



# OEWG REPORT

*Civil society perspectives on the open-ended working  
group on nuclear disarmament  
2–13 May 2016*



Reaching Critical Will

**4 May 2016  
Vol. 2, No. 9**

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 | Editorial:  
Transparency  
in the time of  
opacity**
- 2 | Calendar of  
events**
- 3 | Health  
federations'  
joint appeal for  
prohibition and  
elimination**
- 4 | Event:  
Humanitarian  
impact of nuclear  
weapons: from  
1945 to future  
security**
- 5 | News in brief**

The OEWG Report is published by Reaching Critical Will, the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

info@reachingcriticalwill.org  
www.reachingcriticalwill.org

Editor: Ray Acheson

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom or the Reaching Critical Will programme.

## EDITORIAL: TRANSPARENCY IN THE TIME OF OPACITY

Ray Acheson | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

The nuclearised states have come under intense pressure at the open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament (OEWG) for their continued failure to be transparent about their stationing of NATO nuclear weapons or measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their strategic doctrines. While they promote a series of measures on nuclear weapons that include transparency, these states are not themselves being transparent about their nuclear weapon-related activities or policies. This is a challenge to disarmament that they could help overcome if committed to their own "progressive approach".

### *NATO nuclear weapons*

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)'s security doctrine includes nuclear weapons for "deterrence" purposes. As unclassified reports and respected civil society sources such as the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) have documented, five NATO countries host 160–200 US nuclear weapons on their territories: Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey. These states neither confirm nor deny this fact.

"It is deeply regrettable that several of the states here today are unwilling even to confess that they host nuclear weapons on their soil," lamented Linnet Ngayu on behalf of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). "They withhold that information not only from ordinary citizens, but also from lawmakers. What does that say about the strength of their democracies? What does it say about the state of our international disarmament regime?"

Despite the lack of official transparency about these nuclear weapons, some information is known about the arrangements. "Some of these weapons are stored at U.S. bases and would be delivered by U.S. aircraft," FAS has found. "Others are stored at bases operated by the 'host nation' and would be delivered by that nation's aircraft if NATO decided to employ nuclear weapons."

As Susi Snyder on behalf of ICAN said in her intervention, such efforts by civil society to increase transparency about nuclear weapons is valuable, but it does not excuse the absence of official information. While Canada, Germany, and Norway indicated support for transparency and reporting, they have not supplied information about NATO nuclear weapons as requested by a rising chorus of non-nuclear-armed states.

### *Suggestions for transparency*

On Monday, Mexico asked the nuclearised states about their measures to ensure security of NATO nuclear weapons. On Tuesday, Mexico and Brazil asked them what measures they will take to increase transparency. They have not yet responded to these questions but others have given some suggestions.

Austria argued that the burden of proof for demonstrating that nuclear weapon control systems are safe is on those that possess or station these weapons. It called for five specific measures in this regard, including on failsafe mechanisms for false alarms and system failures; the record of system breakdowns and accidents; the design basis for threat assumptions; the scenarios that have been considered for regional and global food security, human health, psychological, and critical infrastructure implications of any detonation; and public education efforts regarding the dangers of risks of nuclear weapons and doctrines.

Ecuador called for transparency on the number and status of nuclear warheads; measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their military doctrines; measures to reduce and de-alert the operational systems of nuclear weapons; and the destructive capacity of the weapons.

Wildfire highlighted suggestions for transparency in OEWG working papers NGO.4 and NGO.8. Switzerland indicated support for NGO.8's recommendations as a useful basis for work. ICAN suggested that nuclear weapon host states should provide information on:

*continued on next page*

## Editorial continued

- Multilateral exercises preparing for the use of nuclear weapons;
- The role of national militaries or other national agencies in targeting discussions;
- The budgets assigned by governments to facilitate their national air force preparation for acceptance of the transfer of nuclear weapons;
- Emergency response preparations for possible accidents with the weapons stationed on their territories, particularly around the Kleine Brogel, Volkel, Ghedi, Aviano, Buchel, and Incirlik bases;
- Studies about the impact of multiple weapons accidents, especially given the recent history of civilian break-ins at these facilities;
- The specific costs host governments will have to pay to modify new aircraft to become dual capable to drop the nuclear;
- Information about the budgets allocated for security of the facilities that hold the weapons; and
- Ending the policies of neither confirming nor denying the public secret that they station nuclear weapons.

### *Transparency is not disarmament*

If the nuclearised states were to take up these suggestions, it would indicate some sense of genuine commitment to pursue a nuclear weapon free world, which they claim to support.

However as Ambassador Dell Higgie of New Zealand cautioned, discussions about increasing transparency should not be divorced from reality. Increased transparency would be welcome, but as has been seen in the NPT context, there is “very little appetite on the part of the NWS for a renewal even of the elements of transparency and reporting that had been agreed upon at the 2010 RevCon,” she pointed out. “This same reluctance about transparency does seem also apparent on the part of host states with respect to holdings on their territories.”

It does seem disingenuous for nuclearised states to call for increased transparency as one of the most important “steps” for disarmament without being willing to increase the transparency around their own involvement in the maintenance, modernisation, stationing, or control over nuclear weapons.

Furthermore, as Haiti noted, transparency is important for trust and verification but is insufficient for dealing with the challenges of nuclear weapons. Referring to Dr. Patricia Lewis’ comments yesterday about the need to apply the precautionary principle to nuclear weapons, Haiti called for the negotiation of a legally binding instrument. ICAN similarly warned that while transparency is important, it is not itself disarmament. “Sharing information about one’s nuclear arsenal is not the same as consigning it to the dustbin of history.” Legal measures are also necessary, the most urgent—and feasible—of which is a ban treaty. •



## Calendar of events

When	What	Where
09:00-10:00	ICAN campaigners meeting	Room XXV
10:00-13:00	Panel III on additional measures to increase awareness and understanding of the complexity of and interrelationship between the wide range of humanitarian consequences that would result from any nuclear detonation; exchange of views	Room XIX
15:00-18:00	Exchange of views on panel III continued	Room XIX

# HEALTH FEDERATIONS' JOINT APPEAL FOR PROHIBITION AND ELIMINATION

John Loretz | *International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War*

The leading international federations representing the world's physicians, public health professionals, and nurses have told a special UN working group that the medical and scientific evidence about the consequences of nuclear weapons requires urgent action to prohibit and eliminate them as "the only course of action commensurate with the existential danger they pose."

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), the World Medical Association (WMA), the World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA), and the International Council of Nurses (ICN) have submitted a joint working paper—"The health and humanitarian case for banning and eliminating nuclear weapons"—to the UN Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG), which holds its main meeting in Geneva this week to decide what new legal measures are needed to achieve nuclear disarmament. The OEWG will report back to the UN General Assembly later this year.

The working paper summarizes the evidence presented at three international conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, emphasizing that:

- a nuclear war with weapons in existing arsenals could kill many more people in a few hours than were killed during the entire Second World War;
- radioactive fallout from nuclear weapons lingers in the environment, causing cancers and other illnesses over generations;
- fewer than one percent of the nuclear weapons in the world today could disrupt the global climate and cause a nuclear famine;
- the thousands of weapons in the world's largest arsenals could trigger a global ecological collapse in a nuclear winter;
- a meaningful medical and humanitarian response to aid the survivors of nuclear conflict is impossible.

The four federations told OEWG participants that they have "a unique opportunity and a shared responsibility to take leadership on nuclear disarmament by reframing the goal as a humanitarian-based process for banning and eliminating nuclear weapons." They urged the OEWG to "assert the need for a new treaty that...explicitly prohibit[s]...nuclear weapons, based on their unacceptable consequences."

IPPNW, a non-partisan federation of national medical groups in 64 countries, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1985 for its efforts to educate US and Soviet leaders about the consequences of nuclear war. Co-president Tilman Ruff said this is the first

time the leading international federations of health professionals have addressed the dangers of nuclear weapons with a common voice. "We have all expressed concern over nuclear weapons for many years," Ruff said. "The fact that we are now coming together to demand action on disarmament is unprecedented and raises a loud alarm about the unacceptable danger a handful of states are imposing on the entire world. We have a professional obligation to prevent what we cannot cure or treat."

The WMA, comprising 112 national medical associations, has repeatedly condemned nuclear weapons, and has called for their prohibition and elimination. "Even a limited nuclear war" said WMA president, Professor Sir Michael Marmot, "would bring about immense human suffering and death together with catastrophic effects on the Earth's ecosystem, which could subsequently decrease the world's food supply for over a decade and put billions of people at peril of starvation."

Michael Moore, president-elect of the WFPHA, an international, nongovernmental organization comprising more than 100 multidisciplinary national public health associations, added that the public health hazards posed by decades of testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere and underground were only one aspect of a much graver threat. "It is time for real leadership and action from our presidents, prime ministers, and politicians around the world," Moore said. "It is past time to rid the world of this threat to the health and well-being of ordinary citizens everywhere."

Frances Hughes, Chief Executive Officer of the ICN, which links more than 130 national nurses associations representing more than 16 million nurses worldwide, said "the ICN abhors the accidental or deliberate use of nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional weapons and land mines, all of which undermine health and threaten survival. Inherent to nursing is the respect for the life and dignity of people; thus, nurses have a responsibility to work towards eliminating any threats to life and health."

The working paper is available at [www.ippnw.org](http://www.ippnw.org), or contact [johnatippnw@gmail.com](mailto:johnatippnw@gmail.com). •



International Physicians  
for the Prevention of Nuclear War





**EVENT: HUMANITARIAN IMPACT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS***Jessica Lawson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

This event was a panel conversation between atomic bomb survivor Ms. Setsuko Thurlow, IPPNW co-president Dr. Ira Helfand, and Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi of Austria. The discussion was moderated by Ms. Rebecca Johnson from Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, the International Panel on Fissile Materials, and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

Setsuko Thurlow survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima when she was 13 years old and has spent her life raising awareness about nuclear dangers and disarmament. Ms. Thurlow talked about her horrific experience on the day that the US bombed Hiroshima. She remembers seeing a blueish-white flash and feeling the sensation of floating up in the air. She lost consciousness and when she awoke, found herself in the dark. Later during that day, Setsuko and her friends took off their blouses and soaked them in water and squeezed the moisture from the wet cloths into the mouths of the dying and injured, who were begging for water.

Ira Helfand is a US physician and co-president of the International Physician for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). He has written about the global climate and agricultural consequences of a "limited nuclear war" in his groundbreaking study, *Nuclear Famine*. Dr. Helfand warned that if nuclear weapons were used today, the destruction would be much worse even than the tragic experience Ms. Thurlow endured. He said that states that focus on

arguments about national security interests when it comes to nuclear weapons are playing an abstract intellectual game.

Thomas Hajnoczi is the ambassador and permanent representative of Austria to the United Nations in Geneva. Austria has been very positive in its engagement with the nuclear disarmament debate and the humanitarian initiative. It hosted the Vienna conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in 2014 and initiated the Humanitarian Pledge, which has now been endorsed by 127 states. In regard to a legally binding instrument, Ambassador Hajnoczi said, "We don't have any other option". He warned that the longer it takes states to act, the probability that nuclear weapons will be used again increases.

During the discussion, Ms. Thurlow was asked what keeps her motivated to continue advocating at 84 years old, when she could be retiring. To this, she answered that she made a decision when she was young, that it would be her life-long mission to see a world without these weapons. And so, when things like the OEWG happen, she wants to be here; she wants to meet like-minded people. She said, "We've got a big job to do."

Despite often being told that we need a long-term view to reach abolition, Dr. Helfand reminded us that this process has to move quickly. He said that Ms. Thurlow has waited too long already. •

*Photo © ICAN Romania*

## NEWS IN BRIEF

Mia Gandenberger | *Reaching Critical Will of WILPF*

The News in Brief is not a comprehensive summary of all statements. It highlights positions on a few critical issues covered during plenary discussions.

### **Panel II on transparency measures related to the risks associated with existing nuclear weapons**

- Piet de Klerk, Chairman of Working Group I of International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV) spoke on matters of transparency and verification. He argued that the implementation of article 6 of the NPT is an obligation for all states parties, but that discussions of concrete disarmament solutions must involve countries that possess nuclear weapons and must take into account their ideas and concerns as well as the security considerations of all.
- P. de Klerk also said that some progress has been achieved with regard to the reduction of the nuclear arsenals of Russia and the US. He thinks the current security tensions at both global and regional levels make further large-scale nuclear reductions more difficult.
- He introduced the work of the IPNDV, a group of 25 states, including of all nuclear-armed states of the NPT, that aims to advance nuclear disarmament verification concepts, procedures, and technologies. Among other issues he also highlighted the challenges to prevent proliferation resulting from verification through non-nuclear-armed states.
- Australia called for a strong message from this group regarding transparency.
- Iran highlighted its WP.7 and asked if non-nuclear-armed states hosting nuclear weapons on their territory have a special role to play in the context of transparency.
- Australia, Germany, Japan, Canada recalled the work of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) on transparency, in particular its work on reporting templates in the context of the NPT.
- Germany welcomed the openness of some nuclear-armed states and argued that they are under particular scrutiny precisely because of their openness. Germany also argued that sensitive information must not be published or leaked and that it is a challenge to find a balance between protecting national security and transparency.
- South Africa asked how the work of the IPNDV would fit with a ban treaty and how they could complement each other.
- Mexico recalled the recommendations on transparency contained in the NPT outcome documents and called for the harmonisation of the reports by nuclear-armed states.
- Mexico inquired about the willingness for collaboration of nuclear-armed states taking part in the IPNDV.
- Brazil called for the broadening of the membership of the IPNDV.
- Austria similarly wondered about the process and current membership of the partnership.
- ICAN stressed that transparency and openness are essential for democracy and regretted that some states today cannot even acknowledge that they have NWS on their soil.
- ICAN also pointed out that transparency is not in itself disarmament and concrete legal measures are needed, the most urgent of which is a ban treaty.
- Sweden, Ecuador, Ireland, Austria, Nicaragua, and Japan highlighted the existing verification system of the CTBTO, which needs to be strengthened and enhanced.
- Sweden appreciated the joint WP of Costa Rica and Malaysia and underlined that transparency needs to be pursued by both nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed states.
- Ecuador and Nicaragua stressed that nuclear-armed states not only have a legal obligation under the NPT, they have the ethical and moral obligation to be transparent, which also extends to those states with nuclear weapon agreements.
- Ecuador underlined the importance of nuclear-armed states being sufficiently transparent on fundamental issues, such as the number and status of nuclear warheads on their territory; measures to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their military doctrines; and their measures to reduce and de-alert the operational systems of nuclear weapons.
- Ecuador also suggested that discussions of reductions should include a reference to the destructive capacity of the remaining weapons.
- P. De Klerk explained that the partnership had not discussed what form a treaty will take, but the work of the IPNDV takes place against the background of ongoing efforts towards "global nuclear zero".
- With regard to participation, he said there is no strict procedure for additional members and it will be a theme of the discussions of the IPNDV in June. States should come to the partnership prepared to invest and a certain level of tech-

*continued on next page*



## News in brief, continued

nological capacity would be a factor for efficient participation.

- A special role for umbrella/host states is not a matter that has been discussed in the IPNDV and P. de Klerk did not see any special role for any such state.
- Haiti recognised that transparency strengthens trust and verification, however the precautionary principle mentioned by P. Lewis in yesterday's session stressed how urgent it is that measures are taken through an international binding instrument.
- Norway highlighted the need to prepare for a world without nuclear weapons, saying both the IPNDV and the UK-Norway initiative are avenues to prepare. Looking ahead, it asked what role the IAEA will play or what lessons could be drawn from the CTBTO experience.
- Canada recalled the report of the GGE discussing a fissile material cut-off treaty and its conclusions regarding verification and wondered how that relates to the goals of the IPNDV.
- New Zealand recalled that proliferation concerns stemming from non-nuclear-armed state verification of nuclear disarmament were addressed in a paper on the international legal issues relevant to the relationship between the NPT and a new instrument on nuclear disarmament and which was circulated by New Zealand at the UNGA First Committee last year.
- Further, it recalled the commitments to transparency of the 2010 NPT outcome document and worried that calling for recommendations, and an outcome, from this body focused primarily on transparency and reporting would mean states are simply repeating a call that many here have been making now for a considerable time.
- Egypt underlined that nuclear weapons are the only WMD that have not been outlawed and wondered how non-nuclear states should act, pending the arrival of the right security conditions for nuclear disarmament. Should they stand by and watch nuclear-armed states threaten each other? What about other countries? Neighbours? Who decides who should have nuclear weapons? Does reduction amount to disarmament?
- Egypt then asked if there are examples of verification of bilateral reduction agreements that could possibly be used alongside with the IAEA work.
- Ireland asked if verification technologies could be used to determine the initiating party in case of a nuclear weapons detonation.
- Austria, Nicaragua expressed support for WP.22 on reporting mechanisms.
- Austria further called for information on the record of system breakdowns, the design basis for threat assumptions, existing failsafe mechanisms for possible system failures, scenarios that have been considered to address the greater implications of a nuclear weapons detonation, and public education efforts.
- Nicaragua and Austria asked if the work of the IPNDV included evaluation of modernisation programmes.
- Switzerland stressed transparency is a fundamental factor for evaluation and expressed support for WP NGO.8 as a useful basis, in particular points a), b), and e) under measures to increase transparency in paragraph 3.
- P. De Klerk explained that the IAEA has not yet played a role in the IPNDV, but he hopes the Agency will bring technical expertise to the partnership.
- With regard the possible verification of an FMCT, he saw some overlap, but also a lot of difference as any FMCT would focus on non-production/or only for PUNE and would not address the verification of dismantlement of existing warheads.
- He explained that, there is a working group in the IPNDV on how to organise on-site inspections.
- Modernisation programmes are not considered by the IPNDV, he said.
- Poland expressed support for the work of the partnership.
- Iran stressed the importance of taking all measures to reduce the risk and called for nuclear weapons not to go beyond the borders of a nuclear-armed state and for the end to nuclear sharing.
- South Africa highlighted the IAEA's role and its technical capabilities regarding verification.
- Wildfire highlighted concrete suggestions in WPs NGO.4 and NGO.8 regarding what reporting activities might include.
- PAX/ICAN suggested some concrete measures on how host states can increase transparency about their role with nuclear weapons.
- PAX/ICAN continued, a nuclear ban treaty is a way to codify practices, unblock blockages, build on the foundations of the global legal architecture needed to achieve and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons, and end the loopholes and circumstances that have allowed questionable risky practices to go on for far too long. •