

Cameroonian Dr. Hubert Kum Foy Wins International Award



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The Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Ambassador Fernando Arias, and the Mayor of the Municipality of The Hague, Jan van Zanen, announced the decision of the OPCW-The Hague Award selection panel to honour three recipients of the 2023 OPCW-The Hague Award amongst them Cameroon's Dr Hubert Kum Foy, Founding Director and Senior Research Scientist at the African Centre for Science and International Security in Ghana. Through his work, Foy has been advocating for the effective implementation of the Convention in Africa, including enhancing chemical security in African countries, and developing training courses for various stakeholders to raise awareness of issues related to implementation of the Convention.

The OPCW-The Hague Award ceremony took place on Monday, 27 November on the sidelines of the Twenty-Eighth Session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CSP-28).

The other recipients included Spiez Laboratory in Switzerland for its significant contributions to advancing arms control and international security through science, research, and analysis and Dr Syeda Sultana Razia, Professor at the Department of Chemical Engineering at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and member of the OPCW Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). Dr Razia's work focuses on advancing capacity building in chemical safety and security. In addition, she has developed educational courses on topics related to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

"All three of these recipients have demonstrated that everyone has a role to play in ridding the world of chemical weapons and preventing their re-emergence," said OPCW

Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias. "We must together strive to continue to ensure that toxic chemicals are never used as instruments of harm and that our populations are protected."

"The City of The Hague congratulates the winners of the 2023 OPCW-The Hague Award. This year's recipients fit perfectly within the objectives of the award: recognising individuals and institutions who have made invaluable contributions to a world free of chemical weapons. We are grateful for their efforts to making our world a safer place," said van Zanen.

Background

In 2013, the OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons. To preserve the legacy of this achievement, the OPCW established the OPCW-The Hague Award in collaboration with the Municipality of The Hague in 2014. The Award recognises individuals and organisations that play a significant role in advancing the goals of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The total €90,000 cash prize is awarded to up to three recipients annually.

As the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW, with its 193 Member States, oversees the global endeavour to permanently eliminate chemical weapons. Since the Convention's entry into force in 1997, it is the most successful disarmament treaty eliminating an entire class of weapons of mass destruction.

On 7 July 2023, the OPCW verified that all chemical weapons stockpiles declared by the 193 States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention since 1997 — totalling 72,304 metric tonnes of chemical agents — have been irreversibly destroyed under the OPCW's strict verification regime.

The Man Dr Hubert Kum Foy

Hubert K. Foy is a distinguished senior research scientist specializing in the field of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) security and nonproliferation. He is the visionary founding director of the African Centre for Science and International Security (AFRISIS), headquartered in Accra, Ghana since 2012.

In 2019, Foy achieved a significant milestone by joining the U.S. National Academies' ad hoc committee of experts. His contribution culminated in the creation of the June 2021 technical report on Radioactive Sources: Applications and Alternative Technologies. With extensive expertise, he advises the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the U.S. Department of Energy on nuclear and radiological security matters across Africa.

Foy holds pivotal editorial roles, including as a member of the Editorial Board for the International Journal for Nuclear Security and the RUSI Journal. His dynamic contributions span nuclear nonproliferation, disarmament, radiological security, missile defence, and dual-use science and technology. Notably, his special report on Nuclear Energy in Ghana was published by the Southern African Institute of International Affairs.

He is a Board Member for the International Nuclear Security Forum (INSF) and International Student/Young Pugwash (ISYP). Active in the Gender Champions in Nuclear Policy initiative, he serves as a member of the Working Group III Chair emeritus of the IAEA International Nuclear Security Education Network. His leadership extends to the NTI Nuclear Security Index's International Panel of Experts. Before founding AFRISIS, he managed a Californian WMD consulting firm, conducted transformative research at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, and taught physics at Sacred Heart College Douala, Cameroon.

Educationally, Foy holds distinguished degrees, including a master's in Space Studies from the International Space University Strasbourg in France, a master's in International Policy Studies from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies (Specialization in WMD Nonproliferation Studies) in California, USA, a Postgraduate Diploma in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning from the University of Texas in the USA, Cameroon, and a Bachelor of Science in Physics and Computer Science from the University of Buea, Cameroon. He is an alumnus of CPC Bali and Sacred Heart College Mankon.

His contributions have featured in esteemed platforms such as The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

and The Space Safety Magazine. With a dynamic vision, Mr. Foy is set to significantly impact the international security landscape in the field of non-conventional weapons, epitomizing his commitment to nuclear security, disarmament, and international collaboration.

As a member of the Chemical Weapons Convention Coalition, and through his work, Foy has been advocating for the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention in Africa, including enhancing chemical security in African countries, and developing training courses for various stakeholders to raise awareness of issues related to implementation of the Convention.

About the African Centre for Science and International Security, AFRISIS

The mission of the African Centre for Science and International Security (AFRISIS) is twofold: FIRST, to help African states comply with international treaties and conventions in order to prevent the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and SECOND to promote and develop the safe and peaceful uses of nuclear, biological, and chemical technologies.

AFRISIS is a Public Policy Research, Analysis, and Engagement Organization, registered as a non-governmental organization in Ghana and has operated since 2012. AFRISIS makes use of its network of global and multi-sectoral partnerships to assess security threats, identify implementation challenges, reflect on regional approaches, and build the human capacities and capabilities vital for governments to understand and make informed choices about security threats of domestic and international concern. We leverage this expertise and maximize capital resources at bilateral, sub-regional, and regional levels to complement and fill gaps in the efforts of national governments, their western partners, and international agencies.

AFRISIS was created in response to observations by global organizations—including the African Union, the United Nations, and the European Union—that threats posed by WMDs have been left largely unaddressed in Africa. Historically, this inaction has been the result of a lack of awareness and coordinated action across the continent, limited resources (finances and skilled personnel), and the pressing nature of other acute economic and political issues. However, modern developments in many African states now make it essential that we focus explicitly on nuclear, biological, and chemical safety & security. Currently, some African nations are planning to develop nuclear power plants in order to

address their severe energy crises and planning to move forward with biotechnology in order to achieve food security and sustainable agriculture. The chemical industry is also expanding across the continent that can help society maintain and improve its standards of living and do so in a sustainable way. These are exciting, positive developments—but they are occurring on a continent burdened by a growing number of terrorist groups and attacks, weak regulations, porous borders, and unstable governments. These factors create security challenges for international trade of dual-use WMD sensitive materials and take considerable financial and political tolls on African states which in turn weaken global efforts to combat WMD terrorism. AFRISIS operates with a well-defined model of internal governance, established policies and procedures, transparency in operations, and the ability to leverage expertise and resources to enhance ongoing activities of African and western governments and organizations.

"We operate from two offices — one in Accra, Ghana and another in Yaoundé, Cameroon—staffed by full-time administrative officers and researchers. We have a board of international advisers who meet once a year to review activities and set priority project for the coming years. We also have a team of external subject-matter experts and a network of former heads of states advocating WMD disarmament and nonproliferation in the continent. We take a systematic, cooperative approach to inform and empower citizens to work together with their governments and relevant organizations to achieve positive and lasting change.

"Our operation is 100% grant funded. AFRISIS provides support and full funding for salary, work expenses, travel, supplies, and consultants/contracts. We encourage grant funding from donors, organizations, and companies in all areas. It is expected that office rent, bills, and major equipment will be supported through seed grants. A pattern of significant pro bono effort from our researchers and experts has already been established. However, we encourage governments seeking consulting services on national implementation plans to provide matching funds to cover costs of travel and stay, as well as honoraria to compensate expert time.

"Our Major Partners are governments (Ghana, Cameroon, the U.S., the U.K., Netherlands) and organizations (Nuclear Threat Initiative, Center for Nonproliferation Studies, International Atomic Energy Agency, World Institute for Nuclear Security, Chatham House, Fissile Material Working Group). We are always seeking broader collaboration in our mission. We hope you will partner with us to defend against the dangerous and violent uses of nuclear, biological and chemical technologies—and to promote their peaceful and beneficial uses".

