



# OXFORD CND

## NEWSLETTER

November/December 2020



# Nuclear ban on its way



**A new United Nations treaty will enter into force in January, one which will make nuclear weapons illegal in the countries that sign it.**

**The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) will now officially enter into force on January 22nd after 50 countries ratified the agreement with a further 84 signing it.**

**Oxford Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**

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# Positive News

We are all searching for good news in these dark days, and the achievement of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in reaching the required fifty ratifications for it to enter into force is a rare shaft of light. It is a tribute to the efforts of all those countries and NGOs that campaigned for what they were told was a futile exercise. And it is a reminder that persistence can pay off: We should enjoy this chance to dwell on the positive.

Of course, the nuclear powers will not sign or ratify the Treaty and so will not be bound by it, but its existence will force them more on to the defensive and weaken their case for nuclear weapons retention. This was put very well by Peter Mauer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, at the recent General Assembly meeting to promote the Treaty, in a series of points. First, the Treaty shows “that progress is possible” on this difficult issue, if nations act “in concert and with clarity of purpose.” Second, it provides the first legal international tool which may be used to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Third, it reinforces the taboo on the use of nuclear weapons (which, as cold war historians have shown, did inhibit to some extent the nuclear powers at times of crisis). And fourth, the Treaty “presents a road map for the verified elimination of nuclear weapons.”

In the latest issue of *Reaching Critical Will*, the disarmament program of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Ray Acheson laments the hypocrisy of the nuclear powers at the annual meeting in October of the UN First Committee on Disarmament and Security, but she finds grounds for optimism in the positions taken by the other countries – and there is a multitude of them – who do not accept the equivocations and false assertions of those powers.

Many of these governments, says Acheson, “are not just sounding the alarm but are actively trying to build something else”, urging a shift from weapons expenditure to investment in people’s well-being, the environment, and pandemic prevention. As the Irish delegate

put it, the pandemic is an urgent reminder “of the importance of international cooperation to avoid global catastrophes”, and the arsenals of nuclear weapons “afford us no security or safety...” (Ireland ratified the Treaty in the final round of ratifications).

So how many nuclear battalions does Ireland have, or the Maldives, or Costa Rica or Honduras, cynics will ask. Yet the struggle between the powers with nuclear weapons and those with a voice but no bombs is nothing new and the Treaty merely carries to a higher stage. It puts the spotlight on the failure of the nuclear powers to keep their bargain to move towards disarmament under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. And

it exposes the hypocrisy of regarding chemical and biological weapons as illegal but not nuclear ones.

In many ways it is not the cold war period which is evoked by today’s talk of a “new” cold war, but the years before the First World War when the forces of this struggle were strong on either side.

That the peace argument finally failed should be regarded as historical fact rather than historical inevitability: it could have been different and it can be again. Alfred Fried (1864-1921),

the pioneer of peace journalism who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1911, was one of many voices who argued that international anarchy had to be overcome by international organisation: in his words, the task was to “organise the world”. We have come a long way since then and we do have an international organisation in the UN which has already achieved far more than it is often credited for.

On a practical level, we all have the opportunity to support the UN today through the UK United Nations Association (UNA-UK). It is now part of Together First, a world-wide movement committed to “making global governance a reality”. This has produced a report on UN Security Council reform concentrating on realistic ideas that have some chance of being achieved. We may still be able to organize the world. ■

**John Gittings**



# UN Nuclear treaty 50th ratification

**London, 25 October 2020**

The United Nations has confirmed that the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has been ratified by its 50th state party, Honduras, and will therefore enter into international legal force 90 days later, on 22 January 2021.

*"This Treaty bans nuclear weapons production, testing, possession and use, along with other activities that could enable and assist anyone to acquire or use these weapons of mass destruction ever again,"* said Dr Rebecca Johnson, a former Greenham peace activist and first president of the Geneva-based International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN, 2017 Nobel Peace Laureate).

*"This treaty is the culmination of 75 years of humanitarian activism, from the "Hibakusha" and indigenous survivors of nuclear weapons and testing, to the Aldermaston marchers and Greenham Common Peace Women who helped to ban nuclear testing and get cruise missiles banned and off the roads. Together we've persuaded UN governments to bring this ground-breaking nuclear disarmament treaty into international humanitarian law. Our task now is to bring all the nuclear armed and dependent countries into working with the non-nuclear majority to eliminate existing arsenals and universalise, implement and verify the Nuclear Ban Treaty."*

Ben Donaldson, from United Nations Association UK (UNA-UK), highlighted the

symbolism of the TPNW reaching its 50th ratification on UN Day, 75 years on from the founding of the United Nations, and recognised that nuclear weapons were first used against the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki 75 years ago in August 1945.

Noting that this UN-negotiated multilateral treaty was recently described by UN Secretary-General António Guterres as an important pillar to strengthen nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Mr Donaldson said, *"The ground is moving under the UK's feet. We now have this significant new UN treaty which will sit alongside the other major global treaty on nuclear weapons, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and drive forward the international community's shared vision of a world free of nuclear weapons. Governments, international organisations and civil society are sending a clear message to nuclear-armed that they have lived in fear of fallout for far too long, and want real disarmament action now."*

As well as banning the activities and practices that make nuclear acquisition, proliferation and use possible, the TPNW provides two legal pathways by which nations holding nuclear weapons, like the UK, can eliminate their arsenals. From 2021 onwards, TPNW states parties will now work on establishing the strong legal framework to build adaptable verification systems and oversee nuclear disarmament compliance and implementation. ■



Left: Oxford CND quickly marks 50th ratification of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at 11.00am in Bonn Square, Sunday 25th October 2020. Above: Aldermaston Women TPNW banner main gate AWE Aldermaston, Sunday 25th October 2020.

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# Fukushima contaminated water release

Japan to release 1m tonnes of contaminated Fukushima water into the sea Japan's government has reportedly decided to release more than 1m tonnes of contaminated water from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant into the sea. Tepco's Advanced Liquid Processing System removes highly radioactive substances from the water but the system is unable to filter out tritium, a radioactive isotope of hydrogen that nuclear plants routinely dilute and dump along with water into the ocean.

## Concerns over proposed tritium discharges from Fukushima

Recent newspaper reports have expressed concern about the apparent decision by the Japanese Government and TEPCO to discharge large volumes of radioactive tritiated water from the stricken Fukushima nuclear power station in Japan into the Pacific Ocean.

I have expressed concern myself about this proposed decision. Instead I recommend that TEPCO and the Japanese Government should build more storage tanks to allow for the decay of the radioactive tritium.

Some readers have commented that all nuclear power stations world-wide discharge tritium into the sea (sometimes via rivers) and into the atmosphere. This is true and TEPCO used this fact to try to justify its proposed dumping of tritium into the sea. My reply was that two wrongs do not make a right: it is in fact quite worrying that all nuclear facilities routinely dump large volumes of tritium into the sea and the air.

This applies to all UK nuclear power stations as well – including Hunterston B and Torness in Scotland. Recent reports have expressed concern about the restarts of the ancient dilapidated reactors at Hunterston B which are well past their sell-by dates. These fears largely centre on the risks of a nuclear accident at these old unsafe reactors.

But shouldn't we also be concerned about their tritium discharges?

Data on these discharges can be found in the latest report "Radioactivity in Food and the Environment" (RIFE 24) published by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). These data are contained in tables A2.1 and A 2.2 buried deep at the back of Appendix 2 of the RIFE report on the annual radionuclide releases from UK nuclear facilities.

In 2018, annual tritium releases to the sea from Hunterston B were 148 terabecquerels (TBq) and the even more dangerous tritium emissions to the atmosphere totalled 0.96 TBq. A becquerel is the rate of radioactivity meaning one nuclear disintegration per second. A terabecquerel means one trillion (one followed by twelve zeroes) becquerels. Written in full it is 1,000,000,000,000 becquerels – a very large amount.

Some people may argue that this amount when spread across one year (ie ~10,000 hours) is less dangerous. But they would be wrong, as in many cases most of the annual releases are spiked... ie they occur at certain events and not throughout the year.

The situation is similar at all other UK nuclear power stations. For example, at Torness, the tritium discharges in 2018 were 295 TBq into the sea and 1.32 TBq into the air.

In most cases, these annual amounts are larger than the annual amounts being proposed to be released at Fukushima. So, shouldn't we be equally be concerned at these releases, as we are at the Japanese ones? ■

**Ian Fairlie** – blog 22nd Oct 2020

Fukushima Pacific Ocean discharges will release hazardous radioactive carbon-14 with potential to damage human DNA. All of the radioactive carbon contained in water tanks at Fukushima Daiichi will be discharged into the Pacific Ocean if Japanese government plans proceed. The radioactive isotope carbon-14 has a half-life of 5,370 years Carbon-14 is especially important as a major contributor to collective human radiation dose and has the potential to damage human DNA.

The Japanese government and TEPCO have continued to call the 1.23 million tons of water stored in tanks "treated water" and to give the impression that it only contains tritium. They have deliberately held back for years detailed information on the radioactive material in the contaminated water. They have failed to explain to the citizens of Fukushima, wider Japan and to neighbouring countries such as South Korea and China that the contaminated water to be dumped into the Pacific Ocean contains dangerous levels of carbon-14. These, together with other radionuclides in the water will remain hazardous for thousands of years with the potential to cause genetic damage. ■

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# Trident crew misbehaving

CND has condemned reports that a Royal Navy officer responsible for Britain's nuclear weapons turned up to work on board his submarine drunk.

Lt Cdr Len Louw was sent home from the United States, where HMS Vigilant – one of Britain's Vanguard-class submarines which carries the Trident nuclear weapons system – was docked at the time. He is now under investigation.

Multiple stories in the press reveal Lt Cdr Louw was 'staggering drunk' and was carrying a bag of chicken. The weapons engineering officer is responsible for all weapons and sensors on board.

CND General Secretary Kate Hudson commented:

'This is not the first time we've heard about crew on board Britain's nuclear submarines acting recklessly. Over the past few years, there have been reports of inappropriate relationships, failed drug tests, shortages of staff and on-board fires. It's ironic that the government insists that Trident is for our security, but this long list of incidents seem to suggest the opposite – it's a disaster waiting to happen.'

'The stakes are so high if something goes wrong, that it's beyond belief if a senior member of the crew decided to act so carelessly as to get drunk before working with nuclear weapons. Questions must be asked as to the whole culture on board the country's nuclear-armed submarines.'

'It would be safer for all involved if the government scrapped Trident and the planned replacement, and concentrated instead on addressing the real threats we face today, not least the Covid-19 pandemic.'

More than 30 crew members on HMS Vigilant have tested positive for COVID-19 during this US visit, including the doctor and executive officer, one of only two people with codes to fire the nukes. A U.S. official confirmed a report that the crew of the submarine got sick after violating isolation rules. A quarter of the crew onboard were infected with the virus.

The sailors reportedly travelled to Cocoa Beach, Fla., 200 miles away, and went to bars and strip clubs, although Georgia and Florida both continued to report high rates of infection. ■

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## USAF Fairford

Six US nuclear-capable B52 bombers were stationed on exercise at (RAF) USAF Fairford on the Oxfordshire / Gloucestershire border from the last week in August until the end of September.

They flew from Fairford in fairly provocative flights ranging from the East Siberian Sea to the Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea during this exercise. They flew over all European NATO countries, and had many exercises with allied aircraft.

USAF Fairford is more active than for the last decade, with exercises of B2 stealth, B1 and B52 strategic bombers taking place at various times. It now has U2 intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance planes stationed there, flying on missions every few days.

Local nukewatchers and peace activists monitor the increasing activities at the base. ■



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# 'Global War-Fighting Starts Here' – webinar USAF Croughton Keep Space for Peace week – 3rd October

At the beginning of 'Keep Space for Peace' week each October Oxford CND, Abingdon Peace Group, Faringdon Peace Group and Kidlington Peace Group with other friends in the area campaign as Oxfordshire Peace Group at the USAF base at (RAF) Croughton on the Oxfordshire / Northamptonshire border.

This major U.S. communication and intelligence base supports space communications, data links, military drone information, bomber guidance, missile defence, diplomatic communications, and command and control war fighting functions.

It is now online here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXb7rEvOm5E>

There are links to Paul Mobbs's two videos in the description below, and they also show up linked on the video itself at the end. Dave Webb's slides are also linked in the description. The link to the SeaGreen Singers with Paul Mobbs slideshow also is below.

## **Oxfordshire Peace Campaign and CND**

As part of Keep Space for Peace Week, the Oxfordshire Peace Campaign and CND discussed the role of USAF Croughton in drone warfare, as well as wider strategic issues. The webinar also featured a video from Paul Mobbs (Croughtonwatch) and songs from the SeaGreen Singers.

You can find Paul Mobbs's introductory video on YouTube separately here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JF0m1>

And the SeaGreen Singers video with Paul Mobbs's slideshow can be found separately here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LUOEN>

You can find Dave Webb's slides at <https://cnduk.org/wp-content/uploads/>

For more about Keep Space for Peace Week please visit <http://www.space4peace.org/>

**U.S.A.F. Croughton**  
**Stop the Militarisation of Space**

**No Space Force**  
**Stop Drones Surveillance & Killing**  
**Stop Joint Intelligence Analysis Centre**

**Deal with climate change and global poverty**

**Oxfordshire Peace Campaign**

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# The Future

When CND calls for global nuclear abolition, it is not just a demand from civil society, it's the demand from the overwhelming majority of states globally who are continuing the fight to ensure that humanity has a future.

But the struggle has been a long one, and every time an advance is made, the nuclear weapons states look for a way to derail the momentum towards disarmament.

The requirement for nuclear states to disarm has been enshrined in international law since 1970, in the form of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The NPT commits its signatories – including Britain – to take steps to disarm if they have nuclear weapons and not to acquire them if they don't.

While the non-nuclear states have kept their side of the bargain, all the nuclear powers still have their weapons and are upgrading or modernising their arsenals.

In Britain this takes the form of replacing Trident at an ongoing cost of over £205 billion.

CND was one of many in the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) that joined over 100 governments that welcomed civil society organisations to work alongside them.

The final text was adopted in July 2017, with 122 countries voting in favour.

The treaty is a strong and comprehensive text

which has the potential to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

Its Article 1 is a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons and other related activity and its list of prohibitions includes the use, stockpiling, testing, production, manufacture, stationing and installation.

The treaty opened for signature in September 2017 and three years later sufficient countries have stepped up to the plate, ignoring the bullying of the nuclear weapons states to ensure that the treaty will enter into force on 22nd January 2021.

The challenge now is to prevent the nuclear weapons states sabotaging the treaty.

They don't want it and will try to ignore it. It's up to us to work to bring Britain into the process.

And while our government says it will never sign, there are practical steps we can take to advance the treaty.

Towns and cities around the world – including Oxford – have bypassed their governments and becoming Nuclear Ban Communities as they sign up to support the TPNW.

Whatever the obstacles, the treaty is a breakthrough in international disarmament efforts and will be of enormous support in achieving the goal that most of the world shares: a world free of these weapons of mass destruction. ■



# Diary



**MONTHLY ALL YEAR:** USAF Croughton main gate Quaker meeting 2-3pm (fourth Saturday of the month). Contact: **Elisabeth Salisbury – 01865 515163.**

## November

**Wednesday 4th** – Faringdon Peace Group Zoom meeting 7.30pm.

**Sunday 8th** – Remembrance Sunday.

**Saturday 13th** – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Margaret: 01865 248357

**Tuesday 17th** – Abingdon Peace Group Zoom meeting, 8.00pm.

## December

**Wednesday 2nd** – Faringdon Peace Group Zoom meeting 7.30pm.

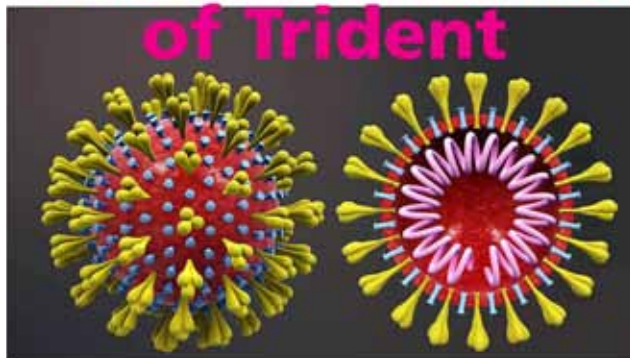
**Saturday 12th** – Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp – Margaret: 01865 248357

**Tuesday 18th** – Abingdon Peace Group Zoom meeting, 8.00pm.

## Webinars

Salisbury CND website gives you access to 2 pages of news and events –  
The link to the News pages is:  
[https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news\\_items](https://www.cndsalisbury.org.uk/news_items)

## Wash our hands of Trident



## Latest News

### Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons

The ground is moving under the UK's feet. We now have this significant new UN treaty which will sit alongside the other major global treaty on nuclear weapons, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and drive forward the international community's shared vision of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The treaty is not symbolic, but gives teeth to this long-delayed commitment to rid the planet of nuclear Weapons of Mass Destruction.

### Membership subscriptions 2020 Please pay your subscription soon!

If you pay your subscription by cheque please can you pay us as soon as possible. Oxford CND needs that money to campaign and send you information and newsletters. We are also very grateful for extra donations. Subs are very reasonable – £10 or £5 low wage, but are essential for us to continue to campaign. Standing orders can continue as before. Make cheques for 2020 payable to Oxford CND and send to: Membership, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP.

### Oxford CND Newsletter by email

Some members already receive the Oxford CND newsletter only by email. If you would also like to receive it only by email, contact: [oxfordcnd@phonecoop.coop](mailto:oxfordcnd@phonecoop.coop)

### Contributions to the next issue...

Please send letters and items to:  
Newsletter, 22 Downside Road, Oxford, OX3 8HP  
No later than **Sunday 3rd January 2021**

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