

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

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Statement for the 1st Meeting of States Parties of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Working paper submitted by Netzwerk Friedenskooperative / Network of the German Peace Movement

1. The war in Ukraine shows that nuclear weapons represent one of the greatest threats to humanity. The use of even smaller, so-called tactical or low-yield nuclear weapons, would have devastating consequences that we cannot cope with. For this reason, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons must be further disseminated and can count on our support. By focusing on the catastrophic effects of using nuclear weapons rather than on the supposed "strength" of nuclear weapons, we show governments how irresponsible such a use would be. The consequences would be so fatal that we have no choice but to ban and outlaw these weapons as a matter of principle. Because nobody wins a nuclear war.

2. Many countries of the Global South are a model for an alternative path of security. For there is a decades-long practice of freedom from nuclear weapons there. All land masses, outer space and the seabed in the Southern Hemisphere are treaty-regulated nuclear-weapons-free zones. All existing nuclear weapons are stored in the Global North. It is also these countries of the Global South that made the TPNW possible in the first place. Instead of investing ever more in the theory of deterrence, they advocate for human security. For them it is clear that the world is not safer with nuclear weapons. Their security interests must also be heard and not denied. We now gather in Vienna for the historic event of the first Conference of the States Parties to the TPNW. The TPNW is due in part to the tireless and successful efforts of these countries and civil society.

3. The threat of the use of nuclear weapons seems more real now than ever before. Nevertheless, we are more determined than ever to finally abolish nuclear weapons. This demand for the abolition of nuclear weapons is currently being dismissed as "unrealistic" more than ever. The fact is, however, as long as nuclear weapons exist, there is also a risk and probability that they will be used. At the same time, militarized masculinity is finding its way into many debates. One must prove "power" is heard everywhere. Militarized masculinity makes disarmament and peace look like weakness. However, putting human security at the center is, on the contrary, a strength.

4. In particular, we call on States Parties to listen to and make space for the voices of the Hibakusha. Affected communities must be engaged in an inclusive process. We should let the survivors guide us. Further, we call for victims to be supported.

5. We call upon the states participating as observers, such as Germany and Norway, to join the TPNW. Observer status can serve as an important bridge to those states that are currently still opposing the treaty and enable them to closely monitor and support the treaty process. In this way, constructive contributions can be made to regulations for states that possess or have deployed nuclear weapons but would like to join the TPNW in the future.

6. We urge all states to sign and ratify the TPNW. Only a world free of nuclear weapons is a safe world. All states, as well as all people, must join our call to protect this world. We want to live in a world where no state has the power to annihilate another community, and where the security of some does not depend on the insecurity of others.
