# Global Nuclear Weapons Spending Soars as Tensions Rise



Global spending on nuclear weapons increased by 13% to $91.4 billion in 2023, primarily fueled by higher U.S. defense budgets amid geopolitical instability, reports the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). All nine nuclear-armed countries, including the U.S., China, Russia, the UK, and France, amplified their nuclear investments. The U.S. led with $51.5 billion, followed by China’s $11.9 billion and Russia’s $8.3 billion.

Amid these expenditures, Russian and Belarusian military forces conducted drills near their border, simulating the use of tactical nuclear weapons. Russia’s President Vladimir Putin has frequently used his nation’s nuclear arsenal to caution the West against intervening in Ukraine since Russia’s full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) data reveals an increase in the number of active nuclear warheads to 9,585, largely due to China’s arsenal expansion. SIPRI notes that Russia and the U.S. hold nearly 90% of the world’s warheads, with Russia deploying an estimated 36 more since January 2023.

In 2023, the global inventory of nuclear warheads was roughly 12,121, with 2,100 in high operational alert. The ongoing modernization and increasing operational readiness of nuclear arsenals globally have raised concerns about escalating nuclear tensions reminiscent of the Cold War era.