

SGI-UK

Buddhism in Action for Peace

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The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London SW1A 2AA

29th March 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

I enclose a statement to you from leaders of the UK's Buddhist community around the recent statement in the Defence Review about the proposed increase in the cap of the UK's stockpile of nuclear weapons.

On moral and humanitarian grounds, we urge a reconsideration of this proposal, and ask that the UK government takes action in line with its obligations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and reduce nuclear weapons. We also suggest that the UK participate, at least as an observer, in the First Meeting of States Parties of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which will take place in Vienna in January 2022.

Yours sincerely,



Robert Harrap
SGI-UK General Director

TRUST THROUGH FRIENDSHIP
PEACE THROUGH TRUST

Statement to the Prime Minister from Buddhist leaders following the UK Government's Integrated Review of Security Defence Development and Foreign Policy

29th March 2021

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to you today as leaders and representatives of the various Buddhist organisations listed below, and our shared determination to live in a peaceful and harmonious world.

Having read the UK Government's recent Integrated Review we note the statement that:

'The Integrated Review is a comprehensive articulation of the UK's national security and international policy. It outlines three fundamental national interests that bind together the citizens of the UK – sovereignty, security and prosperity – alongside our values of democracy and a commitment to universal human rights, the rule of law, freedom of speech and faith, and equality.'

We recognise that there are new and emerging challenges in the world especially in the area of technology and in this Review the government is seeking to respond to these. However the decision to increase the cap on the number of nuclear weapons which the UK can stockpile by more than 40 percent is contrary to the stated spirit of the Review.

Nuclear weapons are weapons of mass destruction that will not protect the UK against cyber attacks and surely put the UK at more risk of cyber attacks and terrorism.

The UK is a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and should be using its best endeavours to be reducing the number of nuclear weapons, not increasing them.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has commented that the UK is acting 'contrary to its obligations under Article VI of the NPT' in a move which could have a 'damaging impact on global stability and efforts to pursue a world free of nuclear weapons'.

The entry into force of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22nd January this year is a great milestone in the eradication of these weapons

of mass destruction and the UK government should indicate that it will be participating in the First Meeting of States Parties which will take place in Vienna in January 2022. A commitment to participate in this process, even as an observer, would indicate a genuine commitment to multilateral disarmament.

The humanitarian consequences of the accidental detonation of one nuclear warhead would be unimaginably devastating and the International Red Cross has indicated the long-lasting consequences would not and could not be limited by national borders. To truly demonstrate its commitment to equality and the universal human rights, we urge the British government to join the international community which supports the TPNW and take urgent steps to reduce its nuclear weapons stockpile and as soon as possible eradicate it. This would enable funds to be used for the benefit of both the domestic population as well as the wider international community in the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

This is the moral and ethical action we urge the UK Government to take.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Harrap, General Director of Soka Gakkai International – UK

Ven. B. Seelawimala, Head of London Buddhist Vihara and president of Srilankan Sangha Sabha

Kyoichiro Hosoya, Director, Rissho Kosei-kai London Centre

Don de Silva MSc MAC, University Buddhist Chaplain and Mentor

Kaspalita Thompson, Buddhist Teacher, Bright Earth Buddhist Temple

Juliet Hackney, Chair, Network of Buddhist Organisations – UK

Munisha, Liaison and Communications officer, Triratna Buddhist Order

Jamie Cresswell, Director, Centre for Applied Buddhism