

## Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists Clock Statement, 2021

*The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists was founded in 1945 by Albert Einstein and University of Chicago scientists who helped develop the first atomic weapons in the Manhattan Project. It publishes news on global threats and also updates the clock every year in January. This is its 2021 statement:*

Accelerating nuclear programs in multiple countries moved the world into less stable and manageable territory last year. Development of hypersonic glide vehicles, ballistic missile defenses, and weapons-delivery systems that can flexibly use conventional or nuclear warheads may raise the probability of miscalculation in times of tension. . . . Nuclear nations, however, have ignored or undermined practical and available diplomatic and security tools for managing nuclear risks.

Governments have also failed to sufficiently address climate change. . . . Fossil fuel development and production are projected to increase. Atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations hit a record high in 2020, one of the two warmest years on record. The massive wildfires and catastrophic cyclones of 2020 are illustrations of the major devastation that will only increase if governments do not significantly and quickly amplify their efforts to bring greenhouse gas emissions essentially to zero. . . .

The . . . threats of nuclear weapons and climate change have intensified in recent years because of . . . the continuing corruption of the information ecosphere on which democracy and public decision-making depend. Here, again, the COVID-19 pandemic is a wake-up call. False and misleading information disseminated over the internet—including misrepresentation of COVID-19's seriousness, promotion of false cures, and politicization of low-cost protective measures such as face masks—created social chaos in many countries and led to unnecessary death. . . .

In 2020, online lying literally killed. . . .

We continue to believe that human beings can manage the dangers posed by modern technology, even in times of crisis. . . . Citizens around the world can and should organize and demand—through public protests, at ballot boxes, and in other creative ways—that their governments reorder their priorities and cooperate domestically and internationally to reduce the risk of nuclear war, climate change, and other global disasters, including pandemic disease.

We have experienced the consequences of inaction. It is time to respond.

(Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. 2021. Accessed on 8.6.21 at <https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/current-time/>)

An article that both explain and criticizes the use of the clock metaphor can be found here:

[What Even Is The Doomsday Clock? | The New Republic](#)

Linked article. The New Republic. 2018. Accessed on 8.6.21 at <https://newrepublic.com/article/146763/even-doomsday-clock>