



Action for abolition

Nuclear weapons were built with human hands and can be dismantled with human hands. There are no technical barriers, only political ones. Tens of thousands of nuclear weapons have already been taken apart.

With leadership and political will, further progress towards disarmament could be achieved very rapidly. The fact that large geographic regions have already been declared free of nuclear weapons suggests that, one day, the entire world could be.

Historically, some of the greatest breakthroughs in the field of nuclear arms control were achieved at times of high international tension. A crisis can focus leaders' minds and force them to explore new pathways forward.

But progress will always depend on a powerful grassroots movement for change, involving concerned citizens from all walks of life. The strong, enduring global taboo that exists today against the use of nuclear weapons is the result of decades of popular resistance.

There are many ways that individuals can contribute to the cause of eliminating the world's worst weapons. Here are some of them:

Educate:

Share information with friends, family members and colleagues about the urgency of abolishing nuclear weapons. Write articles and letters to the editor, post content on social media, and organise public forums, teach-ins and film screenings.

Raising awareness about the harm that nuclear weapons inflict on people and the environment is especially important. Too often, education about nuclear weapons focuses instead on the men who invented and dropped the weapons in 1945.

The first-hand testimonies of survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and of people harmed by nuclear testing, can help shift attitudes and motivate action.

Paper cranes

In Japan, paper cranes are traditionally a symbol of good health and a long life. Today, they are also recognised internationally as a symbol of peace, and can be used to spark important conversations on the urgent need to eliminate nuclear weapons.

As a two-year-old girl, Sadako Sasaki was exposed to radiation from the Hiroshima bomb. Years later, she was diagnosed with leukaemia – a delayed effect of radiation – and she set herself the goal of folding one thousand paper cranes while in hospital, hoping that it would bring her good health.

She persevered and reached her goal but, tragically, grew weaker by the day and died at the age of 12.

Ever since, children across Japan and throughout the world have folded paper cranes to show their support for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Why not mail or hand deliver paper cranes to elected representatives in your country, with a letter requesting their support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons?



Advocate:

Write to, phone or meet with decision-makers in your country to seek their support for the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

Since 2017, thousands of parliamentarians across the political spectrum have responded to the demands of concerned citizens and signed an ICAN pledge to promote adherence to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (pledge.icanw.org).

Hundreds of cities, from Washington DC to Paris to Sydney, have also formally supported the treaty, signing onto an ICAN appeal (cities.icanw.org).

You need not be an expert to make your voice heard. What matters is that you recognise the gravity of the threat and the urgency of action.

Thousands of paper cranes adorning a monument in Nagasaki. Credit: ICAN



Protest:

Non-violent protest is an important way for people to convey their rejection of nuclear weapons. It can take many forms, including rallies, marches, blockades and vigils.

For decades, members of the global peace and disarmament movement have held protests, large and small, to draw attention to the cause. Countless actions have occurred at sites where nuclear weapons are built and deployed, at universities involved in their development, and outside national parliaments.

Undoubtedly, mass protests have helped bring an end to nuclear testing, halt the expansion of nuclear arsenals, prevent any use of nuclear weapons in war since 1945, and build pressure for disarmament.

More direct action is needed today.



An anti-nuclear action in Melbourne, Australia. Credit: Jesse Boylan

Divest:

In some nuclear-armed nations, companies are involved in the production of nuclear weapons and their components, and financial institutions provide capital to make this work possible.

Divesting from the nuclear weapons industry is a tangible contribution that financial institutions can make to disarmament. Hundreds have already done so, committing to nuclear-weapon-free finance, in line with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (divest.icanw.org).

Individuals can contact their banks and pension funds and insist that nuclear weapons companies be excluded from their investments.

Donate:

As the former UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon once remarked: “The world is over-armed and peace is under-funded.” By donating to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), you can help change that (icanw.org/donate).

ICAN is the leading civil society voice on nuclear disarmament globally, with a proven track record of effective advocacy, recognised in 2017 with the Nobel Peace Prize. With your support, we can take the campaign its full distance: all the way to zero nuclear weapons.





An action with students in Hiroshima.
Credit: Takeo Nakaoku

ICAN convenes parliamentarians from across the world.
Credit: Derek French

