

10th NPT Review Conference, 01-26 August 2022

July 2022

Background

Nuclear weapons are the most destructive, inhumane and indiscriminate weapons ever created. A single nuclear bomb detonated over a large city could kill more than a million people in a matter of seconds. More than fifty years after the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force, there are still nearly 13,000 nuclear weapons in the world, many ready to be used within minutes. States have failed to implement agreed actions from past Review Conference documents, including ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, negotiation of further bilateral reductions between United States and Russia, lowering of the operational status of warheads, reducing the role and significance of nuclear weapons in military doctrines, the unequivocal undertaking for nuclear disarmament, and the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

On 23 June, the First Meeting of States Parties (MSP) of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) adopted the landmark 50-point Vienna Action Plan¹ whereby states parties committed to promote the TPNW in all relevant fora and to emphasise the complementarity of the TPNW with the existing disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including at the NPT Review Conference. The Vienna Declaration² condemned unequivocally “any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances.” A working paper³ prepared by Ireland (who is now the informal facilitator to explore areas of cooperation between the TPNW and the NPT) and Thailand for the TPNW MSP provides a detailed study of how the TPNW contributes to and complements the existing disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

¹ United Nations, First meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, “Draft Vienna Action Plan”, *TPNW/MSP/2022/CRP.7*, June 2022

² United Nations, First meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, “Draft Vienna Declaration”, *TPNW/MSP/2022/CRP.8*, June 2022

³ Ireland and Thailand, “Complementarity with the existing disarmament and non-proliferation regime”, *TPNW/MSP/2022/WP.3*

Key points to raise at the NPT Review Conference

In statements to the NPT Review Conference, ICAN encourages all states to:

1. Highlight the risks of nuclear weapons use, including by:

- Expressing deep concern at the continued risk for humanity represented by the possibility that nuclear weapons could be used.
- Expressing concern about the rising risk of nuclear weapon use caused by the advance of artificial intelligence and cyber operations.⁴

2. Highlight the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, including by:

- Expressing deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from the use of nuclear weapons as well as at the ongoing humanitarian and environmental harms caused by nuclear weapons use and testing.⁵
- Acknowledging that the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons cannot be adequately addressed, transcend national borders, pose grave implications for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations, and have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, including as a result of ionizing radiation.⁶

3. Condemn all states engaging in activities that undermine the NPT and call on states to return to compliance including by:

- Strongly condemning Russian threats to use nuclear weapons and condemning unequivocally any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances.
- Condemning nuclear-armed states' qualitative and quantitative advancements of their nuclear arsenals as violations of Article VI, including quantitative increases by China and Russia and the United Kingdom's March 2021 decision⁷ to increase its nuclear warhead cap by 40% to 260 warheads.⁸
- Condemning non-nuclear weapon states' plans to use highly-enriched uranium for military purposes, including Australia's proposed acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines, as undermining the NPT and weakening the IAEA safeguards system.⁹
- Reiterating the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament to which

⁴ International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, "Briefing: Emerging technologies and nuclear weapons risks," January 2020.

⁵ United Nations, 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, *Final Document: Volume I, NPT/CONF.2010/50(Vol. I) (2010)*.

⁶ *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, New York, 7 July 2017.

⁷ ICAN, "UK to Increase Nuclear Stockpile Limit", March 16th, 2021

https://www.icanw.org/uk_to_increase_nuclear_stockpile_limit#:~:text=On%2016%20March%2C%20the%20United,warheads%20%2D%20a%2040%25%20increase.

⁸ Reaching Critical Will, "Assuring destruction forever: 2020 edition", June 2020.

⁹ ICAN Australia, "Briefing Note: Nuclear-powered submarines," October 2021.

all States parties are committed under Article VI.¹⁰

- Calling on nuclear-armed states to undertake nuclear disarmament, for states to stop hosting other countries' nuclear weapons on their territories, and for states to reject the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons on their behalf.

4. Welcome the newest addition to the disarmament and nonproliferation architecture, the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons including by:

- Welcoming the entry into force of the TPNW, the successful conclusion of the TPNW first Meeting of States Parties, and the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Vienna Action Plan, the first multilaterally negotiated action plan adopted on nuclear disarmament in more than a decade, which underscores the commitment of TPNW states parties to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.
- Calling on all states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the TPNW without delay.
- Welcoming the actions states have committed to take to promote the universalisation of the TPNW, noting that the TPNW complements and strengthens the NPT as an effective measure as foreseen in Article VI.
- Welcoming efforts to address the rights and needs of affected communities through victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance.

¹⁰ United Nations, 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document: Volume I, *NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II) (2000)*.