

# Salisbury CND 21.4.17



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## **Interesting developments within the United Nations on Nuclear Disarmament**

Our speaker, Elizabeth Minor, was from Article 36, which is a not-for-profit organisation working to prevent the unintended, unnecessary or unacceptable harm caused by certain weapons. She was talking about the United Nations initiative to negotiate a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons. Four weeks of talks are envisaged which are planned to lead to a Treaty ready for signatories to adopt in July 2017. Similar treaties have been developed to prohibit the use of Biological and Chemical weapons, Land Mines and Cluster Bombs. The humanitarian arguments behind these existing treaties apply also to nuclear weapons.

A UN mandate to negotiate a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons was voted through in 2016. One hundred and thirty states participated in the initial week of meetings in March 2017. The nations who have nuclear arms did not attend, but the intention within the UN is that the treaty will go ahead, with or without the involvement of these member states. When the treaty exists, it will provide additional international pressure on all nations to eliminate nuclear weapons and has the potential to be an important influence on public opinion. It will be in addition to the existing treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, a treaty that is dominated by those countries that hold such weapons. The new treaty is primarily being driven by those nations that do not hold nuclear arms.

It is seen as important that the public is informed of this new initiative, which could be helpful in encouraging the discussion of nuclear disarmament. It moves the scope for campaigning beyond simply Trident replacement in the UK, although the future of Trident remains an important aspect of our work. The UK is seen as a country with one of the strongest anti-nuclear lobbies in the world.

Article 36's fuller report on the discussions is available here:

<http://www.article36.org/nuclear-weapons/first-week-ban/>