



Network of
Christian Peace
Organisations

Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty Briefing 2019

Where we are today

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) - also known as the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty - was agreed by the United Nations in July 2017 when 122 states voted in its favour. It is a landmark international agreement that would see nuclear weapons outlawed in the same way as chemical and biological weapons have been previously.

There are two stages to states joining the Treaty. They sign formally in New York before completing their domestic processes for ratification, which vary from state to state. The Treaty will come into force once it has been ratified by 50 states, although it will only be binding on those which have completed the ratification process.

The Treaty is the result of years of campaigning by organisations, highlighting the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. In December 2017 the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work on the nuclear weapon ban. A number of Network of Christian Peace Organisations (NCPO) members are part of ICAN.

Every signature, every ratification of this Treaty, constitutes an important step toward the achievement of a nuclear-free world.

Holy See, 2017

People of faith are "a constant life-light in campaigns such as this."

Beatrice Finn, Director of (ICAN), 2017



ican
international campaign to
abolish nuclear weapons

**NOBEL
PEACE
PRIZE
2017**



Setsuko Thurlow (centre) and Beatrice Finn (right) receive the Nobel Award in Norway.

Members of the NCPO

- Anglican Pacifist Fellowship
- Baptist Peace Fellowship
- Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
- Christian International Peace Service
- Christian Peacemaker Teams
- Church and Peace
- Community of Reconciliation
- Congregational Peace Fellowship
- Fellowship of Reconciliation
- Franciscan Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation
- Martin Luther King Peace Committee
- Methodist Peace Fellowship
- Northern Friends Peace Board
- Pax Christi
- Quaker Peace and Social Witness
- Student Christian Movement
- United Reformed Church Peace Fellowship

Contact: **NCPO**, c/o Pax Christi,
St Joseph's, Watford Way,
London NW4 4TY, 0208 203 4884
www.ncpo.org.uk
<https://www.facebook.com/ncpouk/>

Who is on board and what more needs to be done?

At the time of writing there are 70 signatories to the Treaty, 20 of which have completed the ratification process. Many of those completing ratification are smaller states, but often with a history of opposing nuclear weapons, such as the Marshall Islands, with first-hand experience of the devastating impact of nuclear weapons. Other states which have completed ratification include Austria, New Zealand and Mexico.

One of the first states to ratify the Treaty was the Holy See. This leadership from the Vatican followed supportive statements from Pope Francis during the negotiations in New York.

Unfortunately none of the nuclear-armed states have decided to engage with the TPNW at any stage. The UK Government did not attend the negotiations and has said that it has no intention of signing the Treaty.



Role the Churches have been playing in Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty work

People of faith value life and know that nuclear weapons - even if they are never used - threaten the planet and deny life to millions. Christians look to the person of Jesus, the wisdom of scriptures and the values of their teachings for motivation and support in campaigning against nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons pose a threat to the very existence of God's creation and everything in it. Jesus' message to the crowds, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God," is a call to us all today. A world without nuclear weapons and a world based on cooperation and peace brings the Kingdom of God a step closer.

People of faith have been working within their churches to encourage their leadership to take a stronger, more courageous role in this task.

Here are some fruits of this work.

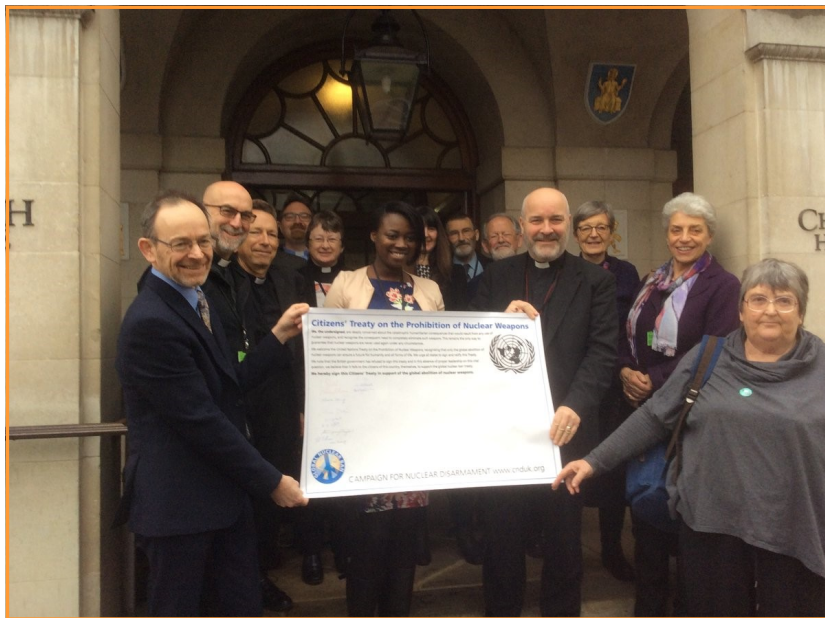
July 2018 The Church of England General Synod passed a motion on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The motion *"calls on Her Majesty's Government to respond positively to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by reiterating publicly its obligations under Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and its strategy for meeting them"*.

December 2017 22 UK faith leaders wrote an open letter supporting ICAN receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. *"There is a need for creative political leadership to ensure that any attempt to justify the threat of mass destruction in any circumstance is wholly rejected. A world free of nuclear weapons achieved by building on established international norms is a global public good of the highest order. No country or government must allow itself to be left behind. Therefore, we call on the UK government to add its support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons."*

...nuclear weapons are disproportionate and indiscriminate in their capacity to kill and destroy by design. And these are the very tests whereby Christians have discerned what force could be used...

I know that this is not a place where speaking of peace is considered foolish or naive. Let us simply be guided by this: what would Jesus do?

Bishop Stephen Cottrell,
Church of England Synod Debate,
July 2018



Members of Christian CND and Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, with Bishop Stephen Cottrell, display the Citizens' Treaty on the TPNW

November 2017 At a special conference in Rome on nuclear disarmament Pope Francis said: *"concerned by the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental effects of any employment of nuclear devices and the risk of accidental detonation as a result of error of any kind, the threat of their [Nuclear weapon] use, as well as their very possession, is to be firmly condemned... they exist in the service of a mentality of fear"*.

September 2018 Archbishop Gallagher, Head of the Holy See delegation in New York, signed the Treaty and said: *"The Holy See, who signed and ratified it on the very day it was opened for signature and ratification on 20 September 2017, wishes to urge others to sign and ratify it. It will be a strong component of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime once it enters into force. Every signature, every ratification of this Treaty, constitutes an important step toward the achievement of a nuclear-free world"*.

The main demands and opportunities of the treaty

- The TPNW fills an important legal gap and complements the existing Non-Proliferation Treaty, the vision of which was to create the conditions for negotiations on comprehensive disarmament. Unfortunately the nuclear-armed states have been unable to agree on a way forward for decades.
- The Treaty includes a ban on the use, stockpiling, testing, production, manufacture, stationing and installation of nuclear weapons. Assisting a state in prohibited acts is also covered in the Treaty, so the United States would no longer be able to lease the Trident missiles to the UK. Assistance for the victims of nuclear weapons is included for the first time, alongside a requirement to take action on areas damaged by nuclear weapons' tests.
- Signatories to the Treaty cannot help, urge, support or supply anybody else who may wish to develop, test, or manufacture them. This includes companies that build them and banks and pension funds that finance them.
- The Treaty is for multilateral disarmament. It gives nuclear-armed states such as the UK an opportunity to redouble efforts and commitments and to join the majority of the world's countries that have agreed on the threat and dangers of nuclear weapons.
- There is a clear mechanism for nuclear-armed states to sign up. It does not require them to disarm immediately but to enter into negotiations on a time scale for the destruction of their stockpiles.

What needs to be encouraged and challenged ?

While many states are currently in the process of ratifying the Treaty, there are some supportive states that have policies of not joining a Treaty until it enters into force. This delays the TPNW entering into force and gives succour to those seeking to undermine it.

Nuclear-armed states have also been putting pressure on states that support the TPNW not to sign. Everything from attempting to make the TPNW sound ineffective to threatening to withdraw financial or other support if states sign. It is vital for the success of the TPNW that states are able to make their own decision on their engagement with the Treaty.

Closer to home, there are many MPs who support the TPNW, and the Scottish National Party has long supported this initiative. While MPs are focused on other issues, it is important to continue to raise the TPNW with them and demonstrate the level of international support for it.

The Treaty provides the UK with a wonderful opportunity for global leadership, for creative thinking about approaches to security that would address the real problems of our planet such as inequality, climate change and migration.

The United States has confirmed that it will suspend its obligations under the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty and will withdraw in six months. This gives an indication of the need to maintain pressure on nuclear weapons states to act responsibly and make nuclear disarmament a political reality.

In 2015 the General Assembly reaffirmed the church's position that the ownership of, use of and threat to use nuclear weapons are inherently evil, and stated its support for an international Nuclear Ban Treaty.

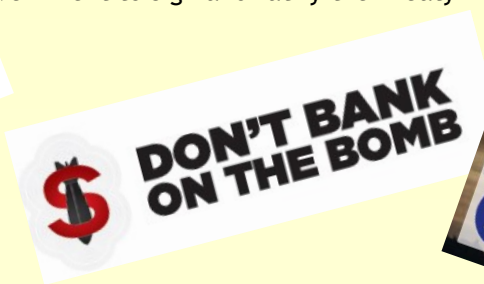
Rev Dr Richard Frazer, convenor, Church of Scotland Church and Society.



Ash Wednesday witness, London 2018

What you can do

- Read the Treaty and be informed! Use this briefing and the web-links below to keep yourself up-to-date on the progress of TPNW.
- Offer to write an article for your Church newspaper or local newsletter to let people know how deeply faith communities are involved in supporting the TPNW.
- Use dates such as 6 March—Ash Wednesday, Hiroshima Day and Nagasaki Day in August, 20 September (anniversary of first signatories to the Treaty), 10 December (anniversary of ICAN receiving the Nobel Peace Prize) to publicise the need for the Treaty.
- Arrange a meeting through your local church or Churches Together, inviting your MP along to discuss how she/he sees this issue. Is it on their Agenda at all? What is their understanding of the Treaty? What are their concerns about the Treaty? Would they be willing to write to the FCO/PM to encourage the UK government to sign?
- Explore how the **Don't Bank on the Bomb Campaign** can be used to encourage churches, pension funds, Religious Congregations and others to investigate whether or not their investments support the “*testing, production, manufacture*” of nuclear weapons. This could begin a process of dialogue leading to change and if needed, divestment. www.dontbankonthebomb.com
- Urge your local authority/council to support the TPNW. Manchester City Council, with the support of Mayors for Peace, has set a great example as part of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities project. More here <http://www.nuclearpolicy.info/>
- Sign the Christian CND Petition urging the UK Government to sign and ratify the Treaty <http://christiancnd.org.uk/petition/>



Resources from the Churches

Intervention of the Holy See at the UN in New York, September 2018

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/09/27/180927e.html>

Full letter from 22 UK Faith Leaders

<http://paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/news-reports/november-december-2017/>

Background on Church of England Synod Debate

<http://christiancnd.org.uk/2018/07/08/synod2018/>

Churches say NO to Nuclear Weapons: download of quotations for display/use in exhibitions or newsletters
<http://wp.christiancnd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Church-statements-poster.pdf>

Resources on the Treaty

Full text of the Treaty

<http://www.icanw.org/treaty-on-the-prohibition-of-nuclear-weapons/>

Up-dates of signing/ratifying of the Treaty

<http://www.icanw.org/>

Mind-map/discussion resource on UK Ban Treaty Phobia

<https://wp.christiancnd.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/New-Ban-treaty-phobia-Leaflet.pdf>

Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty Resource Guide, WILPF

https://wilpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Nuclear-Weapons-Ban-Treaty_English-web-FINAL.pdf

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons:

<http://uk.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/ICAN-UK-Sep-2017-for-upload-6th-September.pdf>



For more copies of this Briefing contact:

Pax Christi, St Joseph's,
Watford Way, London NW4 4TY

Tel: 0208 203 4884

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