



Briefing paper

Date: 11th April 2017

No.9

Subject: The first UN Nuclear Weapon Ban Conference, a UK tour of hibakusha and statement over the London terrorist attack at Westminster

1. Introduction

This report by the Chapter Secretary provides an overview of the first of two conferences in 2017 at the United Nations General Assembly to discuss the developing of an international treaty banning the holding of nuclear weapons. There will also be a Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) Preparatory Conference in the UN offices in Vienna in May, which means discussion of such matters will be extensive in the first half of 2017. This report also considers a recent UK tour by two 'hibakusha' or atomic bomb survivors from Hiroshima that deliberately coincided with the UN Conference. Mayors for Peace members and NGOs cooperated on this tour with events held in London, Edinburgh, outside the Faslane naval base, Manchester, Oldham and Oxford.

2. Development of the UN nuclear ban process

Following the stalemate at the 2015 NPT Review Conference, a number of non-nuclear weapon states with support from international NGOs have been actively encouraging a separate process to try to break the logjam on the issues around nuclear proliferation and disarmament. Key countries leading this process include Austria, the Republic of Ireland, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa.

There were a number of key landmarks in bringing about the 2017 conferences, including:

- May 2010 – the NPT Review Conference expressed “their deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons” and gave impetus to promote this strand of discussions.
- November 2011 – the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement adopted a landmark resolution to appeal to all nations to negotiate a ‘legally binding international agreement’ to prohibit and completely eliminate all nuclear weapons.
- May 2012 – in an initiative of 16 nations, Switzerland delivered a statement at the UN on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and urged all nations to “intensify their efforts to outlaw nuclear weapons”. 159 nations, or four-fifths of all UN members, agreed to support the statement.
- March 2013 – the first International Conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons was held in Oslo, Norway. 128 nations attended it, with relief agencies warning that they would be powerless to respond meaningfully after a nuclear weapons attack.
- February 2014 – the second conference is held in Nayarit, Mexico. The Chair of the Conference calls for a “diplomatic process” to negotiate a “legally binding instrument” to ban nuclear weapons.
- December 2014 – the third conference is held in Vienna, Austria (along with a civil society conference attended by UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace representatives). 158 nations attend and 129 support Austria’s ‘humanitarian pledge’ to ‘fill the legal gap’ in the international regime governing nuclear weapons.

THE UK & IRELAND CHAPTER OF MAYORS FOR PEACE

c/o Nuclear Policy, City Policy Section, Level 5, Town Hall Extension, Manchester, M60 3NY
Tel: 0161 234 3244 E-Mail: s.morris4@manchester.gov.uk Website: <http://www.mayorsforpeace.org>

- August 2016 – A special UN Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament met in Geneva on four occasions in 2016. It recommends the negotiation of a treaty to ban nuclear weapons.
- December 2016 – The UN General Assembly adopts a landmark resolution to convene a conference in early 2017 to negotiate a “legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination”. It is agreed to hold these conferences in March and late June / early July 2017. (1)

Mayors for Peace and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), amongst a large number of civil society groups, were heavily involved in, and actively supported these discussions and actions. They are both present in the three nuclear weapons conferences in 2017 – the two nuclear ban treaty conferences and the NPT Preparatory Conference.

3. The position of nuclear weapon states towards the nuclear ban treaty conference

Whilst there has been an increasing interest and strong coalition of support that has developed amongst non-nuclear weapon states to this process, there has also been a real reluctance from the nuclear weapon states to engage with it. This reluctance has widened to states linked under the American ‘nuclear umbrella’ like NATO members, Japan, South Korea and Australia.

The core ‘P5’ of original nuclear weapon states (and UN Security Council permanent members) of the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom and France did not attend any of the ‘humanitarian’ UN conferences and have purposefully boycotted the March nuclear ban treaty conference. India and Pakistan have attended some of the conferences, but not the March conference, while Israel has boycotted the entire process. Iran and North Korea, potential nuclear weapon states (probably in the case of North Korea) have attended some of the conferences.

States like Japan, Australia and some NATO members (like Germany and Norway) did actively take part in the process leading to the nuclear ban treaty conference but appear to have sided with nuclear weapon states in relation to the March conference, despite considerable pressure placed on them by national NGO disarmament networks. The only NATO member to attend the March conference was the Netherlands, and that was due to a Parliamentary vote compelling the Dutch government to attend.

The collective view of boycotting was given in a joint press conference by the US Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, who said that the countries skipping the talks: "...would love to have a ban on nuclear weapons, but in this day and time we can't honestly say we can protect our people by allowing bad actors to have them, and those of us that are good trying to keep peace and safety not to have them."

She went on to say: "We have to be realistic. Is there anyone who thinks that North Korea would ban nuclear weapons? North Korea would be the one cheering and all of us, and the people we represent, would be the ones at risk."

Britain's UN Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said: "The UK is not attending the negotiations on a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons because we do not believe that those negotiations will lead to effective progress on global nuclear disarmament."

And the Deputy French UN Ambassador Alexis Lamek said the security conditions were not right for a nuclear weapons ban treaty: "In the current perilous context, considering in particular the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, our countries continue to rely on nuclear deterrence for security and stability."

It should also be noted that the new U.S. administration of President Donald Trump is reviewing whether it will reaffirm the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, an aim that has been embraced by Presidents over previous decades and required under the NPT. (2)

In response to these comments, Austria's Vice Minister Alexander Marschik argued that expert analyses and evidence considered by the three conferences on the UN humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapon had showed with "stunning clarity" that the risks, accidents, mistakes,

radiation and climate impacts – and the local, regional and global humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons – have been hugely underestimated. He concluded that: "We came away [from the Vienna Conference] with the certainty that we must reduce that risk and that the only way... was the prohibition of such weapons through a legally binding instrument."

Mr Marschik also acknowledged the concerns raised by nuclear-armed states, explaining that no individual country would be asked to disarm by themselves by noting: "What we seek is a general legal prohibition and once we have that, then will we establish... a system of eliminating [these weapons] together." He went on to say: "Is doing nothing a better strategy? ...Waiting for disaster is no strategy."

Mr Marshick concluded with an appeal to national delegations not to overload the current process and "miss this opportunity," and he called for unity and focus behind "one, narrow, clear objective: a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons... we will only succeed if we are disciplined, if we put the common goal ahead of [any] national agenda." (3)

The intractability of both sides in this debate is not at all unusual, as it was similar in the early discussions that led to the approval of UN international treaties on landmines, chemical and biological weapons. Indeed some of the tactics of the nuclear disarmament community is reminiscent of the campaigns on these treaties. Nuclear weapons disarmament remains though the most difficult of issues to find a treaty that will receive global consensual support. This current debate has brought such issues back to the core agenda of the United Nations like never before and it will also clearly influence the overlapping debate at the NPT Preparatory Conference in Vienna in May, at which nuclear weapon states will be present.

In the UK, the current discussions on the nuclear weapons ban treaty follow on from a summer 2016 Parliamentary discussion on the renewal and replacement of the Trident nuclear weapons submarine programme. By a large majority, Parliament decided for a full 'like for like' renewal of Trident. Other nuclear weapon states are also planning to renew their nuclear weapon programmes. The nuclear weapon states are much more comfortable with the narrower structure of the NPT regime and have not sought to engage with the multilateral nuclear disarmament talks of this parallel process.

Meanwhile, though opinion polls in the UK suggest a narrow majority for approving Trident replacement (4) – far closer than the 2016 Parliamentary vote – a recent poll commissioned by the disarmament group Abolition 2000 showed 75% of the population wanted the UK Government to be represented at the March UN Conference. (5) This poll received little coverage in the UK media, though it was heavily profiled in the international media, perhaps highlighting the lack of a deeper national discussion over the UK's nuclear weapon policy.

Both Mayors for Peace and a wide collection of UK disarmament groups wrote to the UK Government (and other UN members) encouraging it to attend, but at present it appears a joint strategy of the 'P5' group will be to remain intransigent. The two letters sent to the UK Government are attached as Appendix 1 and 2.

4. Overview of the March 2017 UN Nuclear Ban Treaty Conference

Despite the boycott by around 40 states, there were still 132 participating countries at the UN Conference. The Conference was chaired by Ambassador Elaine Whyte Gomez of Costa Rica and ran from the 27th March – 1st April.

This first conference session was mainly designed to gather input from participating countries. It is then up to the president of the conference to produce a draft text in the coming weeks to allow for final negotiations on that text from mid-June through to the 7th July.

As ICAN noted in their analysis of the conference:

"Discussions this week focused on three topics: the goals, objectives, and preamble of the treaty; the details of what actions will be included in a prohibition, such as the possession, development, testing, and use of nuclear weapons and assisting other countries with them, as

well as what actions will be required of parties; and legalities for such things as accession to the treaty, regular review conferences, and questions about the accession of nuclear-armed states. It is expected that the final treaty will legally bind parties from using, possessing, and developing nuclear weapons, and assisting others in those activities, working in concert with the existing regime of non-proliferation and disarmament agreements to hasten a world without nuclear weapons.”

The Executive Director of ICAN, Beatrice Fihn, commented on the talks that:

“Banning these weapons should be the first step to eliminating them. The treaty we expect from this week’s work will impact the behaviour of both those who join it and the nuclear-armed countries which do not. Just as with chemical weapons, land mines, or cluster munitions, creating new international norms will change every state’s behaviour. It is time to bring an end to the nuclear age.” (5)

Many participating states gave their outline views of what they would wish to see in the content of a treaty. There was also a useful series of productive interactive dialogues with the NGO movement at which groups like ICAN, Mayors for Peace, Article 36, PNND, Reaching Critical Will and suchlike gave expert advice and assistance to participating state delegations. These included a number of moving presentations from the hibakusha of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as from other people directly affected by atomic weapon testing.

For example, one hibakusha who spoke was Toshiaki Fujimori, who had been a child in Hiroshima when the first atomic bomb was detonated on 6 August 1945. Mr Fujimori described feeling "heartbroken" when the Japanese government voted against last year's multilateral nuclear disarmament resolution at the UN. He also shared news of the *hibakusha*-initiated campaign that has collected more than 1.7 million signatures urging governments to ban these inhumane weapons of mass destruction once and for all. (6)

As Laura Boillot from Article 36 noted, an important part of discussion was around the need for full environmental remediation of areas affected by nuclear weapon tests and for victim rights to be also fully honoured. This is a similar guarantee provided in other ‘ban treaties’ of weapons of mass destruction such as landmines and chemical and biological weapons.(7)

In Rebecca Johnson’s analysis of the conference she noted that key questions that challenged delegates included: “the relationship between the new treaty and earlier agreements such as the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT); whether to be explicit about banning not just the use but also threats to use nuclear weapons, which are currently the basis for nuclear deterrence doctrines; and how to address actions that induce or assist states to violate the treaty, such as financing nuclear weapons production and facilitating their deployment.” (8)

With no nuclear weapon states or NATO members present at the conference, it was largely left to The Netherlands to represent their case (The Netherlands is a NATO member but was mandated to attend the conference after a Parliamentary vote). They argued that any agreed ‘ban’ treaty needed to be compatible with its obligations to NATO, which will “remain a nuclear alliance as long as nuclear weapons exist.” The Dutch Government also called for an explicit linkage for an agreed treaty with the NPT as NATO states consider it compatible with nuclear deterrence doctrines, the development and enhancement of nuclear arsenals, and the deployment of US nuclear weapons in European “non-nuclear weapon states,” which includes The Netherlands, Belgium and Germany.

Johnson argued the Dutch intervention “can be read as an attempt to square the nuclear disarmament circle – or to derail the talks – by advocating the contradictory target of harmonising a nuclear prohibition treaty with NATO's nuclear sharing and use doctrines.” (9)

At the end of this first conference Ambassador Whyte informed delegates that a draft treaty would be issued in good time before the resumption of discussions on the 15th June. In the interim, all UN members, including nuclear weapon states, will be present at the NPT Preparatory Conference in Vienna. Mayors for Peace will be present at this conference,

including the Mayor of Hiroshima. A review of the May and June / July UN conferences will be provided in further Chapter Policy Briefings.

5. UK hibakusha tour to coincide with the UN nuclear ban treaty conference

In the UK an opportunity arose to bring the issues of the impacts of a nuclear weapon attack to a wider audience with a visit from two hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) for a number of public meetings and Parliamentary receptions. The aim of the visit, organised by the Tokyo Federation of A-bomb Sufferers (Toyukai) organisation in cooperation with CND, NFLA and Mayors for Peace, was to provide direct information of the personal impact of the 1945 atomic bombings and encourage peace education and the multilateral disarmament message. (10)

The two ladies who came to the UK were Mrs Reiko Yamada, an 83 year old first generation hibakusha who was 11 years old at the time of the bombing; and Mrs Midori Yamada (not related) who was a second generation hibakusha born in 1949, who focused on the story of her older brother and wider family affected by the bomb, as well as her own health issues later in life.

Reiko was at school on 6th January 1945 and saw the B29 bomber that launched the nuclear weapon attack in the sky. She was affected by the radioactive “black rain” that followed on later that day. She witnessed many terrible scenes and talked of the injuries to her family which led to her father’s premature death and the many burns her sister endured, who had been near Hiroshima train station. She noted how 42% of those who died in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings were never identified by name, and could only be recorded as “unidentified victims”.

Her talk at a number of public meetings ended as thus:

“For over 60 years, with the pledge to ‘save humanity from its crisis through the lessons learned from our experiences’, we have called for the abolition of nuclear weapons to ensure that ‘there should be no more Hibakusha anywhere in the world’...In this context, the UN conference has just started to negotiate a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons. We sincerely hope that the governments of all the nuclear-armed states, as well as Japan as the A-bombed country, will join the negotiations and make sincere efforts to discuss and conclude the treaty to ban all nuclear weapons. We believe that it is the power of us citizens that we can put pressure on and change the policy of the nuclear weapons states and Japan.” (11)

Midori was born in 1945 in Ono-cho, 25 kilometres from Hiroshima City. Her father and two brothers were directly affected by the Hiroshima bombing. Her father was Deputy Mayor of Ono-cho Town at the time and, once informed of the bombing, joined the rescue corps and went back and forth between his home and Hiroshima City for several days, exposing himself to dangerous levels of residual radiation. Her father was very concerned about possible radiation effects on his daughter as a second generation hibakusha. Midori did suffer from breast cancer at the age of 34 but survived it through chemotherapy.

At the public talks she used a series of illustrated pictures to tell the story of one of her brothers, who was 13 years old when the bomb was dropped. He was at school and was badly injured by the bomb. When he finally got home his face was black with soot and was swollen like a balloon. Shortly afterwards he fell into a coma for three months, hovering between life and death. Though he survived, the emotional scars were high, and he did not talk about his experiences until he saw the 2011 Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster. From that point onwards he has talked and drawn about his experiences, which his sister Midori also does on his behalf. As she says: “Nuclear weapons, therefore, not only harm people’s bodies but also deeply harm their minds even after 70 years since their use. These weapons must be abolished urgently.” (12)

6. The UK tour in detail

The tour of the two hibakusha to the UK took in events in London, Edinburgh, Helensburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, Oldham and Oxford. The events were held with the support of CND, the Quakers, the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre, the Faslane Peace Camp, Mayors for Peace, NFLA, Manchester City Council, National Trust Dunham Massey, the People’s History Museum and Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council. The organisers were also indebted to

Shigeo Kobayashi, who provided extensive interpretation. Shigeo is a co-ordinator with the 'Japanese Against Nuclear' UK group and lives in Essex.

London events –

The two Japanese ladies were involved in a number of events shortly after they arrived in London.

They first went to Parliament in Westminster and spoke at a special meeting where they met MPs from a number of political parties and specially invited guests. This was then followed by a multi-faith reception meeting faith leaders at an event in Westminster Cathedral. A full and packed meeting room in the Friends (Quakers) Meeting House in London heard of their experiences and their hopes for the UN Conference.

Scotland events –

The Japanese delegation travelled up to Edinburgh by train for a series of special events. This commenced with a meeting at the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre to talk to invited guests. The hibakushas and interpreter moved on to the Scottish Parliament at Holyrood where they met with MSPs from a number of political parties, before a short reception with the First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon. The following day the delegation travelled to Glasgow and did an interview with BBC Radio Scotland. Events were then held with peace activists in Glasgow and Helensburgh and a visit to the Faslane Peace Camp, which is close to the naval base where Trident submarines are based. The hibakusha positively engaged with the younger peace activists and took part in the daily vigil outside the naval base's main gate.

Manchester events –

The delegation took the train down to Manchester and were the guest of honour of the Deputy Lord Mayor of Manchester, Councillor Eddy Newman (Manchester's permanent Mayor for Peace representative) at a civic reception in Manchester Town Hall. At the reception, the ladies met with children and teachers from Manley Park Primary School of south Manchester, who have been involved with the Council's 'Project G' ginkgo tree seeds peace education project. (12) The hibakusha gave moving talks to the schoolchildren of their experience, and there were plenty of questions from the engaged schoolchildren. The school is one of six in Manchester who took part in a 2015 art and poetry competition on Hiroshima, ginkgo seeds and the role nature takes in regeneration after a disaster. Each school will be given a ginkgo tree when they have matured to a manageable size.

The following morning the two ladies and interpreter were taken to the National Trust Dunham Massey site, which is an attractive Georgian house with large gardens and an ancient deer park close to Manchester. The delegation met with estate gardeners who were tending Manchester's ginkgo seeds from Hiroshima, as well as Council environmental policy staff (and their children) and CND local members. They visited the grounds and the greenhouses where the seeds are being nurtured.

Oldham events –

A short trip over to Oldham followed to meet a delegation at Alexandra Park, where the hibakushas formally planted Oldham's ginkgo seeds, which had just arrived from Hiroshima. The delegation met with the Mayor of Oldham, Councillor Derek Heffernan, other councillors, park staff and delegates from the Oldham 'Pledge to Peace' committee, who explained their work. Oldham is the UK's first 'Pledge to Peace' town and this brings together a wide coalition of groups and schools with the aim of promoting a more peaceful Oldham. (13) Alexandra Park is one of four parks which are being considered as 'peace parks' across the borough. The park also has a Japanese style pagoda and an oriental garden, where Oldham's ginkgo trees will eventually be located. The event concluded with a special civic reception in Oldham Town Hall.

On the Friday and the Saturday evening the hibakushas also talked to two 'sold out' public meetings at the People's History Museum in Manchester, at which over 350 people were in attendance. The Friday meeting included a talk from the Chapter Secretary, while the Saturday

meeting included a talk by an evacuee from the Fukushima disaster, whose family now live near Manchester, as well as an art exhibition on comparisons between Hiroshima and Fukushima.

Oxford events –

The tour concluded in Oxford where a public meeting was held at the Fellowship of Reconciliation headquarters in Peace House, allowing for a final public talk by Reiko and Midori. This talk was filmed and will go on You Tube shortly. The ladies then travelled on to Heathrow for a flight back to Japan.

The full tour was an excellent opportunity to promote the issues around the UN Conference, the experience of the hibakusha and the work of the participating organisations, including Mayors for Peace. Selected photographs from the tour are attached as Appendix 3.

7. Mayors for Peace statement on the London terrorist attack

The week prior to the UN Conference and the hibakusha tour witnessed a terrible terrorist attack in London, which has now led to the death of 5 people and many others injured. These past few weeks have also seen a spate of other attacks in Stockholm, Oslo, St Petersburg, Cairo and Alexandria following on from similar attacks in other cities. A horrendous chemical weapons attack in Syria has reminded the world of how bitter is its civil war, with major conflict also still taking place in the likes of Iraq, Afghanistan, Ukraine and Sudan.

The UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter issued a statement of sympathy and solidarity after the London attack and shared similar feelings after the other terrorist attacks. The statement is attached as Appendix 4. It follows on from similar statements made across many UK and Irish towns and cities.

8. Future Mayors for Peace activity in the UK, Ireland and globally

There will be a significant Mayors for Peace presence at the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference in Vienna between 5th and 8th May. The delegation will be led by the Mayor of Hiroshima and the Secretary General of Mayors for Peace, along with a significant European presence. Manchester is considering an invitation to attend and hopes to do so. The delegation will lobby national Ambassadors and hold a meeting in the UN buildings. A special Youth Forum is also being organised.

Mayors for Peace will also participate in the second part of the UN Nuclear Ban Treaty Conference being held in New York from June 15th to July 7th which will look to agree on a final treaty.

In August 2017 the Mayors for Peace will be holding its four-yearly Executive and General Conference. This is a major opportunity for its global leadership and wider membership to come together. It will be held in Nagasaki, Japan from the 7th – 10th August. Manchester will be represented and UK and Ireland members are encouraged to consider attending the conference, budget permitting. (14)

Plans are being considered to look to develop a UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace AGM and Conference in late 2017 / early 2018, perhaps including other European Executive Members of Mayors for Peace. Further details on this initiative will be advertised when they are confirmed.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The UN's Nuclear Ban Treaty Conference has succeeded in somewhat shifting the debate on nuclear weapons and is keeping the issue at the heart of diplomatic efforts to find ways to develop more determined multilateral nuclear disarmament. The intransigence of nuclear weapon states to the process will make it difficult to realise this aim quickly. The current instability in the world will also not assist in unlocking the stalemate that exists. However, it does embolden non-nuclear weapon states and the wider NGO network and encourage more co-ordinated campaigning using a process that has worked successfully with the banning of other weapons of mass destruction. Nuclear weapons remain the most destructive weapons known to humanity, and it remains one of the greatest political goals to find a way to ban them. At present, this looks the way the world will debate this challenging issue.

The process has assisted the NGO disarmament network in finding a more co-ordinated voice and work successfully with the large majority of UN members. It has particularly seen the international role of ICAN grow in combination with a number of other international disarmament groups. Mayors for Peace, led by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and with such a large global membership, has an important role to play in this debate. Towns and cities have close relationships with national governments and by showing solidarity with each other present an important and useful coalition of support. A key aim of Mayors for Peace is to reach 10,000 members by 2020, the 75th anniversary of the use of nuclear weapons, as well as trying to realise the '2020 Vision' of a nuclear weapons free world. Therefore, the Executive and General Conference in August is very important for its future development.

The Chapter Secretariat encourage Chapter members to disseminate this briefing to Mayors / Provosts, Leaders of Councils and senior councillors and officers leading on international issues. Mayors for Peace members in the UK and Ireland are encouraged to become more active and host relevant events of support, such as on the anniversaries of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic weapon attacks, International Peace Day and other relevant local events promoting peace, tolerance, justice and understanding. They are also encouraged to attend the winter 2017 / 18 planned AGM and Conference which is being considered as a way to try and galvanise the Chapter and encourage more activity and increased membership.

10. References

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- (6) ICAN, 'Significant progress so far at UN negotiations', 1st April 2017
<http://www.icanw/campaign-news/significant-progress-at-un-negotiations>
- (7) See reference (3).
- (8) Article 36, 'First week of nuclear ban negotiations over, with humanitarian impact at core of work', 1st April 2017 <http://www.article36.org/nuclear-weapons/first-week-ban>
- (9) See reference (3).
- (10) There are a great number of hibakusha associations across Japan. Toyukai is one of the largest.
- (11) Part of the written message of Reiko Yamada, which is available from the Chapter Secretary.
- (12) Part of the written message of Midori Yamada, which is available from the Chapter Secretary.
- (13) For further information on Oldham's Pledge to Peace Forum contact Richard Outram – richardoutram35@gmail.com - or go to their Facebook page <https://en-gb.facebook.com/pledge-to-peace.html>
- (14) See Mayors for Peace website <http://www.mayorsforpeace.org> for registration details.

Mayors for Peace Executive letter to UN members prior to the March UN Conference

We are writing to voice our strong support for this historic initiative to negotiate a multilateral treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons.

On behalf of over one billion citizens from over 7,200 member cities in 162 countries and regions in the cities among our membership, we reaffirm our common commitment to pursue the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons.

For over seven decades now, the atomic bomb survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, called *hibakusha*, have continued to tell the world their indescribably painful experiences of humanitarian devastation in their earnest desire that “no one shall ever again suffer as we have.” In the eyes of *hibakusha*, nuclear weapons are the most inhumane weapons and an absolute evil.

Based on their keen sense of responsibility to protect the safety and welfare of their citizens, an increasing number of mayors have sympathized with the message of the *hibakusha* and joined our efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons. They are deeply concerned that, in a too often violent world seeded with numerous conflicts, already a quarter century after the Cold War has ended, nearly 15,000 nuclear warheads still exist. Declassified documents have revealed that the risks of inadvertent nuclear weapons use due to accident or miscalculation are quite high. We also cannot ignore the danger posed by nuclear terrorism.

We also believe that the enormous investments in maintaining and modernizing nuclear weapons are an extraordinary waste of precious resources that should instead be devoted to meeting basic human needs in our cities and among the poor in all nations.

This is the situation in which the ban treaty negotiations begin. We wish to commend the vision and leadership of the delegations of all States participating in this great initiative, and in particular, we warmly welcome the fact that it is being pursued within the framework of the United Nations.

To the nuclear-armed states and their allies who have not declared their intention to participate in the negotiations, we strongly appeal to them to participate constructively. No leader around the world would deny the ideal of a “world without nuclear weapons.” And their job is to work on improving our existing imperfect world by pursuing a nuclear-weapon-free future.

What we should focus on now is how all countries can live without nuclear weapons. Leaders around the world must take the decisive step in seeking a world where no country on the face of the Earth possesses nuclear weapons. A legal prohibition of nuclear weapons is the crucial step and it will mark a significant and essential turning point in achieving this goal.

Some states cite the existence of nuclear weapons and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence as essential for their security and therefore claim that it is too early to prohibit them. However, while the theory of deterrence, whose history dates back several thousand years, may function in the short-term, it has been historically proven that it will inevitably end in failure, causing military conflicts in the mid- and long-term.

We must keep in mind that not only can nuclear deterrence fail with unacceptable humanitarian consequences, it offers no effective solution to the global security challenges we face. Furthermore, we must face the fact that this concept can also induce dangers of nuclear proliferation, such as problems similar to North Korea’s nuclear development. These circumstances have made us realize that we can no longer subject the lives of our citizens to the catastrophic risks of the failure of nuclear deterrence and thus we insist this issue be addressed immediately.

The negotiations should therefore be conducted with new thinking and innovative approaches. The international community must join forces and discuss how we can address real issues through building mutual confidence. In pursuit of such efforts, Mayors for Peace reiterates its full confidence in the participants of the negotiations and also its firm support for the process of negotiating a nuclear weapons ban treaty. We strongly recommend that the final outcome of the negotiations will

underscore the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and identify effective legal measures to advance to a world free of nuclear weapons. It is also our sincere hope that this important legal instrument will go through an implementation planning process that will allow all States, including those currently possessing nuclear weapons, to eventually join the treaty. In addition to the above points, we would also like to refer to the other responsibilities that world leaders and civil society should bear in nuclear disarmament.

The states relying on nuclear weapons stress efforts to reduce the numbers and roles of nuclear weapons. It is clear that these efforts should be parallel to discussions on the legal prohibition of nuclear weapons to improve the imperfect reality. Yet what is most needed now is for world leaders, especially those with nuclear weapons and their allies, to show their decisive leadership in planning for their security without reliance on nuclear weapons. In the past, nuclear disarmament measures were taken at peaks of international tension by joint initiatives of such individual leaders to reach out to each other. It is certainly time to do so once again.

The civil society we partially represent bears an important role and commitment in nurturing better conditions for world leaders to demonstrate such political leadership. We believe those conditions are built on striving to overcome mutual distrust and cultivating a shared awareness of belonging to one human family, regardless of cultural, religious and ethnic differences. We, Mayors for Peace, will continue to make our best efforts to support initiatives to create such an atmosphere.

Mayors for Peace, together with a wide range of like-minded civil society partners, will make our best efforts towards the success of the negotiations. We must ensure that the negotiations will bring the effective legal prohibition of nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination and we will continue to support the initiatives of world leaders on our part as mayors with primary responsibility over our people's lives. For the sake of our own common future, let us transcend our various positions and dutifully work together to finish this important task.

President, Mayor of Hiroshima, Japan
Vice president, Mayor of Nagasaki, Japan
Vice president, Lord Mayor of Hannover, Germany
Vice president, Mayor of Volgograd, Russia
Vice president, Mayor of Malakoff, France
Vice president, Mayor of Muntinlupa, Philippines
Vice president, Lord Mayor of Manchester, U.K.
Vice president, Mayor of Akron, U.S.
Vice president, Mayor of Ypres, Belgium
Vice president, Mayor of Biograd na Moru, Croatia
Vice president, Mayor of Granollers, Spain
Vice president, Mayor of Halabja, Iraq
Vice president, Mayor of Brussels, Belgium
Vice president, Mayor of Fongo-Tongo, Cameroon
Vice president, Mayor of Mexico City, Mexico
Vice president, Mayor of Frogn, Norway
Executive, Governor of Bangkok, Thailand
Executive, Mayor of Fremantle, Australia
Executive, Mayor of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Executive, Mayor of Semey, Kazakhstan
Executive, Mayor of Cochin, India
Executive, Mayor of Montreal, Canada
Executive, Mayor of Wellington, New Zealand
Executive, Mayor of Santos, Brazil
Executive, Mayor of Cartago, Costa Rica
Executive, Mayor of Bogota, Colombia
Executive, Mayor of Des Moines, U.S.
Executive, Mayor of Tehran, Iran

March 14, 2017 - Executive Members of Mayors for Peace

UK disarmament groups joint letter to the UK Government

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
London SW1A 2AH

24th March 2017

Re: Negotiations on an international treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons

Dear Secretary of State,

This month, the majority of the world's states will meet at the UN in New York to start negotiations on a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons. These talks give an historic opportunity for an important step towards the total elimination of these weapons of mass destruction. This conference is open to all states, and we are deeply disappointed that the UK government has refused to participate.

The evidence clearly shows that nuclear weapons have catastrophic and unacceptable humanitarian consequences. Aid agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross have emphasised that no meaningful humanitarian response can be mounted to address the impact of a nuclear detonation.¹ The risks of accidental or deliberate detonations are also severe – including to UK citizens wherever these weapons are hosted or transported in this country.²

The majority of countries have therefore recognised the moral and security imperative to prohibit nuclear weapons by an international treaty – an urgency that the UK should also acknowledge. The UK government has emphasised that it possesses “only 1%” of the world's nuclear arsenal,³ but no matter how many nuclear weapons Britain has, these technologies remain unacceptable and dangerous.

We welcome the UK government's frequently stated commitment to working multilaterally for nuclear disarmament, including on international legal measures such as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the proposed Fissile Material Treaty. We believe that refusing to participate in talks on a nuclear weapons prohibition treaty is completely out of step with the aim of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. This boycott also contradicts the UK's commitment to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and to being a leader on the world stage and in the development of international law.

The government has stated that it will not participate because it “do[es] not believe these negotiations will lead to effective progress on global nuclear disarmament.”⁴ However, history shows that the prohibition of unacceptable weapons technologies is an essential step towards their elimination. Prohibition precedes elimination, not the other way around. Stigmatisation, which reduces the political and practical support given to inhumane weapons as well as helping to strengthen global norms against proliferation, has been an important outcome of previous treaties that the UK has joined, including treaties to prohibit biological and chemical weapons, anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. Like the UK, other states have international obligations as well as a moral duty to pursue measures towards nuclear disarmament. The majority of states consider a prohibition treaty to be the next crucial step towards creating security in a world free of nuclear weapons, a goal strongly supported by the British public and successive governments.

¹ See for example <http://bit.ly/2nMxBOD> and <http://bit.ly/1FOooHa>

² See <http://bit.ly/2dmGQSC>

³ See for example <http://bit.ly/2nuGpvZ>

⁴ Foreign and Commonwealth Office answer to written question 66495:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-03-03/66495/>

A recent poll shows that 75% of UK adults think that the UK should attend the negotiations.⁵ The UK's nuclear arsenal is also deployed entirely from Scotland against the wishes of Scotland's Parliament and the overwhelming majority of its MPs. The government is clearly putting itself on the wrong side of public opinion as well as on the wrong side of history.

Signed by Richard Moyes,
Managing Director,
'Article 36' for the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) UK

On behalf of 25 ICAN partners and other disarmament organisations in the UK

⁵ See <http://bit.ly/2n3JQGT>

Selected photos from the Hibakuska visit



The hibakuska in a group photo including the First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon, PND Vice Chair Bill Kidd MSP and members of CND Scotland.



The hibakuska meet Labour MSPs (left), Green MSPs (right) and SNP MPs (below) at the Scottish Parliament

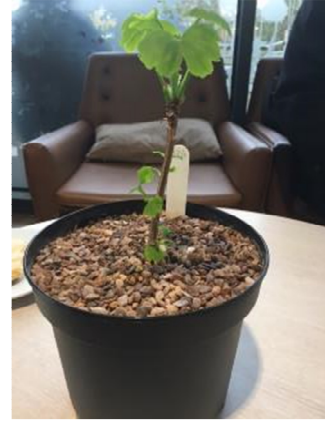




The delegation meet members of Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre (top left) and members of the Faslane Peace Camp (top right)



The Deputy Lord Mayor of Manchester greets the hibakuska, civic guests and students from Manley Park Primary School



Hibakusha receiving flowers from local children at Dunham Massey (top left), Manchester ginkgo seeds (top right and centre right) and the delegation with Dunham Massey head gardener Emily Chandler and children (centre left)



The hibakusha planting Oldham's ginkgo seeds (left) and meeting the Mayor of Oldham (above)

Mayors for Peace Chapter statement on the London terrorist attack

Mayors for Peace UK and Ireland Chapter Statement, 29th March 2017

Mayors for Peace sends its deepest sympathy and solidarity to those killed and injured in the terrorist incident in London

The UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Chapter – the constituent chapter of the international Mayors for Peace movement – joins with European Executive Members of Mayors for Peace and the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to support the following message after last week's terrorist incident in London:

“The UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter, led by the Lord Mayor of Manchester, along with European Executive Board members of Mayors for Peace and the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, sends its sympathy and joins in solidarity with the city of London after the tragic events of the 22nd March, close to the UK Parliament in Westminster.

Our deepest sympathy goes to the families of those killed and injured in the terrorist incident, including of the policeman protecting the Parliament. It has transpired, given that London is such an international city, that some of those affected have come from all over the world, and our sympathy goes to all those families affected by this tragic incident.

This incident follows on from a litany of similar events that have taken place in recent years in the likes of Brussels, Paris, Nice, Istanbul and Berlin, many of whom are members of the Mayors for Peace. By attacking cities in such an indiscriminate way, the aim is to harm innocent peace-loving people. It is an attack on all of those who want to see a more peaceful world.

Our solidarity goes out to the people of London who have suffered many times from terrorist incidents and conflict. London has an unshakeable spirit that these tragic events will not break.

Mayors for Peace works tirelessly for a more peaceful world free of weapons of mass destruction. But we also want to see our own towns and cities being beacons of peace, tolerance and understanding and these events therefore affect all of us.

By working together we can seek to tackle the causes of conflict and injustice and work for a more peaceful and tolerant world.

Our thoughts are currently with London, but they remain also with many other people across our world who live under the threat of terrorism and the scourge of urban civil war.

We stand together for peace and an end to violence in all its many forms and we send our sympathy and solidarity to the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and to the people of London after this sad day.”
(1)

The statement was approved by the Lord Mayor of Manchester and the Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council and has the full support of the Mayors of Hiroshima (Japan), Nagasaki (Japan), Ypres (Belgium), Hannover (Germany), Malakoff (France), Frogn (Norway), Granollers (Spain) and Biograd na Moru (Croatia), who are members of the Mayors for Peace Executive Board. The statement has been sent to all UK and Ireland members of Mayors for Peace.

Manchester City Council, like many towns and cities across the UK, Ireland and the wider world held a special vigil event outside Manchester Town Hall led by the Lord Mayor of Manchester. The Town Hall was lit up in red, white and blue and a minute's silence was held for the victims of the terrorist incident.

Councillor Sue Murphy, Deputy Leader of Manchester City Council, said: "Manchester's thoughts are with everyone affected by the sickening attack at Westminster, and especially those whose loved ones were killed or injured. We also pay tribute to the bravery of the emergency services, including the police officer who lost his life defending others, and the civilians who helped those injured. This, not the actions of those who would sow hatred and terror, is the true spirit of Britain and Manchester stands in solidarity with London." (2)

Ends

Notes:

- (1) Statement agreed by members of the Mayors for Peace Executive Board and supported by the Chapter.
- (2) Manchester City Council media release, 23rd March 2017
http://www.manchester.gov.uk/news/article/7648/manchester_stands_in_solidarity_with_london