

Notes from the ICAN Act On It Forum

9th-10th of March 2023.

The ICAN Act On It Forum was held in Oslo, Norway the 9th and 10th of March 2023, hosted by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and ICAN Norway. The forum gathered over 200 campaigners, civil society, academics, politicians, journalists, ambassadors, representatives for affected communities, youth politicians, youth organisations, religious leaders and more. These voices are important in order to nuance the public debate and to present various tools in the work to eradicate the threat of nuclear weapons. The forum focused on the work being done in nuclear-weapon-compact states, and how these states must join the world majority working to end nuclear weapons.

- The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a landmark global agreement to ban nuclear weapons, adopted by an overwhelming majority of the world's nations in 2017. It entered into force on 22 January 2021. At the time of the forum, 68 states had ratified the treaty, and 92 states had signed the treaty.
- Nuclear-weapon-compact states are those which may not have their own nuclear weapons, but are enablers of the status quo by pretending to be in favour of nuclear disarmament while also actively supporting nuclear weapons in their national security policies.
- Nuclear weapons have not been used in war since the devastating bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. A nuclear taboo has been established: a taboo against the first use of nuclear weapons. The TPNW codifies the nuclear taboo in international law – regardless of the persistent opposition by nuclear armed states and their compact allies.

- The Humanitarian Initiative changed the international nuclear disarmament discourse profoundly. Moving away from state security and myths, the humanitarian argument rearranges the stage and puts the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons first, largely represented by affected communities, in particular Indigenous people.
- The results of the nuclear use and testing are devastating and long lasting, with thousands of lives affected and large areas contaminated. ICAN has developed an [interactive website](#) where users can learn more about tests, survivors' stories and their activism for justice.
- After Russia's illegal and devastating invasion of Ukraine, shielded by nuclear threats, it is no longer possible to hide the existential danger nuclear weapons pose to our societies. The TPNW works to delegitimize and stigmatize nuclear weapons and thereby helps shape the global response to the invasion of Ukraine.
- Youth play a crucial role in the work to change nuclear policy, through creating new narratives and challenging the status quo of nuclear weapons.
- Religious leaders and organizations have been key actors in the nuclear disarmament movement since its inception, emphasizing the moral and existential nature of the issue and offering the legitimacy of the numbers their faith communities represent. To many religious people, the threat and use of nuclear weapons is a violation of their core religious and ethical values, such as the sanctity of life, human dignity, and respect for nature.
- At the time of the forum, the US was the only state that stationed nuclear weapons outside its own territory. The agreements with the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Germany and Turkey are veiled in secrecy. To strengthen the nuclear taboo and the principle of non-proliferation, all nuclear weapons should be removed from host states.
- The support for nuclear weapons does not appear in a vacuum. Rather new research from SciencesPo and ICAN demonstrates how the nuclear weapon states and private companies producing nuclear weapons, fund think tanks and lobbyists.

- Both climate change and nuclear weapons pose existential threats to the human race. The two threats are also connected. While a nuclear war will result in devastating climate changes starving billions, both the resources and brain power used to produce nuclear weapons are needed to stop climate change.
- History shows that the presence of nuclear weapons has not prevented the many terrible conflicts since 1945, including aggressions against countries with nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are useless for today's threats, like climate change, terrorism, pandemics and cyber attacks.
- The majority of all states in the world have security policies free from nuclear weapons. Almost 50 % of all states have signed or ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Africa is the most supportive continent, while there is least support amongst European countries. The TPNW is a buffer and a safeguard against further proliferation. Every state that joins the TPNW is another state that reinforces the non-proliferation norm.