

## TPNW/NUCLEAR BAN TREATY TALKING POINTS

*The point of this Coordinated Letters campaign is to **inform the media about the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** and to **demand that they include the Treaty in their coverage** whenever they talk about nuclear weapons instead of pretending it doesn't exist. (The point is not to say, "Get rid of nuclear weapons now." It is to say "Start covering the TPNW.")*

*The purpose of this menu of talking points is not to put words into your mouth (or on your paper). It's to give you facts and perspectives that you can put in your own words to back up your feelings. So choose one or two talking points that capture your concerns and go for it!*

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted at the United Nations by 122 nations on July 7, 2017. The TPNW, or the Nuclear Ban Treaty, entered into force on January 22, 2021.

[61 countries have ratified, and an additional 25 have signed, the TPNW](#) (May 30, 2022).

The Treaty has legal force in every country that has ratified it. It has moral force all over the world.

None of the nine nuclear weapons states have signed (or ratified) the TPNW.

The Nuclear Ban Treaty rejects entirely the legitimacy of nuclear weapons, and calls for their full elimination.

The media has a responsibility to inform the public about the relevant and pertinent information taking place about a topic. Silence about the TPNW severely undermines the vibrant spectrum of conversations taking place around the world about nuclear weapons and the nuclear threat.

The media in the United States has been reporting on the increasing threat of nuclear weapons since the March 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine (and subsequent, repeated threats by President Vladimir Putin), but there has been virtually no mention of the Nuclear Ban Treaty, nor of the global call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

There was similar media silence about the Nuclear Ban Treaty when Donald Trump threatened "fire and fury" against North Korea just a month after the TPNW was adopted at the United Nations.

The media has a responsibility to include real and salient political diplomatic solutions - like the TPNW - to eliminate the threat of nuclear weapons.

Polls show that more than 70% of people in the US are "concerned or very concerned" about nuclear weapons. In reporting on this, responsible media should address global efforts to eliminate the nuclear threat—the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the First Meeting of States Parties (Vienna, Austria, June 21-23, 2022)

It is important for people to know, as they realize the great threat that nuclear weapons pose, that there is a widely supported international effort to address that threat - a plan to get rid of nuclear weapons - codified in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons asserts that conversations about these catastrophic weapons can no longer be limited to policies of deterrence and military strategy. Nuclear weapons have devastating human and ecological consequences, and the TPNW insists that every conversation about nuclear weapons must include these considerations.

Local angle about why you care about the problem of nuclear weapons, the TPNW, and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

From June 21-23, 2022, the 86 states that have signed the TPNW will meet in Vienna, Austria to discuss its implementation. Observer states, NGOs, and members of civil society will also attend. The Biden Administration has not indicated that the US will send any delegates to Vienna. ([https://www.icanw.org/tpnw\\_first\\_meeting\\_of\\_states\\_parties](https://www.icanw.org/tpnw_first_meeting_of_states_parties))

During the First Meeting of States Parties (1MSP) to the TPNW June 21-23, 2022 in Vienna, Austria, States parties to the TPNW will gather to commit to concrete actions to

- implement obligations under the Treaty, including providing assistance to victims of nuclear weapon use and testing
- implement obligations to begin to remediate contaminated environments, and
- universalize the treaty (Article 12).

The 1MSP will also be an opportunity for States to discuss some of the treaty's technical details, like setting a deadline for the elimination of nuclear weapons for nuclear-armed states that join (Article 4)." ([https://www.icanw.org/tpnw\\_first\\_meeting\\_of\\_states\\_parties](https://www.icanw.org/tpnw_first_meeting_of_states_parties))

Media outlets in the U.S. have allowed military and political leaders to establish the parameters of conversations about nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear armed states, through the TPNW, assert that no country is justified in possessing weapons that kill and destroy indiscriminately and inflict catastrophic harm on humans, other beings, and the environment. The media must broaden the conversation to include these perspectives.

The 86 signatories to the TPNW reject the legitimacy and power that comes along with nuclear weapons, and that undermines global peace and security.

The media has a responsibility to ask leaders about the consequences of our nuclear policies and nuclear weapons on human beings, non-human beings, and the environment. Decisions to develop new weapons systems and missiles are incredibly expensive and further entrench us in the threat and violence of nuclear weapons.

The new global arms race will only serve to increase the nuclear danger, raising the stakes of a nuclear confrontation.

The way to reduce and eliminate the threat of total destruction from nuclear weapons is not to build more weapons of mass destruction; it is to adopt the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and work with other nuclear-armed states to eliminate the weapons themselves.

At this moment of great peril, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons provides the best tool to eliminate the threat of nuclear catastrophe.

*Hibakusha* observe that “humans cannot exist alongside nuclear weapons.” The threat and inevitability of nuclear annihilation will persist until we rid the world of nuclear weapons entirely. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a critical tool to do that.

The First Meeting of States Parties will give voice to people who have long been overlooked and unheard—people who were affected by the use and testing of nuclear weapons, from Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the Pacific Islands and test sites in the former Soviet Union, the United States, and other parts of the world.

We call on the media to break its silence about the Treaty and to provide the public with information about the Treaty, including coverage of the First Meeting of States Parties scheduled for June of 2022.

The recent threats by Vladimir Putin have reawakened us to the potential for a global nuclear catastrophe. It could happen any day, initiated by any one of the leaders of the nine nuclear-armed nations. It is clear that we dare not wait; we cannot gamble with the future. The time to take concrete and irreversible steps to eliminate the nuclear threat, in concert with other nuclear armed states, is now.

In adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017, 122 states around the world said the status quo is unacceptable. It is time to end the threat of a global nuclear apocalypse by getting rid of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty entered into force on January 22, 2021. While its legal force is limited to those states that have signed the Treaty, its moral force applies in every country, including ours. All people have a right to live in a world that is not under constant threat of nuclear annihilation.

Weapons profiteers have taken the threat from Vladimir Putin as a reason to double down on funding for nuclear weapons. This response only compounds the already unacceptable risk of nuclear annihilation. Vladimir Putin’s threat to use nuclear weapons makes clear three things:

- the threat of nuclear catastrophe is real and could be triggered at any moment;
- the possession of nuclear weapons embolden leaders to take aggressive military action knowing other nations will be constrained in their response;
- the possession of nuclear weapons by other states does effectively not deter war-making.

The answer to this is not more nuclear weapons; the only answer that guarantees security for future generations is the abolition of nuclear weapons. The first step on the road to safety and security is the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

*The best letters are the ones you write from your heart – that express your feelings. They don't have to be fancy or technical, they don't have to use big words or complicated sentence structure. In fact, it's better if they aren't any of those things. Be direct and plainspoken. You aren't writing to impress editors; you are writing to communicate to readers.*

#### **FACT SHEET MATERIAL**

In recent years, nuclear policy in the United States has been dominated by the perilous theory of deterrence - Mutually Assured Destruction. With about 5,550 of the world's 13,080 nuclear weapons, the U.S. production, maintenance, and basing of these weapons of mass destruction undermine its longstanding commitments to and the critical necessity of full nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

(<https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Nuclearweaponswhohaswhat>)

The Nuclear Ban Treaty builds on decades of anti-nuclear organizing by people around the world, following the calls for the abolition of nuclear weapons and the assertion by *hibakusha* that “humans cannot exist with nuclear weapons,” and following three “international conferences on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons”, convened in 2013 and 2014 respectively in Norway, Mexico, and Austria. The U.S. has been conspicuously non-engaged in these diplomatic efforts for nuclear disarmament.

Taxpayers in the United States pay ~\$44.2 billion for nuclear weapons and their associated costs. For a localized or thematic breakdown of what that money could be used for, visit <https://www.nationalpriorities.org/interactive-data/trade-offs/> and choose the Nuclear Weapons option.