



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office

The Rt Hon. James Cleverly MP
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Dear Ben Donaldson,

Thank you for your letter of 22 January 2021 to the Prime Minister about the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). I am responding as the Minister for the Middle East and North Africa.

The United Kingdom is committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, in line with our obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We believe that the NPT is the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

The UK will work for a successful NPT Review Conference that continues to lay the groundwork and helps build the trust and confidence necessary for multilateral disarmament, as well as strengthening the non-proliferation and peaceful uses pillars of the Treaty. And we will continue to press for other steps including the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and successful negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty within the Conference on Disarmament.

As a Nuclear Weapon State that takes its responsibilities seriously, the UK continues to work with international partners towards creating the environment for a world without nuclear weapons. However, the Government is of the firm view that the TPNW fails to address the obstacles that must first be overcome to achieve lasting global nuclear disarmament. We do not believe that the TPNW will improve the international security environment or increase trust and transparency.

The United Kingdom will not send observers to the First Conference of States Parties of the TPNW. The Government has been clear it will not sign the TPNW. We do not believe this Treaty will bring us closer to a world without nuclear weapons and do not accept that the TPNW contributes to the development of customary international law.

I can reassure you that the Government is committed to putting the necessary resources into tackling COVID-19 and climate change. However, these are not the only threats faced by the UK, its interests and its Allies. The UK's nuclear deterrent exists to deter the most extreme threats from other states to our national security and way of life, and it will remain essential for as long as the global security situation demands.

I can also reassure you that movements of Defence Nuclear Materials are kept to the minimum necessary to meet operational requirements and are, and will continue to be, conducted by highly trained personnel to the most rigorous safety and security standards, which are subject to a robust assurance process including regulatory oversight.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'J. Cleverly', written in a cursive style.

The Rt Hon. James Cleverly MP
Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa