



NOBEL
PEACE
PRIZE
2017

THE NUCLEAR WEAPON BAN TREATY

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Image: Costa Rican ambassador
Elayne Whyte Gómez presides over the
historic United Nations negotiations for
a treaty to outlaw nuclear weapons, in
New York in June 2017.



A NEW GLOBAL NORM

Nuclear weapons threaten the very survival of humanity and our entire living planet. Their effects transcend national boundaries and span generations. They are immoral, illegitimate and now – at long last – illegal.

On 7 July 2017, following a decade of advocacy by ICAN and its partners, 122 nations voted to adopt a historic global agreement to ban nuclear weapons, known officially as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This new legal instrument offers a powerful alternative to a world in which threats of mass destruction are allowed to prevail. It provides a pathway

forward at a time of alarming global crisis. If ever there were a moment for leaders to declare their unequivocal opposition to these weapons, that moment is now.

FILLING A LEGAL GAP

Prior to the treaty's adoption, nuclear weapons were the only weapons of mass destruction not subject to a categorical ban, despite their catastrophic, widespread and persistent humanitarian consequences. The new agreement thus fills a major gap in international law. It prohibits nations from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, transferring, possessing,

stockpiling, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons, or allowing nuclear weapons to be stationed on their territory. It also bars them from assisting, encouraging or inducing others to engage in any of these prohibited activities.

Nations armed with nuclear weapons must, upon joining the treaty, commit to destroy their stockpiles in accordance with a legally binding, time-bound plan. Nations that host an ally's nuclear weapons on their territory must remove them by a specified deadline.

The treaty also obliges its parties to provide assistance to those who have suffered

as a result of the use and testing of nuclear weapons around the world, and to take measures to remediate contaminated environments.

The treaty was negotiated at UN headquarters in New York over four weeks in 2017, with the participation of a great majority of the world's nations. It is permanent in nature and will enter into legal force once 50 nations have formally ratified it.

Elayne Whyte Gómez, the Costa Rican ambassador who presided over the negotiations, remarked during the closing session: "We have managed to sow the first seeds of a world free of nuclear weapons."

OUR CAMPAIGN

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons is a diverse coalition of non-governmental organizations in one hundred countries promoting adherence to and implementation of the UN nuclear weapon ban treaty. Our partners range from local peace groups to global federations representing millions of people. The campaign was founded in Australia in 2007 and initially developed through International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. We were inspired by the success of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, which a decade earlier had played an instrumental role

in the negotiation of the anti-personnel mine ban treaty.

Since our founding, we have worked to build a global groundswell of public opposition to nuclear weapons. By engaging a broad range of groups and working alongside the Red Cross and like-minded governments, we have helped reshape the debate on nuclear weapons and generate momentum towards their total eradication.

HUMANITARIAN FOCUS

ICAN served as the civil society partner for three major diplomatic conferences in 2013 and 2014 focusing on the humanitarian impacts of

nuclear detonations, which brought together most of the world's governments.

In 2015 we helped garner the support of 127 nations for a pledge to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. And in 2016 our campaign successfully lobbied for the UN General Assembly to adopt a resolution to launch negotiations the following year on “a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons”. For our major role in bringing about the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons – adopted with overwhelming support – we were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2017.

HOW WE WORK

ICAN coordinates global days of action, raises public awareness, and engages in advocacy at the UN and in national parliaments. We work with survivors of the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and of nuclear testing, helping share their testimonies with the public and lawmakers. Many prominent people have lent their support to the campaign, including Nobel laureates Desmond Tutu and the Dalai Lama, musician Herbie Hancock, artist Yoko Ono, and actors Martin Sheen and Michael Douglas. The UN secretary-general has praised our work.

Image: In June 2017, as negotiations begin in New York for a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons, Japanese activists light one thousand candles in front of Hiroshima's iconic A-bomb dome.





SUMITERU TANIGUCHI

As a 16-year-old boy, **Sumiteru Taniguchi** (left) was riding his bicycle in Nagasaki when a US atomic bomb exploded 1.8 km away, scorching his back and leaving the skin on his right arm hanging down from the shoulder to the fingertips. His horrific burns required many operations. Here he is pictured alongside a photograph of himself taken in 1945. After decades struggling against the bomb, he passed away in 2017.

IROJI KEBENLI

Iroji Kebenli (right), of the Marshall Islands, suffered burns to his skin in 1954 after contact with “Bikini snow” – radioactive ash and coral fragments dispersed over Bikini Atoll and other islands following US nuclear tests. Still today, many Marshallese citizens remain displaced from their home islands.



CATASTROPHIC HARM

Nuclear weapons are the most destructive, inhumane and indiscriminate weapons ever created. Both in the scale of the devastation they cause and in their uniquely persistent, spreading, genetically damaging radioactive fallout, they are unlike any other weapons.

A single nuclear weapon detonated over a populated area could kill millions of people. The use of a large number of nuclear weapons would disrupt the global climate, causing widespread agricultural collapse and famine. The burning cities ignited by nuclear explosions would loft smoke high into the upper atmosphere,

blanketing the globe. This, in turn, would cool, darken and dry the Earth's surface, decimating food crops – putting potentially billions of people at risk of starvation.

Nuclear weapons have been used twice in warfare, on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Close to a quarter of a million civilians were incinerated in an instant or suffered agonizing deaths in the weeks and months after the attacks. Many thousands more have died in the seven decades since from radiation-related illnesses.

More than two thousand nuclear weapons have also been exploded as part of

test programmes, with long-lasting consequences for people and the environment.

EFFECTS OF A BOMBING

Nuclear weapons release vast amounts of energy in the form of blast, heat and radiation. Almost everything close to ground zero is vaporized. Ionizing radiation at high doses kills cells, damages organs and can be acutely fatal. At all doses, it increases the lifetime risk of cancer, chronic disease and genetic damage. Children, especially girls, and women are more susceptible than men to radiation harm.

The Red Cross and other relief agencies have warned

repeatedly that no meaningful humanitarian response would be possible following a single nuclear detonation anywhere, let alone in the aftermath of a full-scale nuclear war.

In the preamble to the UN nuclear weapon ban treaty, nations express their deep concern about the “catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from any use of nuclear weapons” and recognize the consequent need to “completely eliminate such weapons”. They state that elimination remains “the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons are never used again under any circumstances”.

HOW THE BAN WAS ACHIEVED

2007 LAUNCH OF ICAN GLOBALLY



The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons is launched at events around the world. Our mission: to eliminate the worst weapons of mass destruction via a treaty that categorically prohibits them. ICAN campaigners begin working to build a global groundswell of opposition to nuclear weapons and form close partnerships with like-minded governments.

2010 NEW HUMANITARIAN FOCUS



The Red Cross and Red Crescent movement adopts nuclear disarmament as a top priority, and all parties to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, including five nuclear-armed nations, express their “deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons”. This provides the basis for future statements and conferences on the subject.

2012 FIRST HUMANITARIAN STATEMENT



On behalf of 16 nations, Switzerland delivers the first in a series of joint statements on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, urging all nations to “intensify their efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons”. Support for this humanitarian call grows with each new iteration of the statement. Eventually, 159 nations – around four-fifths of all UN members – join the appeal.

2013 OSLO CONFERENCE



Eager to strengthen the evidence base for prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons, Norway hosts the first-ever intergovernmental conference on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, attended by 128 nations. Relief organizations warn that they would be powerless to respond meaningfully in the aftermath of a nuclear attack. Several UN agencies participate.

2014 NAYARIT CONFERENCE



Mexico hosts the second humanitarian consequences conference, in the state of Nayarit, with 146 nations present. It calls for the launch of a “diplomatic process” to negotiate a “legally binding instrument” to prohibit nuclear weapons – a necessary precondition for reaching the goal of elimination. It declares the conference “a point of no return”.

2014 VIENNA CONFERENCE



Five hundred ICAN activists gather for the third conference on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, in Vienna. A record 158 nations participate. Austria presents a pledge to cooperate in efforts to “fill the legal gap” in the international regime governing nuclear weapons. Within months, 127 nations formally endorse the document, known as the Humanitarian Pledge.

2016 A UNITED NATIONS MANDATE



A special UN working group on disarmament convenes in Geneva to discuss new legal measures to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. It recommends the negotiation of a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons, which the Red Cross hails as having “potentially historic implications”. Two months later, 123 governments vote to establish a formal UN mandate for treaty negotiations.

2017 TREATY NEGOTIATIONS



Ending two decades of paralysis in multilateral nuclear disarmament efforts, diplomats spend four weeks negotiating “a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination”. On 7 July, 122 nations vote to adopt the historic accord. Then, on 20 September, it opens for signature, and the leaders of 50 nations sign it immediately.

NUCLEAR FORCES TODAY

Nine nations together possess an estimated 14,930 nuclear weapons, of which more than 90 per cent are in the arsenals of the United States and Russia. Approximately 1,800 warheads are kept on high alert – ready to be launched within minutes of a warning.

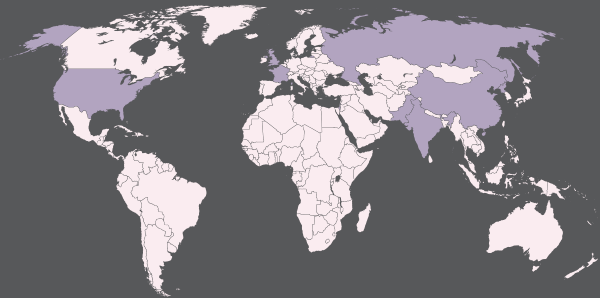
Most nuclear weapons today are many times more powerful than the atomic bombs dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

The failure of the nuclear-armed nations to disarm has heightened the risk that others will one day acquire nuclear weapons. The only guarantee against the spread

and use of nuclear weapons is to eliminate them without further delay.

Although the leaders of some nuclear-armed nations have expressed their “vision” of a nuclear-weapon-free world, all are actively upgrading and modernizing their nuclear arsenals. They have no plans as yet to dismantle them completely.

Five European nations host US nuclear weapons on their soil as part of a NATO nuclear-sharing arrangement (Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey), and roughly two dozen other nations claim to rely on US nuclear weapons in their military doctrines.



COUNTRY	WARHEADS	TESTS
United States	6,800	1,054
Russia	7,000	715
United Kingdom	215	45
France	300	210
China	270	45
India	110–120	6
Pakistan	120–130	6
Israel	80	?
North Korea	10–20	6
Total	14,930	2,087

Source: Federation of American Scientists, 2017



Image: ICAN activists in Melbourne, Australia, film a campaign video in 2014.

HOW THE BAN WORKS

History shows that the prohibition of certain types of weapons facilitates progress towards their elimination. Weapons that have been outlawed by international treaties are increasingly seen as illegitimate, losing their political status and, along with it, the resources for their production. Arms companies find it more difficult to acquire funds for work on illegal weapons, and such work carries a significant reputational risk. Banks and other financial institutions divest from these producers.

The UN nuclear weapon ban treaty complements the prohibitions on biological and chemical weapons,

anti-personnel land mines and cluster munitions, and reinforces various other legal instruments on nuclear weapons, including the non-proliferation treaty of 1968. It strengthens the global taboo against the use and possession of nuclear weapons – challenging any notion that these are legitimate, acceptable weapons for certain nations.

Underpinning the decision by governments and civil society to pursue the ban was our belief that changing the rules regarding nuclear weapons would have a major impact even beyond those nations that would formally adopt the treaty at the outset.

This belief stemmed from experience with treaties outlawing other weapons, which have established powerful norms that greatly influence the policies and practices of states that are not yet parties to them.

ICAN is confident that the new treaty will spur long-overdue progress towards disarmament when the norms it enshrines take hold.

EVERYONE'S SECURITY

The treaty aims not only to advance nuclear disarmament, but also to prevent further proliferation. It will enhance the security of people everywhere, not least of all those in nations

currently armed with nuclear weapons, who are more likely than others to be the victims of a nuclear attack.

The three conferences on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons in 2013 and 2014 shed new light on the perils of living in a world armed to the brink with these weapons. They clarified the urgent need to prohibit them under international law.

The treaty embodies the principle that there can be no safe hands for nuclear weapons, establishing the same standard for all its parties. Far from ignoring the security concerns of governments, the treaty is a direct response to them.



NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017 for our work “to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons” and our “ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons”. The prize is a tribute to the tireless efforts of many millions of campaigners and concerned citizens worldwide who, ever since the dawn of the atomic age, have loudly protested nuclear weapons, insisting that they can serve no legitimate purpose and must be forever banished from the face of our earth. It is a tribute also to the survivors

of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – the *hibakusha* – and victims of nuclear test explosions around the world, whose searing testimonies and unstinting advocacy were instrumental in securing the nuclear weapon ban treaty.

The award shines a needed light on the path towards a world free of nuclear weapons. It will amplify our message as we work assiduously in coming years to ensure the full implementation of the historic new accord. Any nation that seeks a more peaceful world, forever free of the nuclear menace, will sign and ratify the treaty without delay.

PROHIBITED WEAPONS

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, like conventions banning other inherently indiscriminate and inhumane weapons,

is based on the principles and rules of international humanitarian law – in particular, the principle that the right of parties to an

armed conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited, the rule that weapons must be capable of distinguishing between

civilians and combatants, and the prohibition on the use of weapons that cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering.



BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Banned under the Biological Weapons Convention

1972



CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Banned under the Chemical Weapons Convention

1993



LAND MINES

Banned under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty

1997



CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Banned under the Convention on Cluster Munitions

2008



NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Banned under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

2017

Image: The United States detonates an atomic bomb underwater at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands in 1946.



**“TO THE LEADERS OF COUNTRIES ACROSS THE
WORLD, I BESEECH YOU: IF YOU LOVE THIS
PLANET, YOU WILL SIGN THIS TREATY.”**

– SETSUKO THURLOW, HIROSHIMA SURVIVOR

NUCLEARBAN.ORG