R20 Nuclear Waste Threat in the Pacific

Proposer: Australian Greens, Japan Greens

Resolution text

Recalling all relevant international instruments, particularly the Convention and Protocol on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter(1972/2006), Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone,the SEANWFZ Treaty (Bangkok Treaty)(1995)South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty -Treaty of Rarotonga(1985) and the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region - Noumea Convention(1986).

Noting that signatories to these international conventions and treaties must uphold the commitments that have been made to keep the sea and the Pacific region free of environmental pollution by radioactive and nuclear waste and other radioactive matter, and to uphold legal obligations to prevent ocean dumping and any action to assist or encourage dumping by other states.

Recommending that:

That the Global Greens:

1. Condemn plans by the Japanese government to allow some 1.25 million tons of treated wastewater contaminated by the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant to be discharged into the Pacific Ocean.

2. Request TEPCO to disclose the estimated amount of tritium and carbon-14 that ALPS (advanced liquid processing system) cannot process, in addition to the total amount of radioactive materials in the water treated by the ALPS.

3. Call for the immediate cessation of this plan in order to protect the health of the peoples of Japan, the Peoples of the Pacific Region and Pacific Rim, and the environment and biodiversity of the Blue Pacific.

4. Call for the construction of a concrete and steel dam underground instead of the frozen soil barrier currently in use to reduce the amount of groundwater entering the buildings and being contaminated.

5. Call on the Japanese government to enable the ongoing storage of treated nuclear waste from Fukushima to occur on land.

6. Support the Green Party of Japan in its campaign against further nuclear energy plants and against the dumping of nuclear waste in the Pacific.

7. Support the engagement of the Pacific Leaders Forum (including Greens Parties of Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands) in the decommissioning of the Japan Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant.

8. Support the aims of the Blue Pacific and its leaders in recognition of the need for a unified approach to address the challenges facing the region. We recognize that protection of the oceans and the environment, sustainable development, regional security and stability are priorities.

9. Facilitate and support urgent action by Greens parties, civil society and NGOs to support international treaties and conventions which call on parties to enact the prohibition the dumping of radioactive wastes or other radioactive matter into the Blue Pacific.

Concluding that:

We, the Greens must re-commit to supporting Pacific Leaders Forum who reiterated their "strong concerns for the significance of the potential threat of nuclear contamination to the health and security of the Blue Pacific, its people and prospects, and reaffirmed the importance of ensuring international consultation, international law, and independent and verifiable scientific assessments as per the PALM9 Declaration."

Further, we, the Greens, remain vigilant about the historical nuclear contamination in the Pacific, including the Nuclear Test Site at Runit Dome on Runit Island of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (commenced already in 2022).

We, the Greens Proposing Group, welcome the support of our Members and the GGC23 on this Resolution for increased national, regional and global coherence and harmonisation.

We, the Greens, are grounded in four pillars: ecological sustainability, grassroots democracy, social justice and peace and non-violence and this is reiterated in our position for a nuclear-free Pacific Region.

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Reason

In April 2021,Japan announced plans to discharge over 1.23 million tons of radioactive waste water stored in tanks from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant into the Pacific Ocean. Despite strong criticism from many countries in the Asia Pacific, NGOs and the UN and expert scientific advice, Japan is planning to start releasing this material from July this year and to continue this process for decades.

A number of key international Conventions and Treaties dating from 1972 to 2006 ban the discharge and dumping of nuclear waste into the sea.

The environmental, economic and social impacts of this decision are a key concern for Greens members in Japan, Sth East Asia, and the Blue Pacific. In 2022, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) sought advice from an independent panel of global experts on nuclear issues which advised that there is insufficient data to classify the impending discharge by Japan as safe for Pacific people and for the ocean's biodiversity.

It is crucial that the Global Greens highlight their concern with the plan to dump large volumes of treated nuclear waste into the Pacific.

And to commit to highlighting the ongoing impacts of the Fukushima disaster and nuclear testing in the Pacific and the environmental issues with nuclear waste at this time when nuclear energy is being promoted as a clean alternative to fossil fuel energy and in light of the energy impacts of the Ukraine war on the supply of energy fuels.

Selected sources:

- Pacific Island Forum appoint panel of independent global experts on nuclear issues
- PIF: Expert advises deferment on Japan Fukushima discharge dates
- Japan: UN experts say deeply disappointed by decision to discharge Fukushima water (15 April 2021)
- Sth. Korea expresses 'strong regret' over Japan's Fukushima water
- On anniversary of the Fukushima disaster, Australia must stand firm against nuclear (Australian Conservation Foundation)
- Uranium mines harm indigenous people - so why have we approved a new one?
- Noumea Convention
- Treaty of Rarotonga
- Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter