

Pugwash Report on Activities 2024





Pugwash News: A Year of Change

In September 2024, the Pugwash Council elected **Karen Hallberg** to become its next Secretary General.

Prof. Hallberg, a professor of Physics at the Balseiro Institute and Principal Researcher at the Bariloche Atomic Center, National Atomic Energy Agency and National Research Council in Argentina, succeeded Paolo Cotta-Ramusino on 1 January 2025. Expressing her gratitude to the Council on her election, she said *“In my professional life, I have always been dedicated to both science and to the serious ethical responsibility of being a scientist. I will seek to fulfil my duties with integrity, responsibility and commitment, leveraging Pugwash’s extensive network, expertise, and scientific rationale to meet the variety of global challenges.”*

She continued, *“I am deeply grateful to Paolo for his dedicated work over so many years, establishing Pugwash as a key forum for dialogue and developing a forceful global network. I really look forward to working with him and the Pugwash President, Hussain Al-Shahristani, the incoming Pugwash Council, and all parts of the global Pugwash Community to fulfil Pugwash’s mission and goals. Humanity is facing one of the most challenging moments and we should rise to the responsibility passed on to us by the founders of this unique movement.”*



Pugwash News: A Year of Change

In May 2024, the Pugwash Council elected **Hussain Al-Shahristani** as its new President.

Dr. Al-Shahristani is a scientist, scholar, and statesman from Iraq. He obtained his Ph.D. in nuclear chemistry. In 1979 he was imprisoned in Abu Ghraib prison for eleven years after refusing to collaborate on a nuclear weapon for Iraq. After escaping to Iran during the first Gulf War, he returned to Iraq in 2005, becoming first vice-president of the transitional National Assembly. From 2006 to 2016, Dr Al-Shahristani served in government as Minister of Oil (2006-2010), Deputy Prime Minister for Energy Affairs (2010-2014), Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs (2014), and Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research (2014-16).

The Pugwash community was saddened at the passing of former President **Sérgio Duarte** in July 2024, just months after resigning due to ill health after almost seven years in the role. Paying tribute to Amb. Duarte, Hallberg noted *“He worked tirelessly until his last days and he left an enormous legacy.”* Cotta-Ramusino added that, *“in a time of crisis and growing international hostilities, we will all miss Sérgio’s presence and his outstanding positive personality.”*

Pugwash News: A Renewed Council for the next Quinquennium

At its extraordinary meeting of the Pugwash Council, which took place in Vienna in September 2024, a new Pugwash Council was elected following several months of engagement with the Pugwash Community and the various National Groups. The Pugwash Council serves to provide strategic guidance and direction to the organization, with elected membership drawn from several geographical regions and areas of expertise. The full Council list can be found on the final page.

The Pugwash Community was also able to express its gratitude to **Claudia Vaughn** and **Mimma de Santis**, who each have served and contributed to Pugwash activities for over 30 years.

Pugwash President Hussain Al-Shahristani said, *“I am delighted to welcome you as members to the new Pugwash Council. During these turbulent times, we are called upon to work harder to promote our ideals for a world free from weapons of mass destruction, a world where peace and justice prevail, a world where resources are spent to eradicate poverty and disease rather than to developing more potent weapons that are existential threats to the human race.”*

The Pugwash leadership and community expresses its deep gratitude to the outgoing members of the Council for their service and looks forward to continuing cooperation in the future.

● Pugwash and the 2024 ● Nobel Peace Prize

On 10 December 2024, Karen Hallberg represented Pugwash at the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, awarded to the Nihon Hidankyo for their courageous, tireless and persistent struggle to tell the world about the horrors of the atomic bombs.

Reacting to the acceptance speech by Terumi Tanaka, Pugwash Japan leader Tatsujior Suzuki noted, “Let Nagasaki be the Last”- this should be our common goal. Mr. Tanaka’s speech eloquently appealed to the world.”

The following day in Oslo, Karen Hallberg participated in the Nobel Peace Prize Forum, “NUKES – How to counter the threat” on a panel session alongside Manpreet Sethi, Wilfred Wan, Hans Kristensen, and chaired by Andrew Futter.

Videos and reports are available on www.pugwash.org.



Pugwash Delegation in the U.S.A

On 5-6 December 2024, a Pugwash delegation led by Secretary General-elect Karen Hallberg visited New York and Washington, D.C. for several meetings with experts, officials and donors.

Pugwash held a roundtable discussion on 6 December in Washington, D.C. to assess the nuclear risk reduction agenda after the U.S. election. A dozen experts and former officials discussed prospects for strategic stability, dialogue between the US and Iran, Russia, and China, future developments in the Middle East region, and the importance of scientific input to policymaking.

The delegation also met with senior officials of the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Arms Control, Deterrence, and Stability (ADS).



US Pugwash leaders and Council members Steve Miller and Cliff Kupchan, with Karen Hallberg and Poul Erik Christiansen at the US Department of State

2025 in prospect: Message from new Secretary General Karen Hallberg

I am honoured to have been elected by the Pugwash Council to lead this prestigious organization. I look forward to working together with the extensive expertise and energy of all Pugwash Council, the Working Groups, and National Group members across the world. Unfortunately, as we enter 2025, conflicts and political turmoil continue to create a sense of desperation and danger; however, I firmly believe that the Pugwash network can make valuable contributions to reduce tensions and lessen the risk that nuclear weapons may again be used. I take inspiration from the tireless and persistent struggle of the Hibakusha, who I was proud to witness receive the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2024, almost 30 years after Pugwash received its own.

Moving forward, our priorities will focus on leveraging Pugwash's extensive world-wide network, bringing our expertise and rationale to further the mission of a world free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This will be done by fostering dialogue between all conflicting sides based on critical thinking, intellectual honesty, openness and evidence-based exchange. We will prioritize discussions on reducing the risk posed by nuclear weapons, regional conflicts and disruptive technologies including AI, cyber security, chemical and biological weapons, among others. The next generation has a critical stake in shaping its own future and we will engage closely with the International Student/Young Pugwash (ISYP) network to involve them in our work. The changes for Pugwash cannot be achieved if we do not urgently devote a great effort in securing funding and continue with the process of improving its governance. Humanity is facing one of the most challenging moments and we should rise to the responsibility passed on to us by the founders of this unique movement.

Reflections: Outgoing Secretary General Paolo Cotta-Ramusino

I have been Secretary General of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs from August 2002 until the end of 2024. I am honoured to have led the organization and feel proud at what we have accomplished in this time, building on the successes of the past. Since 1957, Pugwash has been actively promoting the elimination of nuclear weapons and WMD and supporting multilateral efforts of arms control. The number of states possessing nuclear weapons remains significant (i.e. nine) and these nuclear weapons states are involved, directly or indirectly, in several conflicts around the globe. In this sense, there is the serious possibility that one such country may, at some point, be induced to use nuclear weapons and create a dramatically dangerous situation. It is also very important for Pugwash to dedicate special attention to the countries that either have the possibility or the possible intention to acquire nuclear weapons. Among the countries where we have expanded Pugwash presence I would like to mention India and Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and in general the entire Middle East. Also, we have of course kept our important presence in Europe, Russia, China and the USA.

Hence, the focus during my time of leading Pugwash has been to pay special attention to lower these kinds of conflicts, diminish the associated antagonisms between states and peoples, and promote peace initiatives where possible that reduce the danger that conflicts spill over into use of nuclear weapons. I have been dedicated in a significant way to expand the presence of the organization to the new critical countries involved in conflicts around the globe. It has been critically important to build networks in the many impacted countries, groups of people who could interact with their authorities and promote concern about the nuclear risks around the globe. This has helped Pugwash to pursue initiatives to help limit or eliminate conflicts that could make the use of nuclear weapons more likely or incentivize the construction of nuclear weapons by non-nuclear states. Looking forward, it is more important than ever for Pugwash to extend its role in these critical areas of the world, as well as concentrate on the core of nuclear weapons states. Unfortunately, in the last period the global situation worsened in a dramatic way. The tensions and the nuclear risks became heavier and, even though Pugwash has of course its limitations, we have the responsibility and the duty to foster dialogue across divides between people who are seriously concerned about the global risks for the world and promote stability, peace and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Simons Panel on Prospect for Nuclear Disarmament

On 13 September 2024, Pugwash held a public panel at the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, in cooperation with the Vienna School of International Studies.

The panel featured opening remarks from Alexander Kmentt, Austrian diplomat and leading proponent of the TPNW, as well as presentations by Council members Sverre Lodgaard, Steve Miller, and Tariq Rauf. The Simons Panel on Prospects for Nuclear Disarmament is the latest product of the long-standing collaboration between Pugwash and The Simons Foundation Canada, who provided generously funding. A video of the event can be found on the [Pugwash website](https://www.pugwash.org).

Videos and reports are available on www.pugwash.org.



European Security workshops

On 24-25 May, Pugwash held a workshop in Istanbul to assess risk reduction and European security dialogue. Twenty-two international participants discussed the risks, challenges and opportunities of the current security framework and prospects for nuclear and conventional arms control and confidence-building measures.

On 12-13 October, Pugwash held a workshop in Belgrade focused on nuclear risks, deterrence, and arms control. Twenty international participants discussed the challenges to international security and the European order.

Across both meetings, there was consensus that attempts to maintain strategic stability, pursue nuclear and conventional arms control must be intensified in expert circles, which can help to avoid provocative misunderstandings or crisis instability.

Videos and reports are available on www.pugwash.org



Strategic Stability workshop

On 12-13 April, Pugwash convened a workshop in Istanbul to assess opportunities for galvanizing nuclear arms control. Seventeen experts from the United States, Russia, China, and Europe – and three further virtual presentations – engaged in fruitful discussions about the international security landscape aimed at identifying an agenda for future nuclear risk reduction.

Participants expressed their gratitude that the Pugwash setting provides a valuable means of communication at this challenging time and a useful table for brainstorming de-escalating steps for all sides.

Videos and reports are available on www.pugwash.org.



About Pugwash

Mission Statement

Since its founding in 1957, the goal of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs has been primarily to warn against the risk that the use of nuclear weapons could destroy civilization and possibly mankind. In particular, the Russell-Einstein Manifesto, as the founding document, emphasized the resolution of conflict with a view to ending all war. Pugwash advocates nuclear disarmament, eliminating all weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and preventing nuclear proliferation.

Pugwash has offices in Bariloche, Berlin, London, Tokyo & Washington D.C., as well as National Groups and contacts in some 50 countries.

NEWS

The 64th Pugwash International Conference will take place in Hiroshima, Japan, from 1-5 November 2025

In 2024, the Pugwash Council established two new Working Groups in the areas of (1) Emerging Technologies and (2) Chemical and Biological Weapons, in addition to the work of the existing Nuclear Weapons Working Group.

The groups will guide activities and research for the Pugwash leadership and Council.

Organization of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs

Leadership

President:	H.E. Dr. Hussain Al-Shahristani (Iraq)
Secretary General:	Prof. Karen Hallberg (Argentina)
Chair of the Council:	Prof. Götz Neuneck (Germany)
Chair of the Executive Committee:	Prof. Tatsujiro Suzuki (Japan)
Programme Director:	Dr. Poul Erik Christiansen (UK)

Pugwash Executive Committee

Prof. Karen Hallberg (Argentina) <i>ex officio</i>	Prof. Götz Neuneck (Germany) <i>ex officio</i>
H.E. Dr. Hussain Al-Shahristani (Iraq) <i>ex officio</i>	Mr. Tariq Rauf (Canada/Pakistan)
Dr. Katariina Simonen (Finland)	Prof. Amitabh Mattoo (India)
Prof. David Menashri (Israel)	Prof. Tatsujiro Suzuki (Japan)
Amb. Wael Al Assad (Jordan)	Ms. Taghreed El-Khodary (Palestine)
Dr. David Ellwood (United Kingdom)	Dr. Steve Miller (United States of America)

The Pugwash Council

Amb. **Taous Feroukhi** (Algeria)
Prof. **Karen Hallberg** (Argentina) *ex officio*
Dr. **Jean Pascal Zanders** (Belgium)
Dr. **Jennifer Simons** (Canada)
Mr. **Cesar Jaramillo** (Canada)
Mr. **Tariq Rauf** (Canada/Pakistan)
Prof. **Li Bin** (China)
Ms. **Ana Jerković** (Croatia)
Amb. **Khaled Shamaa** (Egypt)
Dr. **Katariina Simonen** (Finland)
Dr. **Venance Journé** (France)
Prof. **Annick Suzor-Weiner** (France)
Prof. **Götz Neuneck** (Germany)
Prof. **Happymon Jacob** (India)
Prof. **Amitabh Mattoo** (India)
Amb. **Reza Ziaran** (Iran)
H.E. Dr. **Ali Salehi** (Iran)
H.E. Dr. **Hussain Al-Shahristani** (Iraq) *ex officio*
Prof. **David Menashri** (Israel)
Amb. **Jeremy Issacharoff** (Israel)
Prof. **Francesco Calogero** (Italy) *invited*
Prof. **Paolo Cotta-Ramusino** (Italy) *invited*
Prof. **Francesco Lenci** (Italy)
Prof. **Tatsujiro Suzuki** (Japan)
Prof. **Tomohiro Inagaki** (Japan)
Amb. **Wael Al-Assad** (Jordan)
Dr. **Mark Suh** (Korea/Germany)
Mr. **Eldar Mamedov** (Latvia)
Amb. **Jan Hoekema** (Netherlands)
Dr. **Moeed Yusuf** (Pakistan)
Ms. **Taghreed El-Khodary** (Palestine)
Amb. **Sergey Batsanov** (Russia)
Prof. **Alexander Nikitin** (Russia)
Prof. **Joelien Pretorius** (South Africa)
Prof. **Thomas Jonter** (Sweden)
Mr. **Arnold Luethold** (Switzerland)
Prof. **Mustafa Kibaroglu** (Türkiye)
Dr. **David Ellwood** (UK)
Mr. **Cliff Kupchan** (USA)
Dr. **Steven Miller** (USA)
Amb. **Robin Raphel** (USA)