



Pax Christi International on Nuclear Disarmament

Pax Christi International has set as its aim, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction or fundamental control of not just weapons of mass destruction but all weapons production. Nuclear arms are perhaps the most inhumane of all weapons. They are rightly called weapons of mass destruction and weapons of terror. Nuclear weapons are indiscriminate in their effects. They result in widespread and massive devastation, and cause long-lasting radioactive damage.

Designed to terrify as well as destroy, these weapons can, in the hands of either states or terrorists, cause destruction on a vastly greater scale than any conventional weapons. They have the potential to kill thousands of people in a single attack, and their effects may persist in the environment and within human bodies, in some cases indefinitely.

As long as any state possesses such weapons – especially nuclear arms - others will persist in acquiring them. As long as such weapons remain in a state's arsenal, there is a risk that these weapons will be used one day, either by design or accident. Such use of these weapons would be catastrophic.

The principle of the non-proliferation of nuclear arms, together with measures of nuclear disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear tests, are intimately interconnected objectives that must be met as soon as possible by means of effective controls at the international level.

The prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as the prevention of nuclear terrorism, is a high priority of Pax Christi International. Nuclear weapons should be outlawed and the threat and the numbers of existing nuclear weapons should be reduced to zero.

Some highlights:

- Participation of Pax Christi International in the annual Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) meetings in Vienna, Geneva and New York.
- Regular Publications of Advocacy Packages on Nuclear Disarmament in 2009 and 2010.
- Pax Christi International issues regular Position Statements on nuclear disarmament. For instance in 2009: "Towards Global Zero of Nuclear Weapons Now. An Appeal to the USA: Make Use of the Momentum! Yes, you can!"
- Advocacy Initiatives to the Holy See on Nuclear Disarmament. Letter to

the Secretariat of State in 2010. Meeting at the Secretariat of State in 2009.

- Introduction on Nuclear Disarmament before COMECE, the Bishops Conferences of the European Union, in 2009. Drafting a position statement for COMECE.
- Campaign on international and European level towards a World Free of Nuclear Weapons.
- Focus and Campaign on a Middle East Free Zone of Weapons of Mass Destruction.
- Participation in a Strategy Seminar of the World Council of Churches on Nuclear Disarmament, November 2011.
- Seminar on Nuclear Disarmament, Paris, 2011.
- Participation in the World Council of Churches Pre-Assembly Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, Seoul, December 2012.
- Publication of Paper on Abolition of Nuclear Weapons and the Need for Nuclear Free Zones – 2013.
- Publication of Paper on Humanitarian Consequences on the use of Nuclear Weapons – 2013.
- Open letters to NATO member states on nuclear disarmament.
- Regular letters addressed to Governments and United Nations.
- Messages on the occasion of 6 and 9 August.

Many Member organisations of Pax Christi International are working on the issue of nuclear disarmament on the national and regional level. They do advocacy, plan actions and prayer vigils. For instance, each Ash Wednesday Pax Christi UK holds a manifestation at the Ministry of Defence in London.

Some Pax Christi Member Organisations do international advocacy such as IKV Pax Christi Netherlands. Our Dutch colleagues have a No Nukes Team in their staff.

Besides specific initiatives taken by Pax Christi International and its Member Organisations, we are part of international coalitions such as Abolition 2000 (the Secretariat is with IKV Pax Christi Netherlands) and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Some Member organisations are member of the national ICAN coalitions. Pax Christi International is also actively within networks such as the International Peace Bureau and the Ecumenical Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament of the WCC.

The International Secretariat organises regularly workshops on nuclear disarmament for its Pax Christi Member Organisations.