

United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament briefing



Introduction

On Friday July 7 2017 the United Nations agreed a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. The text was supported by more than 122 states and is the result of years of campaigning throughout the world. Despite the international consensus against nuclear weapons the United Kingdom chose to boycott the entire process and stood alongside the Americans in denouncing the treaty negotiations. The UK government maintains a long-standing position of supporting a world free of nuclear weapons, but has been unwilling to engage in the biggest opportunity to bring it about.

What's included in the treaty

A comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons and other related activity. This includes:

- ✧ A ban on the use, stockpiling, testing, production, manufacture, stationing and installation.
- ✧ A ban on assisting with the prohibited acts, such as the United States leasing the Trident missiles to the UK.
- ✧ A ban on allowing nuclear weapons to travel through territorial waters or airspace.
- ✧ The requirement of assistance to the victims of nuclear weapons. This is the first time this has been included in a treaty.
- ✧ A requirement to take action in areas which have been damaged by the testing of nuclear weapons.
- ✧ All signatories are required to encourage other states to sign up to the treaty.

And crucially for the UK there is a clear mechanism for nuclear-armed states to sign up. It does not require them to disarm immediately but to enter into negotiations on a time scale for the destruction of their stockpiles.

Christian CND activity

Christian CND has been campaigning for a global nuclear weapons ban for decades. Work we have undertaken in support of the current initiative includes:

- ✧ *Attending the talks* - Christian CND representatives travelled to New York for the first session of talks to take part in the international lobbying efforts, the faith based initiatives and to monitor the negotiations. Representatives also attending the associated NPT meetings in Vienna.
- ✧ *Supporting Caroline Lucas MP in attending* – Christian CND part-funded Caroline's trip to the second round of talks to ensure the UK was represented
- ✧ *Meeting embassy officials* - as part of our regular embassy walk around London Christian CND spoke to officials at a number of embassies about the ban.
- ✧ *Working with partners* - In addition to being active members of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Christian CND also supported the CND UK lobby of parliament to promote the ban in March.
- ✧ *Praying* - we have been regularly calling on God to move on this issue, praying throughout the negotiations as leaders talk about these vital issues.

What happens next?

The treaty is open for signatures at the United Nations in New York from September 20th. Once a state signs it will then have to ratify the treaty through domestic processes. The treaty will enter into force shortly after the 50th state completes the ratification process. The first conference to update on progress is due to take place five years after the treaty comes into force.

What can you do?

While the UK government appears to be entrenched in opposition to the treaty, history demonstrates the difference that active campaigning can make. There are a number of things you can do to support the campaign and make sure that your voice is heard.

- ✂ *Speak to others about the ban* - most people are unaware of the developments. With the lack of coverage in the national media the best way to spread the word is through networks. Tell those in your church the good news.
- ✂ *Contact your MP* - even some MPs are unaware of the ban, and it is a great opportunity to engage with those who say they believe in multilateral disarmament. There is a tool on the CND website you can use to contact your MP.
- ✂ *Pray* - while we believe in the effectiveness of campaigning, God can do miracles and we need to call out to Him for intervention in this. There are some pointers below which you may find useful.

Prayer points

Please join with other Christians around the world at this vital time in praying for:

- ✂ *Our political leaders* – 1 Timothy 2:2 exhorts us to pray for those in authority. As our political leaders face uncertain times and consider how to react, please pray for them and their decisions.
- ✂ *Wisdom* – James 3:11 says that ‘the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving’. Pray that our leaders make wise choices when considering their response to the ban.
- ✂ *Peace* – 1 Peter 3:11 calls on us to ‘seek peace and pursue it’. At a time when peace can seem far away, the ban treaty gives a chance to achieve lasting peace for the future.
- ✂ *Co-operation* – Psalm 133 speaks of the joy of God’s people living in unity. Pray that the global Christian community will come together to seek peace.

Further reading

CND UK briefing on global ban <https://tinyurl.com/Banbriefing>

ICAN frequently asked questions briefing <https://tinyurl.com/ICANbanFAQs>

Full treaty text <https://tinyurl.com/UNfulltext>

Nuclear Information Service report - UK and the ban <https://tinyurl.com/NISreport>

ICAN Parliamentary Pledge on the ban <https://tinyurl.com/BanPledge>

Can you support Christian CND?

This is a vital time in the campaign for a world of peace, free of nuclear weapons. Christian CND is committed to campaigning in support of the ban, but our work costs money. Please consider supporting our work through a regular donation and encouraging others to become members.

Christian CND - Christians working and praying for a nuclear weapons-free world

Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
162 Holloway Road, London, N7 8DQ
020 7700 4200
christians@cnduk.org
www.christiancnd.org.uk