

BANNING NUCLEAR WEAPONS

AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE



Introduction

The struggle for a nuclear-free Africa

Africa has a moral status of a nuclear-weapon-free-zone of 54 States that confers upon it the right to lead the way toward the elimination of nuclear weapons and considering the impact that these weapons would have on African peoples, leading the way is also a humanitarian imperative.

Although no states in Africa possess nuclear weapons, these weapons are intrinsically linked with Africa's past and future. The first nuclear bombs ever used in war, dropped by a US plane on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6th and 9th 1945, were filled with the uranium extracted from the mine of Shinkolobwe, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). To this day, African uranium is used in many of the 16,400 thousands nuclear weapons in the nine possessor countries.

Africa has also been the victim of 17 French nuclear tests between 1960 and 1966 in the Algerian Sahara. Recently declassified reports show that on February 13th, 1960, the radioactive fallout spread to all of West and South-East Africa and up to the Central African Republic. Vast portions of land remain contaminated and many thousands of people have been and continue to be affected.

But it is also in Africa where the only country that developed nuclear weapons decided to destroy them. During the Apartheid era South Africa developed nuclear weapons. These were voluntarily dismantled in the early 1990s and the nuclear weapons programme was stopped. Through a long and successful process starting in the 1960's, African States have built Africa as a unique nuclear Free zone through the Pelindaba Treaty, which entered into force in 2009, making Africa the largest nuclear free zone in terms of geographic area.

Prevent a humanitarian catastrophe

Although the Pelindaba Treaty prohibits any use, acquiring, manufacturing, testing or developing of nuclear weapons by state parties, and claims the will to "protect African states against possible nuclear attack on their territories", Africa, as part

of the global village would be heavily affected by the detonation of nuclear weapons anywhere in the world. As demonstrated in the international conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, there are no national or international bodies that could adequately respond to or mitigate from the effects of a nuclear detonation, and these effects would spread far beyond borders and generations. A 2013 study from IPPNW "Nuclear famine. Two billion people at risk", indicates that even a limited nuclear war involving less than 0,1% of the global arsenal would have heavy effects on the climate and consequently on agriculture and food, causing hundreds of thousands of deaths from starvation and illnesses. Regions already suffering from food and water shortages would be the most dramatically affected.

Not only would any use of these weapons cause a humanitarian catastrophe, but the nuclear arsenals constitute a continuous and significant drain on resources. In 2013, over \$105 billion USD were spent on nuclear weapons, money that could better contribute to meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

Africa's role

The renewed humanitarian focus on nuclear weapons has set the stage for a ban treaty to be negotiated. Negotiations could start anytime and open the way toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Such a process does not require the participation of nuclear weapons possessors to start. With its demographic weight of one billion people and voting block of 54 states, Africa should take a leading role in the process towards banning nuclear weapons.

AFRICA AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS

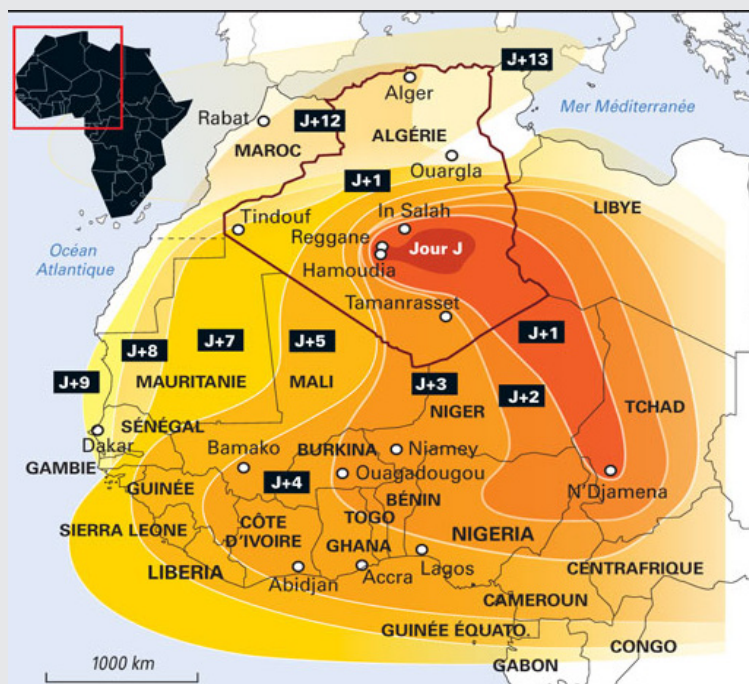
From 1960 to 1966 in Algeria, France officially conducted 4 atmospheric nuclear tests 50 km South-West of the city of Reggane in the Sahara, and 13 underground tests in the Hoggar mountains in Ekker. The French authorities pretended that these regions were uninhabited and when they left in 1967, they claimed that the sites were clean and that contaminated areas were protected from intrusion. But tens of thousands of workers and soldiers have been exposed to radiation and the local populations were never educated about the real dangers. Today, the sites are wide open, winds and erosion have dug out contaminated material which local populations use for everyday purposes, including cooking.

There is no official public survey on the health consequences, but the survivors and victims are estimated to be at least 30 000, with high rates of leukaemia and other illnesses related to radioactive exposure, including miscarriages and malformations.

Contamination over Africa

Algeria was not the only country contaminated by these tests. For years survivors have demanded accountability and information about the impact of these tests. A recently declassified document shows that radioactive clouds spread and affected a huge territory.

This first nuclear test was a bomb of 70 kt, equivalent to more than four times the power of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. It was called “Gerboise bleue” and was detonated on February 13th, 1960. Recently declassified documents, show that the radioactive cloud affected all West Africa, up to the South Eastern part of Central African Republic. The cloud even reached to Sicilia, Italy, and the Southern Spanish coast. Tests showed that water was also heavily contaminated near Tamanrasset in Southern Algeria, as well as in the Chadian capital of N’Djamena. According to Bruno Barillot nuclear test specialist: “The map shows that radioactive elements like iodine 131



Top: 26 countries exposed to radiation declassified by French Ministry of Defence, April 2013. *Credit: The Parisien*

Bottom left: A miner at the Shinkolobwe uranium mine in Democratic Republic of the Congo
Bottom right: Radioactive residue scattered across the Sahara desert

and cesium 137 were ejected in the atmosphere and could have been inhaled, causing cancers or other illnesses.”

Living in exile, six decades on

The uranium that was used in the Manhattan project and in the bombs that were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki came from Shinkolobwe, a uranium mine in DRC, that officially closed in 2004. But there is still clandestine mining that results in terrible conditions for workers and causes serious environmental damage environment. OCHA and UNEP commented in a joint report

that, “Shinkolobwe is representative of similar situations in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world. A strong link exists between rural poverty, environmental protection and this type of livelihood activity.

Alternative income opportunities must be developed and integrated in parallel to artisanal exploitation if new livelihood options are to be found for these rural poor. A holistic, multidisciplinary approach within the context of poverty alleviation is essential to address this problem and avoid further human and environmental catastrophes.”

Imagine a world without nuclear weapons

By Reverend Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

In February 1990, the same month that Nelson Mandela, also known as Madiba, walked free after 27 years behind bars, South Africa's then-President, Frederik Willem de Klerk, issued written instructions to dismantle the nation's atomic arsenal.

From pariah State to the family of nations

Like Madiba's achingly long incarceration, the apartheid regime's development of these most abominable weapons, though never officially acknowledged, had become an intolerable blight on South Africa's image abroad. Divesting ourselves of the bomb was -- as de Klerk later remarked -- an essential part of our transition from a pariah state to an accepted member of the family of nations.

In his time as president, from 1994 to 1999, Madiba frequently implored the remaining nuclear powers to follow South Africa's lead in relinquishing nuclear weapons.

All of humanity would be better off, he reasoned, if we lived free from the threat of a nuclear conflagration, the effects of which would be catastrophic. Addressing the U.N. General Assembly in 1998, he said: "We must ask the question, which might sound naive to those who have elaborated sophisticated arguments to justify their refusal to eliminate these terrible and terrifying weapons of mass destruction -- why do they need them anyway?"

Despite Madiba's undisputed moral authority and unmatched powers of persuasion, his *cri de coeur* for disarmament went unheeded in his lifetime. South Africa, to this day, remains the only nation to have built nuclear weapons and then done away with them altogether.

Nine nations still cling firmly to these ghastly instruments of terror, believing, paradoxically, that by threatening to obliterate others they are maintaining the peace. Quite unaccountably, all are squandering precious resources, human and material, on programs to modernize and upgrade their arsenals -- an egregious theft from the world's poor.

No right hands for wrong weapons

Madiba attributed the lack of progress in achieving total nuclear disarmament to "Cold War inertia and an attachment to the use of the threat of brute force to assert the primacy of some states over others."

To his mind, the struggle against the bomb was intertwined, inextricably, with the struggles to end racism and colonialism. He abhorred the double standard, deeply entrenched in today's international order, whereby certain nations claim a "right" to possess nuclear arms -- in the hundreds, even the thousands -- while simultaneously condemning, and feigning moral outrage towards, those who dare pursue the same.

We must vociferously challenge the perceived entitlement of a select few nations to possess the bomb. As Ban Ki-moon, the U.N. Secretary-General, put it succinctly in January of last year: "There are no right hands for wrong weapons."

But how do we uproot the discriminatory order? How do we end the minority rule? In our decades-long fight against apartheid in South Africa, we depended upon the combination of an irrepressible domestic groundswell of popular opposition to the regime and intense and sustained pressure from the international community. The same combination is needed now in the movement to abolish nuclear weapons.

Time to negotiate a ban

In February 2014, in the Mexican state of Nayarit, ministers and diplomats from three-quarters of all nations -- those not coming include the Permanent Five members of the U.N. Security Council, the U.S., UK, France, Russia and China -- gathered to discuss

the devastating humanitarian impact of nuclear detonations.

This covered the inability of emergency workers to provide relief to the wounded; the widespread dispersal of radiation; the lofting of millions of tonnes of soot from firestorms high into the upper troposphere; the collapse of global agriculture from lack of sunlight and rainfall; the onset of famine and disease on a scale never before witnessed.

This conference, following the one in Oslo, was not only a much-needed reminder of what nuclear weapons do to human beings -- something seldom mentioned in arms control discussions -- but also a vital chance for the international community to chart a new course.

It is high time for the nuclear-free nations of the

world, constituting the overwhelming majority, to work together to exert their extraordinary collective influence.

Without delay, they should embark on a process to negotiate a global treaty banning the use, manufacture and possession of nuclear weapons -- whether or not the nuclear-armed nations are prepared to join them.

Why should these weapons, whose effects are the most grievous of all, remain the only weapons of mass destruction not expressly prohibited under international law?

By stigmatizing the bomb -- as well as those who possess it -- we can build tremendous pressure for disarmament. As Madiba understood well, a world freed of nuclear arms will be a freer world for all.



The **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)** is a global coalition of non-government organisations working for a nuclear-weapon-free world. We are urging all nations to start negotiations now on a treaty banning nuclear weapons completely. Find out more at www.icanw.org

A historical achievement

The Treaty of Pelindaba

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (NWFZ) Treaty, known commonly as the Pelindaba Treaty, establishes the continent of Africa as the largest NWFZ in the world in terms of number of state parties and geographical area.

The treaty entered into force on July 15th, 2009, but the will to keep Africa away from nuclear weapons first appeared as a reaction to French nuclear testing in the Algerian Sahara in 1960. The next year in 1961, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) approved a Resolution on the “Consideration of Africa as a denuclearized zone” and in 1965 UNGA endorsed the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa (“The Cairo Declaration”) adopted by the Summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Cairo. In 1966, France stopped testing nuclear weapons in

Africa. From 1970, when South Africa announced its capability to enrich uranium, to 1990, the UNGA adopts annual resolutions focusing on the obstacles to achieve an African NWFZ. In 1990, South Africa announced their intention to destroy their six nuclear devices and joined the NPT. At its meeting in 1993, in Dakar-Senegal, the OAU announces its will to implement the Cairo Declaration. A group of experts meets to finalise the draft treaty in Pelindaba, South Africa in 1993 and on April 11th 1996 in Cairo, the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty is signed.

The Pelindaba Nuclear Facility, the site of Africa’s nuclear weapons programme.



The Treaty of Pelindaba requires States Parties to renounce nuclear explosive devices and prohibits conducting research, developing, manufacturing, stockpiling or otherwise acquiring, possessing or having control over any nuclear explosive device. The treaty also prohibits parties from encouraging, receiving, providing or seeking any assistance to these ends. The Treaty also prohibits the stationing and testing of nuclear explosive devices within the Zone, as well as the dumping of radioactive waste. The treaty further requires States Parties to declare, dismantle, destroy or convert existing nuclear explosive devices and production facilities. The treaty also prohibits armed attacks on nuclear installations.

The Treaty of Pelindaba is an important pillar

in the global effort to completely eliminate nuclear weapons and prevent their proliferation, as enshrined in the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

There are currently 38 states parties to the Treaty of Pelindaba. These are: Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Comoros, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Mauritania, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, Senegal, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



3rd session of State parties to the Pelindaba Treaty, May 29-30 2014



In 1998 while addressing the UN General Assembly, Nelson Mandela announced that South Africa, along with seven other countries, was putting forth a resolution titled, “Towards a Nuclear Weapons Free World: The Need for a New Agenda.” The South African president implored the world to eliminate nuclear weapons.

The role of African states

by Sheila N. Mweemba

Africa is uniquely positioned to provide leadership in the movement to ban nuclear weapons, and has an obligation to engage in it. In addition to being a nuclear weapons free zone (NWFZ), Africa has also played a leading role in the Ottawa and Oslo processes to ban landmines and cluster munitions respectively, must be leveraged to further increase this campaign momentum. Africa's participation was just as critical in the negotiations of the newly adopted Arms Trade Treaty. Therefore, Africa should be the natural leader and get the job done.

The threat of these weapons is a global one and it is in Africa's own interest that in addition to its own continent, the rest of the world becomes a nuclear weapons free zone. African states are highly vulnerable to accidental or intentional nuclear disasters and would face grave technological, medical, humanitarian and environmental challenges in their aftermath. Besides, no state would be immune from a nuclear detonation.

Lessons from the past

Africa rallied to rid the world of landmines as well as cluster munitions and proved itself to be a formidable force. It stood uncompromisingly against those who argued that as non-producers, users, or stockpilers, it could not be at the forefront of the campaigns. African States can once again leverage this influence.

Past experience has also shown that cooperation and alliances must be created from the local to the global level in waging an effective campaign. The

African Union and regional bodies have a key role to play in promoting this cause. Furthermore, Africa's civil society, faith based organizations as well as youth groups, will be key in energizing the continent behind ICAN.

On a practical level it is worth noting that it is essential to establish a focal point to coordinate African participation, as was done during the Oslo process, to ensure maximum input of African states with the advantage of about 55 votes if a vote were called. This strategy worked exceptionally well during the Oslo Process. The sooner this is established the more effective and formidable Africa would be as a voting block.

Africa has past experience, no direct economic or political stake in preserving nuclear weapons, and is above all the most vulnerable continent. It must challenge the moral conscience of the world and convince the few unenthusiastic States to move forward with it.

Africa has done it before, Africa can do it again!!



Sheila N. Mweemba is the Programme Manager of the Norwegian People's Aid Humanitarian Disarmament Programme based in Mutare Zimbabwe. She was Director of the Zambia Mine Action Centre for 6 and a half years before being appointed Zam-

bia's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York in 2011. She was the Coordinator of the African Group during the Oslo Process and served as one of the 8 Vice Presidents of the Dublin Diplomatic Conference on Cluster Munitions in 2008.

African states meet at the African Union in Addis Ababa for the 50th Anniversary of the body. Over the course of the past few years the voice of African states has grown in support of the humanitarian initiative.



ICAN Campaigners have been active across the continent, bringing experience from past processes to sensitize the public about the urgency of a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

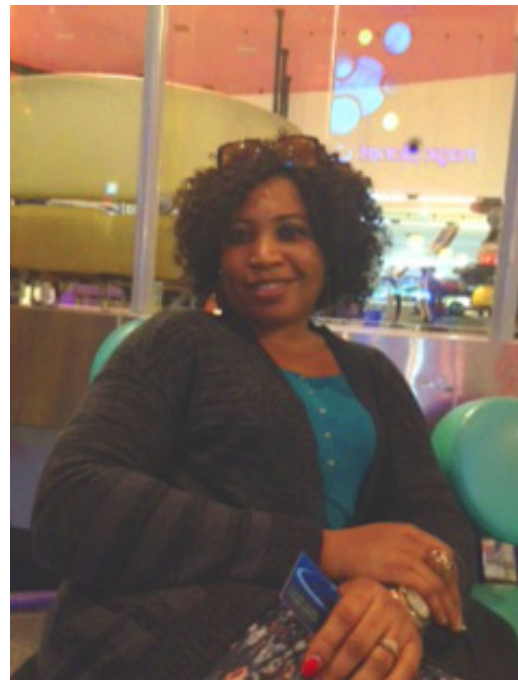
Gender perspectives on nuclear disarmament

by Joy Onyesoh, National President, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Nigeria

Disarmament issues are very critical in the Africa region, because of the various conflicts in the region, emerging conflicts, and the gross violations of women's rights, particularly during conflicts. In addition to the conflicts, there is an upsurge in terrorist activities with the attendant risk of nuclear materials falling into the wrong hands. This risk is heightened as countries in the region are pursuing nuclear energy as an alternative to other energy sources.

There is an urgent need to monitor and regulate the production, transfer and use of arms, and to push for a nuclear weapons ban globally. The risk of nuclear weapons detonation poses a great risk and far reaching consequences to the women, peace, and security agenda in Africa. It is therefore critical that there is an understanding of peace as a human right and the foundation on which equal rights are built. We cannot overemphasize the linkage between disarmament and the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons with women's empowerment. Military expenditures, especially on arms, divert resources from education, quality healthcare, and other social services that could improve women's lives and their substantive participation in development processes. Women's organizations with specific focus on disarmament and peace provide an entry point to reach the broader women's movement and engage them in disarmament issues. The Beijing Platform for Action Strategic Objective E.2 makes an explicit link between disarmament and gender equality and points out the relevance of disarmament issues for women's organizations and gender equality advocates around the world.

It is very important that we promote the participation of women in disarmament discussions as civil society representatives, decision makers,



and technical experts in the African region. We see the discussions being male dominated, with dire implications. The important role of women in the development of more effective disarmament strategies is largely ignored, narrowing the scope of social concerns, goals and the overall sustainability of peace and disarmament efforts in the region.

Faith or Fact

by Nyambura Gichuki, African Council of Religious Leaders, Kenya

Ever heard this before? “Nuclear weapons are a problem of the ‘western world’.” “Nuclear weapons keep us safe and prevent wars!” “Nuclear weapons are not as huge or immediate concern, as say, wide-spread poverty, global hunger, effects of climate change, political instability, HIV and AIDS, corruption, economic upheaval, terrorism, or even the next general elections.” “Nuclear weapons make countries powerful.” “Do we even have that many nuclear weapons in the world— weren’t a whole bunch of them destroyed a while back?”



These are just the tip of the iceberg of the reactions I encounter whilst advocating for a total ban and abolishment of nuclear weapons. More so, because I come from a seemingly incongruous region, in relation to its perceived, or lack of, political clout in the global discourse on nuclear weapons. It often begs the question, therefore, why

do it? Why push and pull for the eradication of all nuclear weapons?

Because I care about people, tout court. The impact of nuclear weapons on people’s lives and their environment, at every phase; be it development, maintenance, testing, use and detonation; is devastating at the very least.

My faith in, and understanding of God teaches and indeed draws me to, ‘love my neighbor as I love myself, in addition to caring for the earth He created. Hence, surely, I must do my part to respond to the potential and actual suffering caused by nuclear weapons.

Faith convictions aside, the critical shift in focus toward evidencing the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, presents a momentous opportunity to re-evaluate the aforementioned justifications and deeply held notions for holding on to or ignoring the problem of nuclear weapons. Judicious arguments such as those presented by Ward Wilson’s, *Five Myths About Nuclear Weapons*, and numerous research and experts’ articles, further address this concern decisively and with empirical persuasion, leaving no doubt the need for abolishment of nuclear weapons, whether by fact or faith.

the humanitarian initiative

Since 2010, a growing number of voices among states, international organisations, UN agencies and in civil society are demanding that the humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons, rather than their role in security doctrines and in international affairs, be the primary consideration in discussions about nuclear weapons.

NPT defines consequences of nuclear weapons as catastrophic

189 parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty including five nuclear-armed states, unanimously acknowledge that any use of nuclear weapons would have “catastrophic” humanitarian consequences.



2010

In the view of the ICRC, preventing the use of nuclear weapons requires fulfilment of existing obligations to pursue negotiations aimed at prohibiting and completely eliminating such weapons through a legally binding international treaty.

Jacob Kellenberger
President ICRC

2011

The Red Cross Movement adopts historic resolution

calling on all states to prohibit and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement.



2012



16 states launch Humanitarian Initiative

at the Non Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in Vienna, 16 states committed themselves to ‘intensify efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons’.

“Seeing contemporary security challenges through a health lens may help us see the perspective of people affected by conflict, emphasizing the impact of violence on health and humanitarian consequences. The idea of using such weapons is not just a security issue, but a health issue. I believe we need to take this perspective as we strive to make concrete progress towards our goal of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.”

Jonas Gahr Støre
Norwegian Foreign Minister

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South Africa delivers landmark statement

South Africa's Ambassador Abdul Minty reading the 80-nations statement, on 24 April 2013 during the Non Proliferation Treaty preparatory committee, highlighting the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons.

“Nuclear weapons should be stigmatized, banned and eliminated before they abolish us. “

Heinz Fischer
President of Austria

Austria will hold the third conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in Vienna, December 8-9, 2014

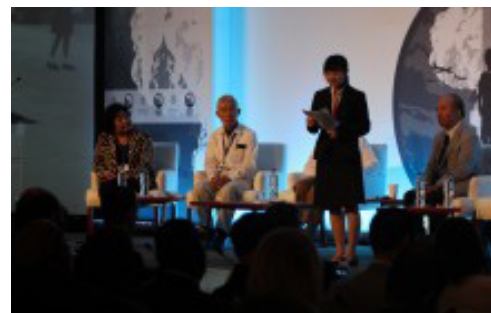
2013

2014



Norway MFA hosts first conference on humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons

In March 2013, the Norwegian government hosts the first-ever intergovernmental conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, bringing together 128 states and major international organizations.



Mexico hosts conference on humanitarian

In February 2014, the Mexican government hosts the second conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, attracting 146 states, with the Chair concluding: it is time for a process to negotiate a treaty banning nuclear weapons.



the initiative

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Health impact

By Dr Robert Mtonga, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War - Zambia

Africa is a continent beset with many problems at present. Images of developing countries, least developed countries, highly indebted countries, highly food sensitive countries and most infectious-disease affected countries seem to be synonymous with Africa. Yes, Africa was not called the “Dark Continent” without reason.

Years of violent conflict and armed violence, poor political and economic governance, volatile weather exemplified by floods alternating with droughts, and lately the scourge of HIV/AIDS under the background of malnutrition and poor health statistics in general have led to Africa being called a basket case. These challenges indicate that, by and large, Africa is in dire need of help to come out of the quagmire it is in.

The world is familiar with pictures of emaciated children in the wake of the Ethiopian environment and food crisis, along with the numerous epidemics that arose from it. Nuclear famine would recreate these pictures, on an unimaginable scale.

Africa has not just sat idly by in trying to solve some of these problems, especially those that are a relic of war and conflict. Africa has been at the forefront in leading the continent and wider world in ridding the world of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions as well as regulating the trade in conventional weapons. Treaties such as the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT), the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) bear Africa’s fingerprints and signature to this effect.

The recent conferences on nuclear weapon disarmament started in Oslo in 2013 on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons. This conference and those following have given the world, and not least Africa, a chance to study the topic of nuclear weapons, their continued possession and the dangers these weapons of mass destruction pose to humanity.

For starters, African countries, on average, spend less than 15% of their annual budget on health care provision, a figure that is insufficient given the heavy burden of infectious diseases and non-

communicable conditions.

Furthermore, many Africans depend on traditional remedies, mainly herbs and other local medicinal products of trees, roots and soils. Forests, therefore, are an important source of medicines.

Most striking are the health consequences that nuclear weapons would cause on a continent such as Africa.

“According to testimony from the survivors, in the immediate aftermath of the nuclear testing, white ash fell from the sky, and shortly thereafter people began to experience skin burns, hair loss, finger discolouration, nausea and other symptoms of acute radiation poisoning. They also provided testimony of observing and experiencing ailments that they had never experienced before, including cancers and growth retardation in children.”

– UN SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR, 2012

The detonation of nuclear weapons deliberately, by accident, or by some unknown reason, on a large scale would first lead to such a blast that heat and fire would cause immediate health effects such as burns, deafness, and death. Help would not likely reach those in need as the municipal and medical services would either be completely destroyed, and if they were, they would likely not be functional.

Epidemic disease out-breaks including radiation diseases, digestive-system diseases including cholera, typhus, malaria, and plague, as well as the spread of Ebola and various skin-disease conditions, would overwhelm Africa.

Red Cross: No more Hiroshimas!

In 2011, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement made an historic appeal on nuclear weapons. In it, the Movement called on States to ensure that nuclear weapons are never again used, regardless of their views on the legality of such weapons, and to urgently pursue and conclude negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement.

This appeal was based on the direct experience of the ICRC and the Japanese Red Cross in responding to and treating the survivors of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Like many States and organizations the ICRC, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement more generally, believe that preventing the use of nuclear weapons – including through the development of a legally binding treaty to prohibit and eliminate such weapons – is the only way forward.

“The ICRC learned many things from its work in Hiroshima. We learned that the consequences of nuclear weapons are catastrophic. We learned that many more people will die from radiation sickness in the weeks and months following an explosion than at the time of the detonation. We learned that when nuclear weapons are used, the normal systems and services for helping the victims are, in an instant, wiped out or severely damaged, making the provision of adequate assistance nearly impossible in the aftermath. We also learned that civilian casualties and suffering are likely to continue for years to come, caused by the development of cancers such as thyroid cancer and leukaemia, and that over time the death toll will continue to rise.

It is our hope that the lessons learned from the past and the new insights gained from the Oslo and Nayarit meetings will guide States as they consider how best to advance nuclear disarmament in the 21st century. We all know that nuclear



weapons must never be used again. The prospect of their catastrophic consequences for humanity can only lead States to the conclusion they must work urgently and with determination to prohibit and eliminate these weapons once and for all.”

- *Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Nayarit, Mexico, February 2014, Statement by Christine Beerli, Vice-President ICRC.*

In the immediate to the long-term, Africa would also see an increase in respiratory diseases due to the massive levels of soot and dust that would result from the blast, cancers of the skin and hunger due to climate changes that would follow a nuclear famine.

Programmes designed to improve public health, including those focused on vaccinating children, preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS, improving maternal health, and enhancing public health and sanitation would lose funds and be unable to continue their work. This would increase the vulnerability of many Africans to poor personal hygiene and unsanitary conditions, thereby increasing the risk of infectious disease.

A nuclear famine would also lead to mass displacement and create refugee camps all over the continent. As such responses would be improvised and disorganized, overcrowding would lead outbreak

of diarrheal diseases, tuberculosis, spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.

Nuclear famine would also lead to the emergence of new and the resurgence of neglected diseases.

Given that Africa is already grappling with the control and treatment of infectious diseases, malnutrition, and healthcare system management in general, nuclear famine would most severely affect Africa to a point of horror beyond measure.

The current efforts to study the question of humanitarian consequences is thus a first step for Africa towards responding to a nuclear famine and consequently protect its fragile healthcare system from total collapse in the event of a nuclear exchange.

Africa's best hope in the mitigation of the health impact of nuclear-war induced nuclear famine is primary prevention, which means calling for a total ban and elimination of nuclear weapons.

Government support in Africa

The Growing Call for a Ban on Nuclear Weapons

As the humanitarian initiative has gathered steam, African states have been at the forefront of the calls to make sure that this new momentum in the field of nuclear disarmament is translated into concrete action. Invoking the moral authority that Africa has as the steward of the Treaty of Pelindaba, as well as being the home of the only country to voluntarily dismantle its nuclear weapons programme, more and more states from across the continent are declaring the need for a new legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

THE HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVE “All states must intensify their efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.” - UN General Assembly, *October 2012* (Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Holy See, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Peru, the Philippines, Samoa, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Switzerland, Thailand, Uruguay, Zambia)

International Committee of the Red Cross “[The Red Cross] calls on all states to ensure that nuclear weapons are never again used, and to pursue negotiations to prohibit and completely eliminate such weapons through a legally binding international agreement.” *September 2013*

BURKINA FASO “The permanent threat to which weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons expose us, and with whom we now measure with certainty the destructive effects, recalls the necessity and the urgency to achieve their prohibition, and their total elimination” *September 2013*

BURUNDI “The delegation of the Government of the Republic of Burundi is sharing these positive aspirations of minimizing the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. It also solemnly expresses its readiness to back up to Burundi any initiatives to further work out a robust roadmap or action plan on totally banning nuclear weapons. We congratulate the civil society and International organizations on their endeavors relating the implementation of a legally binding instrument.” *February 2014*

CAMEROON “Cameroon [...] calls for multilateral negotiations to be launched without delay on a convention prohibiting the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and providing for their elimination.” *February 2014*

COMOROS “My delegation hopes that we are going to increase our cohesion and determination to fight for the prohibition of these weapons, which are a permanent threat to humanity.” *February 2014*

COTE D'IVOIRE “My delegation hopes that we are going to increase our cohesion and determination to fight for the prohibition of these weapons, which are a permanent threat to humanity.” *February 2014*

EGYPT “The effort culminating in the Nayarit Conference..., confirmed that the arguments in defense of nuclear weapons are contrary to human dignity and reflected that the time has come to initiate a diplomatic process within a given timeframe to rid the world of the unacceptable threat represented in the continued existence of nuclear weapons. *May 2014*

KENYA “It is the conviction of Kenya that it is time states considered a legal ban on nuclear weapons, even if nuclear-armed states refuse to participate.” *October 2013*

LIBYA “We are calling for an international instrument related to the full eradication and prohibition of nuclear weapons.” *October 2013*



MALAWI “Malawi realizes the fact that it is the duty, and responsibility of States and Governments, to take up the humanitarian discourse, and start the negotiations for a multilateral legally binding instrument that will ban the production, testing, use and stockpiling of nuclear weapons. Malawi wishes to affirm its interest in and commitment to the humanitarian discourse against nuclear weapons, and the prospect for a ban. Malawi shall support all efforts towards realizing a global ban on nuclear weapons, and indeed all weapons of mass destruction.”
February 2014

MOROCCO “We need to move towards action [...] to obtain the noble goal of banning nuclear weapons.” *February 2014*

NIGERIA “We are concerned that, till now, there is no international treaty banning these weapons of mass destruction.” *February 2014*

SENEGAL “We urge states that have not yet done so to amplify the momentum and join the vast movement for a binding international convention totally banning nuclear weapons.”
June 2014

SIERRA LEONE “We urge states that have not yet done so to amplify the momentum and join the vast movement for a binding international convention totally banning nuclear weapons.”
June 2014

SOUTH AFRICA “A world free from nuclear weapons would require the underpinning of a universal and multilaterally negotiated legally binding instrument that would ban the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction.”
February 2011

SUDAN “Nuclear weapons should be banned completely and immediately.” *March 2013*

ZAMBIA “It is for our good and the good of the future generations to ban this indiscriminate weapon. Clearly, there is no benefit to humanity of having or developing nuclear weapons ... We reiterate our call to completely and totally ban nuclear weapons.”
May 2013

TIME FOR ACTION

A treaty banning nuclear weapons is a global humanitarian imperative of the highest order and more and more African governments are advocating for it. Such a step is achievable and increasingly urgent. Nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction not yet prohibited by an international convention, even though they have the greatest destructive capacity of all weapons. A global ban on nuclear weapons is long overdue and can be achieved in the near future with enough public pressure and political leadership. A ban would not only make it illegal for nations to use or possess nuclear weapons; it would also help pave the way to their complete elimination. Nations committed to reaching the goal of abolition should begin negotiating a ban now.

Catastrophic harm

Despite the end of the cold war, 16,400 nuclear weapons remain in nine countries. As we saw it clearly through the conferences on the nuclear impact of nuclear weapons in Oslo (2013) and Nayarit (February 2013) the detonation of just one nuclear bomb over a large city could kill more than a million people. The use of tens or hundreds could disrupt the global climate, causing widespread agricultural collapse and famine. No matter the scale of the attack, an adequate humanitarian response would not be possible and the most fragile economies will be the first dramatically affected. Given the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons, banning and eradicating them is the only responsible course of action.

Fulfilling obligations

International law obliges all nations to pursue in good faith and conclude negotiations for nuclear disarmament. However, the nuclear-armed nations have so far failed to present a clear road map to a nuclear-weapon-free world. All are investing heavily in the modernization of their nuclear forces, with the apparent intention of retaining them for many decades to come and keep spending over 100 billion US \$ each year. Continued failure on disarmament is not an option. So long as nuclear weapons exist, there is a real danger they will be used again – by accident or intent. A ban is urgently needed.

Not only would any use of these weapons cause a humanitarian catastrophe, but the nuclear arsenals

constitute a continuous and significant drain on resources. In 2013, over \$105 billion USD were spent on nuclear weapons, money that could better contribute to meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

A global prohibition

A nuclear weapons ban would globalize what nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties have done regionally – for Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Central Asia and Africa. It would allow nations in any part of the world to formalize their rejection of nuclear weapons and help create a clear international legal norm against the possession of nuclear weapons. Similarly, a ban would build on, and reinforce, the Non-Proliferation Treaty and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty – which, although having helped prevent the use and limit the spread of nuclear weapons, are insufficient to achieve disarmament. A nuclear weapons ban is the missing piece for a broad legal rejection of all weapons of mass destruction.

A treaty banning nuclear weapons is the next vital step towards nuclear abolition. It should be pursued now, with or without the support of nuclear-armed nations. Negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons should be undertaken by committed nations even without the participation of those armed with nuclear weapons and African States can play a key role to open the road toward a world free of nuclear weapons.



WEAPONS ALREADY BANNED

There are already international conventions prohibiting biological weapons, chemical weapons, land mines and cluster munitions, but no comparable treaty – as yet – for nuclear weapons. The international community must address this legal anomaly. As with the negotiating

processes that resulted in treaties banning land mines and cluster munitions, likeminded governments should work in close partnership with civil society to bring about a nuclear weapons ban regardless of resistance from states possessing the weapons.



**X BIOLOGICAL
WEAPONS**

1972



**X CHEMICAL
WEAPONS**

1993



**X LAND
MINES**

1997



**X CLUSTER
MUNITIONS**

2008



**NUCLEAR
WEAPONS**

**NOT YET BANNED
BY TREATY**

“We must **ask the question**, which might sound naive to those who have **elaborated** sophisticated arguments to justify their **refusal** to eliminate these **terrible** and terrifying **weapons** of mass destruction...

Why do they need them anyway?”

NELSON MANDELA

By Arielle Denis

Contributions by Samir Abi, Mimidoo Achakpa, Nyambura Gichuki, Daniel Högsta, Robert Mtonga, Sheila Mweemba, Joy Onyesoh, Rev Desmond Tutu, Tim Wright

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