



## Marshallese Educational Initiative

NEWS RELEASE

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### **MEI team to participate in Nuclear Ban Conference; Maddison to speak on nuclear legacy**

A team from the Marshallese Educational Initiative will participate in the ICAN Civil Society Conference leading up to the United Nations meeting on the TPNW in Vienna, Austria on June 18-19. The Marshall Islands was used by the United States as a testing ground for nuclear weapons from 1946-1958, the effects of which are still being felt by community members. Arkansas is home to the highest concentration of Marshallese in the continental United States.

Benetick Kabua Maddison, MEI's Assistant Director and Project Specialist for Youth, Nuclear, and Climate Issues, will participate in several side events leading up to and during the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Maddison will speak to the ongoing biological, ecological, and cultural consequences of nuclear testing. In collaboration with partner organization, Reverse the Trend, MEI will showcase artwork by Marshallese youth that was exhibited earlier this spring at Amnesia Atómica, an event held at New York City's Times Square. Maddison will also introduce a short film produced as part of a Docuseries titled, *A Journey Home*, based on a poem written and narrated by Marshallese youth, including Maddison and Marcina Langrine, who will also attend the event along with MEI's National Nuclear Commission intern, Marino Morris.

Marcina Langrine shared: "It is so exciting to be able to participate in this important event and have the opportunity to share the history of our nuclear legacy with the international community on such an important stage."

Maddison will speak about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons production and testing, including experiences of his grandmother, who along with 166 others, was removed from Bikini Atoll in 1946. "Today, while the world is focused on Ukraine and the threat of nuclear weapons use, we cannot forget that the production and testing of nuclear weapons by the United States has had devastating and ongoing consequences, particularly to the Marshallese people. Because the Marshall Islands played such an important role in the United States becoming a world power, Marshall Islands' history is U.S. history and should be taught in schools."

Marino Morris, a MEI/NNC intern, shares that "it is important for Marshallese youth to learn their history and share it with their peers. I'm looking forward to learning from other youth from around

the world whose homelands have also been used as testing grounds. Together, we hope to help educate the world.”

The United States detonated 67 nuclear bombs in the Marshall Islands from 1946-1958. Made up of low-lying atolls in the North, Central Pacific, the Marshall Islands is also vulnerable to rising seas and other effects of climate change.

MEI has been raising awareness about the nuclear legacy and climate change since our founding in 2013. MEI hosted Nuclear Remembrance Day: Reflect. Honor. Educate. in 2014 on the 60th anniversary of the Castle Bravo detonation at the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock, and in 2021 hosted a three-day conference in Springdale on the 75th anniversary of the first nuclear test on Bikini Atoll that featured a youth day, community commemoration, and a series of equity panels about nuclear production and climate change’s impact on health. MEI is a partner organization to The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the conference’s host organization and one which won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its work to abolish nuclear weapons.

For more information:

<http://www.mei.ngo/nuclear>

<https://outrider.org/nuclear-weapons/articles/journey-home>

<https://vienna.icanw.org/humanitarian-impact-conference>

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