

**Speech by General Bernard Norlain**  
**President of Initiatives for Nuclear Disarmament (IDN)**  
**on the occasion of the International Day Against Nuclear Tests**  
**Geneva, 29 August 2025**

Mr Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Eighty years after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which reduced these two cities to radioactive ashes and demonstrated the barbarity of nuclear weapons, the world is sinking into a night of geopolitical chaos where only the law of the strongest and every man for himself prevails. For those who possess nuclear weapons, this rule is based on nuclear threats.

Today, on the International Day Against Nuclear Tests established by the United Nations General Assembly, two vital emergencies are facing humanity: on the one hand, we must remember that we have never been so close to a nuclear detonation, whether deliberate or accidental; on the other hand, we need to emphasise that this sword of Damocles hanging over our heads owes its deadly presence to the more than 2,400 nuclear tests carried out since 1945 by the nuclear powers. For its part, France has conducted 210 nuclear tests, including 50 in the atmosphere. After a moratorium of several years, it resumed testing in 1996 but finally ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty on 6 April 1998.

Global nuclear testing has enabled the manufacture of weapons systems involving the planned death of hundreds of millions of human beings. It has also directly caused the deaths of nearly 2.5 million people living near test sites and led to radioactive fallout on a global scale. To this tragic picture of the victims of nuclear testing must be added the irreparable environmental damage caused, particularly in the Marshall Islands and Kazakhstan, by these nuclear explosions, whether atmospheric or underground.

In these circumstances, at a time when the leaders of the major nuclear powers are considering resuming full-scale nuclear testing, we must remember all the victims of nuclear explosions and nuclear testing and promote a day of remembrance in memory of these victims.

But beyond that, we must call for the ratification of the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty by countries that have not yet done so and strongly denounce the nuclear arms race in which nuclear-armed countries and their allies are engaged.

Albert Camus wrote on 8 August 1945:

‘It is no longer a wish, but an order, that must rise from the people to their governments, the order to choose between hell and reason.’