

Mr. Emmanuel Macron
President of the French Republic
Rue du Faubourg St Honoré
75008 Paris

The Right Honourable Rishi Sunak MP,
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AS.

21st November 2023

Second Meeting of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Mr President,
Prime Minister,

We are writing to you as a group of organisations in France and the United Kingdom, from varying backgrounds, but each with a deep concern at the proliferation and continued development of nuclear weapons in an increasingly polarised and fragmented world.

We welcomed the adoption and entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) which has now been signed by almost half of all countries. We are convinced that this treaty represents the best opportunity for a long-term solution to the dangers posed by nuclear weapons.

By contrast, we note that 53 years since its entry into force, the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has not, despite its stated aims, resulted in any measures of unilateral or multilateral disarmament. Instead, there has been an increase in both the number of nuclear-armed states and the level of risk, as evidenced most recently by the current war in Ukraine and the escalating conflict in the Middle East. The failures of the Review Conferences of the States Parties to the NPT in 2015 then again in 2022 exemplify the current situation of stagnation or worse.

We are aware that France and the UK have both stated their opposition to the TPNW publicly and that, as recently as March this year, in a joint leaders' declaration, you reiterated that opposition as a common position between you. We would urge you to reconsider that position. Our belief is that the majority of French and British citizens support our countries' engaging with the TPNW process¹.

We are convinced that, of the nine nuclear-armed States, France and the United Kingdom are by far the best placed to initiate momentum towards disarmament – a disarmament which humanity so badly needs, so that resources and energy can be harnessed to the challenges of poverty and exclusion, climate change, and the collapse of biodiversity rather than the maintenance and development of nuclear arsenals, the possession and use of which could have catastrophic consequences.

In that light, we ask that you send representatives to observe the proceedings of the 2nd meeting of States Parties of the TPNW in New York from the 27th November to the 1st December.

¹ Regarding France, according to an IFOP opinion poll of July 4, 2018 commissioned by La Croix and the Peace Movement, 67% of French people wanted France to commit to ratifying the TPNW.
<https://www.la-croix.com/France/Securite/Francais-contre-nucleaire-militaire-2018-07-04-1200952564>
Regarding Great Britain, a national poll conducted on 12-13th January 2021 for CND by Survation, showed that 59% of the public support the UK government signing up to the TPNW; and 77% support a 'total ban on all nuclear weapons globally'
<https://cnduk.org/nuclear-ban-poll-shows-majority-want-uk-to-sign-treaty/>

Attendance at the meeting as non-signatory observers would give both governments the opportunity to listen, understand and respond to issues raised by those states engaged in the process.

In particular, attendance would provide the opportunity to repair the historic and ongoing harm that has been caused by nuclear weapons testing by both countries. You will be aware that Articles 6 and 7 of the TPNW establish the first international legal framework through which the issue of that harm can be addressed.

On 27th October of this year, the United Kingdom and France were two of just four states to vote against a resolution tabled by Kazakhstan and Kiribati Islands on 'Addressing the legacy of nuclear weapons: providing victim assistance and environmental remediation to those Member States affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons'. This put the UK and France alongside Russia and North Korea as the only states to vote against the resolution.

Sending observers to the States Parties meeting would be a step towards recognising the responsibility both countries have by virtue of their nuclear armed status, and towards addressing the consequences of their nuclear weapon testing programmes.

Yours respectfully,

Andrew Jackson, Chief Executive of Pax Christi – England and Wales
Marian Pallister, Chair, Pax Christi Scotland
Kate Hudson, General Secretary, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND)
Marc Morgan, Trident Ploughshares
Mabon ap Gwynfor, Member of the Senedd (MS) for Dwyfor Meirionnydd, Chair of CND Cymru
Tim Devereux, Vice-Chair, Movement for the Abolition of War
Alison Lohead, Convener, Greenham Women are Everywhere
John Cooper, Director, Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR-UK)
Sue Claydon, Chair, Anglican Pacifist Fellowship
Simon Barrow, Director, Ekklesia
Martin Tiller, Co-Chair, Christian CND

Alfonso Zardi, Délégué général de Pax Christi - France
Jean-Marie Collin, Directeur d'ICAN France
Michel Roy, Secrétaire général de la Commission Justice et Paix - France
Robert Simon, Commission internationale, Mouvement pour une Alternative Non-violente
Josette Gazzaniga et Augustin Nkundabashaka, co-présidents de la branche française du Mouvement International de la Réconciliation (MIR-IFOR)
Anne-Béatrice Scherrer, Porte-parole du Collectif Bourgogne-Franche-Comté pour l'abolition des armes nucléaires
Patrick Hubert, Porte-parole de la Communauté Mission de France
Denis Stienne, Coprésident, Abolition des Armes Nucléaires-Maison de Vigilance
Margarete Hiller, Responsable internationale de la Communauté de l'Arche - Non-violence et spiritualité
Khaled Gaiji, Président des Amis de la Terre - France
Roland Nivet, Porte parole national du Mouvement de la Paix
Lydia Funck, General Secretary of Church and Peace

Contacts :

Pax Christi England and Wales
St Joseph's, Watford Way
London, NW4 4TY
andrew.jackson@paxchristi.org.uk

Pax Christi France
5, rue Morère – 75014 Paris
delegate@paxchristi.cef.fr