

Call on Canada to Sign Treaty on The Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

On July 7, 2017, 122 nations, in an historic action, voted at the U.N. to adopt a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The Treaty prohibits the use, threat of use, development, testing, production, manufacturing and possession of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons have been unconditionally stigmatized as standing outside international humanitarian law. Governments and civil society have together recognized the “catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences” of the use of any nuclear weapon.

When 50 states have ratified it, the Treaty will enter into force and all the States Parties will be committed to “measures for the verified, time-bound and irreversible elimination of nuclear-weapon programmes.” The U.N. High Representative for Disarmament, Izumi Nakamitsu, hailed the Treaty as “a beacon of hope for all those who have dedicated their lives to the pursuit of a nuclear weapon-free world.”

But the nuclear weapon states oppose the treaty, claiming it is “premature” and will undermine existing legal instruments for disarmament. This opposition is groundless; actually the new Treaty will shore up the beleaguered Non-Proliferation Treaty, which the nuclear weapon states have defied for nearly fifty years by refusing

to meet their legal obligation to pursue good faith comprehensive negotiations to eliminate nuclear weapons.

The existing NATO nuclear policies, holding that nuclear weapons are the “supreme guarantee” of security, are another obstacle for NATO states to sign the Treaty. Canada must now decide if NATO nuclear policies will be given a higher priority than the country’s longstanding “unequivocal undertaking” to negotiations for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

We call on the Government of Canada to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to state that Canada will, through dialogue and changes to its own policies and practices, persist in its efforts to bring NATO into conformity with the Treaty, with a view to Canada ratifying the Treaty as soon as possible.

We also call on Canada to re-energize its commitment to nuclear disarmament, specifically by enlarging its work internationally on nuclear disarmament verification and leading efforts to initiate negotiations for a Fissile Material Treaty in the U.N. General Assembly in 2018.

These are the Canadian civil society groups that have endorsed the Call (so far!):

The Anglican Church of Canada

Les Artistes pour la Paix

Atomic Photographer’s Guild

Canada Peace Alliance/L’Alliance canadienne pour la paix

Canadian Association for Physicians for the Environment

Canadian Coalition for Nuclear Responsibility

Canadian Environmental Law Association

Canadian Federation of University Women

Canadian Peace Initiative

Canadian Pugwash Group

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace

Canadians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention

Committee for Future Generations

Council of Canadians

Denman Island Peace Group

Edmonton Chapter of the Council of Canadians

Greenspiration

Group of 78

Inter-Church Uranium Committee Educational Co-operative

National Council of Women of Canada

Ontario Clean Air Alliance

Peace Quest Cape Breton

People For Peace (London, ON)

Physicians for Global Survival

Ploughshares Calgary Society

Powell River Chapter, Council of Canadians

Project Ploughshares

Project Ploughshares Saskatoon,

Religions for Peace Canada

The Rideau Institute

The United Church of Canada

Saskatoon Peace Coalition

Science for Peace

Social Environmental Alliance (Victoria)

Soka Gakkai International Association of Canada

South Shore Chapter of the Council of Canadians.

Vancouver Island Peace and Disarmament Network

Veterans Against Nuclear Arms - Saskatoon

Victoria-Council of Canadians

Westmount Initiative for Peace/Initiative de Westmount pour la paix

Women’s Healthy Environments Network (WHEN)

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom - Canadian Section

World Federalist Movement - Canada