

MEDIA RELEASE



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Global campaign launches new initiative to shake up stagnant nuclear weapons disarmament regime

For immediate release

GENEVA— Despite a growing recognition that nuclear weapons are unusable weapons with no practical utility in today's global security environment, the number of the existing nuclear warheads continues to represent an unacceptable global humanitarian threat.

From 6-13 July, humanitarian, environmental and peace organisations, under the flag of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), will take to the streets in a concerted effort to demand the start of a process to ban nuclear weapons. Providing a visual backdrop to these efforts will be a social media campaign called *Share Your Shadow* which will encourage people around the world to creatively capture their shadows and share them across Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr.

Shadows are a powerful humanitarian symbol in the context of nuclear weapons. In August 1945, the United States detonated two atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The death toll was enormous. Near the centre of the explosions, the blast was so powerful that people were instantly vaporised, leaving only a shadow on the ground where they stood. These 'nuclear shadows' are still visible on the streets.

"Blanketing Facebook with pictures of shadows is a powerful way to draw attention to the indiscriminate nature of a weapon which is unable to distinguish between a building and an infant, and show support for a nuclear free world." says Magnus Løvold, ICAN's Network Coordinator, "The continued existence of thousands of nuclear weapons is unacceptable and their possession, use and stockpiling needs to be clearly outlawed to prevent another humanitarian catastrophe."

The *Share Your Shadow* initiative includes a global petition which will be presented to governments, UN agencies and representatives from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement who will gather in Mexico early next year to discuss the humanitarian impact of nuclear detonations.

"The recognition of the widespread and disastrous effects of nuclear weapons makes nuclear disarmament a shared responsibility. This is not the domain of nuclear-armed states any longer," says Beatrice Fihn, member of ICAN's International Steering Group, "Nuclear free states have a responsibility to their citizens to take action and begin a process to outlaw the last weapon of mass destruction. A universal treaty would be the first step and could represent an important milestone to achieve a nuclear free world."

Details available at: www.goodbyenuk.es

About ICAN

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a global campaign coalition working to mobilize people in all countries to inspire, persuade and pressure their governments to initiate negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. It has 300 partner organizations in 70 countries, and was launched in 2007. Prominent supporters include Desmond Tutu, Yoko Ono and the Dalai Lama.

Details available at: <http://www.icanw.org>

Resources

Unspeakable Suffering (2013)

Download at: <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/>

Banning Nuclear Weapons (2013)

Download at: <http://www.article36.org/cat2-nuclear-weapons/banning-nuclear-weapons-2/>

Ban Nuclear weapons now (2013)

Download at: <http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/BanNuclearWeaponsNow.pdf>

Catastrophic Humanitarian Harm (2012)

Download at: <http://www.icanw.org/resources/publications>

Interviews

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