy discussion globally. 'Strongman politics', nuclear deterrence, and militarised language are enjoying popular references globally - all the more reason for FFP to shine a light on the oppressive, exclusive, and destructive elements of nuclear policy, specifically nuclear weapons. A German FFP must ask, "[w]hat is the purpose of gendering this space?" (Brown & Consideine 2022: 1264) and be guided by this question in its foreign policy.

Instead of framing nuclear weapons as something that are 'just' part of foreign policy through deterrence, nuclear sharing, and membership in military alliances, FFP must actively promote (nuclear) disarmament, invest in feminist civil society and, most importantly, listen to and support affected communities, young people and everyone who is facing the brunt of nuclear weapons. This may be

an uncomfortable position, but FFP is in service to those most marginalised, the environment and lasting peace and justice. It must challenge the discourse around and use of nuclear weapons and their existence in general.

By committing to FFP in its coalition deal, the German government has also committed to addressing issues contrary to FFP. It must thus actively deal with predicaments and refrain from trade-offs that challenge and undermine the feminist agenda of its foreign and security policy. A commitment to FFP includes a commitment to (nuclear) disarmament, to prioritising peace, and to listening and working closely with critical feminist civil society. It is essential that the German government puts action to this commitment - starting now.

As this policy briefing and CFFP's work make clear, ***nuclear weapons - in Büchel and everywhere - are incompatible with any Feminist Foreign Policy!***

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