

MEDIA RELEASE

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Global ban on nuclear weapons one step closer as hundreds of organisations gather in Oslo to plan campaign

For immediate release

More than 130 governments, several UN agencies and the global Red Cross movement are meeting today in Oslo to discuss the humanitarian, environmental and developmental consequences of nuclear detonations. The high rate of attendance at the conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, organized by the Norwegian government, demonstrates how many governments recognise their responsibility to address the humanitarian dimension of nuclear disarmament, as advocated by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

In addition to the vast majority of states that have renounced nuclear weapons, ICAN welcomes that two nuclear-armed nations, India and Pakistan, have decided to join the discussion. By contrast, the five nuclear-armed states with permanent seats in the UN Security Council – China, France, Russia, the UK and US – made a joint “P5 solidarity” decision to boycott the intergovernmental debate on the humanitarian effects of nuclear detonations. This calls into question the seriousness of these governments’ commitments to address the nuclear dangers caused by the existence of their own arsenals, but will not derail the debates among the majority of governments on how nuclear weapons risks affect the security of their own peoples.

To prepare for the government conference and join forces to achieve a ban on nuclear weapons, hundreds of campaigners met in Oslo at the weekend (2-3 March). The ICAN Civil Society Forum concluded that the disastrous humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, the risks of existing stockpiles and the failures in nuclear non-proliferation efforts make banning these weapons of mass destruction the next big negotiating priority for global civil society.

It is critical that governments use the historic opportunity given by the conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons to consider fact-based evidence of the effects of nuclear explosions and highlight the absence of national and international response plans that the [ICRC has warned of in a recent statement](#).

Civil Society Forum Speakers included:

- **Martin Sheen**, social activist and award-winning actor
- **Terumi Tanaka**, survivor of the Hiroshima atomic bombing
- **Karipbek Kuyukov**, victim of nuclear testing in Kazakhstan
- **Amelia Showalter**, director of digital analytics, Obama for America
- **John Dear**, Jesuit priest and renowned peace activist
- **Gry Larsen**, Norwegian state secretary
- **Ward Wilson**, author of *Five Myths about Nuclear Weapons*

Selected ICAN Spokespeople said:

- **Dr Tilman Ruff, ICAN Co-Chair:** “Even a single nuclear explosion would cause a humanitarian catastrophe for which no effective medical response is possible. When we have no effective treatment, the answer is prevention: eradication of nuclear weapons.”
- **Akira Kawasaki, ICAN Co-Chair:** “What every victim of nuclear weapons will tell you, whether he or she is a survivor of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima or Nagasaki or a victim of the thousands of nuclear weapon tests that happened after 1945, is that they refuse to leave this legacy to their children. The unspeakable suffering caused during the blast, the intergenerational damage to health, and the poisoning of the environment make the very existence of nuclear weapons unacceptable.”
- **Susi Snyder, Member of ICAN International Steering Group:** “Governments say time and time again that they can't act without broad grassroots support – this weekend demonstrated that the world's civil society is united and committed to put an end to the existence of nuclear weapons.”
- **Martin Sheen, social activist and award winning actor** “ There is no way you can use even one nuclear weapon, without becoming a victim yourself.”
- **John Dear, Jesuit priest and renowned peace activist** “ If Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr were alive, they would be part of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.”

Interviews

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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

For information about the effects of nuclear weapons see:

- **Unspeakable Suffering** (2013)
Download at: <http://www.icanw.org/resources/publications>
- **Banning Nuclear Weapons (2013)**
Download at: <http://www.article36.org/cat2-nuclear-weapons/banning-nuclear-weapons-2/>
- **Catastrophic Humanitarian Harm** (2012)
Download at: <http://www.icanw.org/resources/publications>