

THE HAGUE YOUTH MANIFESTO

We, the Youth Peace Summit, representing united youth from 43 different nations, meeting on 23rd and 24th of June 2025 in The Hague, to honour the 10-year celebration of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 in 2015, have stated the following:

FROM WALLS TO BRIDGES

During times of war, it seems a wall divides us. Yet it is only through a lack of imagination that we continue to confine ourselves within our walls. Behind our walls, we start to believe that warfare is the only solution, our last resort. In reality, the human cost and damage of warfare are in complete contradiction with any vision of a world built on freedom, openness, understanding and respect.

As such, we must merely imagine how to deconstruct the materials of our walls into bridges, as from darkness comes light. We must envision a human community interacting through environmentally conscious commerce, rather than climate-destructive competition. We must imagine a world where there is equality of gender, religion, skin colour and labour, instead of power and wealth concentrated in the hands of a few. We must imagine vibrant democratic societies that experience a just peace and the right to be oneself for all.

It is in this light that the international youth of The Hague extend a warm welcome to all on this noble quest, towards a just peace in our time. The most powerful tools to prevent conflicts and wars are not weapons, but bottom-up discussions, dialogues and diplomacy. Communication, understanding, and reconciliation are not just essential in resolving conflicts; they ensure that they do not occur in the first place. All conflicts, in essence, are the result of a failure of communication and the inability to understand one another.

Consequently, we must heavily invest in our abilities to communicate effectively and empathetically. Universal access to impartial education, which empowers individuals to question and understand, is essential in building a world not only without ignorance but also without fear. An urgent call for dialogue will generate our greatest leap forward, towards a humanity reinforced by a rules-based order and active citizenship. In doing so, we must recognize that all humans essentially want the same things in life: love, truth, freedom, dignity, solidarity, peace and justice.

In all of this, the youth can lead the way. They are both the present and the future leaders and deserve to be recognised as such. We, the youth of this world, understand that the walls seemingly dividing us are not real, but merely social constructs, to be broken down and reconstructed as bridges.

OUR DEMANDS

More specifically, in view of the NATO Summit of 24 and 25 June 2025 in The Hague, we demand the following:

1. That a standing NATO-Youth Council be created. The objective of this NATO organ should be to allow youth to periodically discuss relevant security issues with NATO representatives, in order to ensure that youth interests are included in the NATO decision-making processes.

2. That NATO expands its focus on military deterrence with strategies that strengthen the rules-based order, dialogue, diplomacy, and the role of citizens. Thereby contributing to the legitimacy of NATO through the inclusion of grassroots voices and nurturing a peace based on justice.

OUR PROPOSALS

Furthermore, as a first set of discussion topics, we propose the following:

1. To dedicate at least 0.3% of member countries' defence budgets to a multilateral Peace Fund that improves dialogue, reconciliation, and cultural safeguarding through education and community development.
2. To earmark a well-defined portion of NATO spending for youth-led programmes in peacebuilding, digital literacy and propaganda resistance, especially in conflict-affected and marginalised areas, both beyond and within NATO borders.
3. To establish an independent citizen-led framework to eliminate war profiteering from large-scale weapons manufacturers by imposing strict regulations on profit margins for the defence sector. Transparency must be adhered to and must be maintained when deciding which company is awarded contracts.
4. To amend Article 10 of the NATO Charter), by asserting that all member states must uphold the principles of democracy. We acknowledge that democracy depends not only on media accountability, but also on upholding the Principles of Journalism articulated by the Committee of Concerned Journalists specifically Principles 2 (Loyalty to Citizens) and 5 (Independent Monitor of Power).
5. To monitor the adherence to rulings of recognized national and international courts related to NATO missions.
6. That all NATO member countries strive to ensure that any state that deliberately targets civilians is held suitably accountable. This eradicates impunity from the global stage and increases accountability.
7. That NATO member countries' military spending is not made exempt from their respective green regulation measures, and that military CO2 emissions are monitored.
8. That all NATO member countries harmonise their distinct interpretations of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda following United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and allow for interoperability in their gender approach.
9. That every NATO document must be written in plain language and other accessible formats to ensure they are comprehensible to all. Transparency should include those less able to read, hear, or feel the text.