



It is Time to Free our World from Nuclear Weapons

Pax Christi International commemorates victims of nuclear bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

On these solemn days, as we remember the victims of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Pax Christi International offers a message of hope.

In his first World Day of Peace Message, Pope Francis spoke of community as the pathway to peace:

"The ever-increasing number of interconnections and communications in today's world makes us powerfully aware of the unity and common destiny of the nations. In the dynamics of history, and in the diversity of ethnic groups, societies and cultures, we see the seeds of a vocation to form a community composed of brothers and sisters who accept and care for one another. But this vocation is still frequently denied and ignored in a world marked by a globalization of indifference which makes us slowly inured to the suffering of others and closed in on ourselves."¹

That indifference fuels not only the armed conflicts raging across our globe today, but also an unconscionable and exorbitant commitment by a handful of the most powerful states to maintain and constantly modernize arsenals of nuclear weapons whose destructive potential is vast even compared to the tragic devastation in Japan whose anniversary we mark today. For that reason, Pope Francis has called for nuclear disarmament as a first step to reverse the nuclear disorder that thwarts humanity's potential for justice and global solidarity.

Indeed, this message was echoed by the Permanent Observer of the Holy See, Archbishop Francis Chullikat, in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's review process this spring:

"The military doctrine of nuclear deterrence is regarded by a great number of countries as a prime obstacle to meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament. It exists as an elemental part of security force structures that hinder the development of our globalized and interdependent world. Moreover, it is used to justify the modernization of existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons, thus obstructing genuine nuclear disarmament...The logical course of action is clear: urgent and expedited progress leading to a global ban on nuclear weapons to accompany the global ban on other weapons of mass destruction such as chemical and biological weapons."²

Pax Christi International remains convinced that the outdated policy of nuclear deterrence, to which the nuclear weapons states cling so arrogantly, remains the greatest obstacle to the achievement of a nuclear weapons free world. We echo the voices of many peace

¹ [Message of His Holiness Francis for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace](#), 1 January 2014.

² [Intervention of H.E. Archbishop Francis Chullikat, Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN](#), NPT PrepCom 30 April 2014.

organizations regarding the unacceptably slow pace of arsenal reduction and the insufficiently courageous implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty's mandate for disarmament.

Pax Christi International, as a global movement of persons whose daily work for peace embodies hope, is encouraged by the increasing commitment of non-nuclear-armed nations to build a consensus around the urgent need to act. A series of conferences on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons has occurred in Oslo and Nayarit; a third is planned for Vienna, and public opinion appears to have been mobilising around this initiative since its beginning in September 2013. The Oslo-Nayarit-Vienna process offers us concrete hope that an increasing number of nations are prepared to move forward to the total elimination of and permanent ban on nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons are incompatible with peace in our century, and they are incompatible with the survival of human civilisation in the long term.

Pax Christi International has long held that the call for a world free of the scourge of nuclear weapons is one rooted not in fear — although the consequences of any use of nuclear weapons are indeed catastrophic — but in hope. That hope is animated by the truth at the heart of our human existence: that we are one human family, one people called to community.

Pax Christi International, on this day when we remember with great sadness the destruction and human suffering unleashed by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, reaffirms its commitment to act for a future free of the threat or use of these immensely destructive weapons. The use – even the possession – of nuclear weapons is immoral, and it simply cannot be justified.³ As such, Pax Christi International offers a series of recommendations to diplomats, politicians, and all members of civil society.

- We call upon the nuclear weapons states to fulfil their Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments for disarmament: to “pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.”⁴
- We call upon Civil Society to support the Oslo-Nayarit-Vienna process and to continue raising awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. Chemical and biological weapons have been stigmatised and banned; nuclear weapons, too, can be eliminated.
- We call on those states⁵ which have not ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, a treaty which would make immense contributions to nuclear security, to do so immediately. Pax Christi International also supports the creation of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty with effective verification measures, proposed by the United States, which would ban the production of fissile material for nuclear and other explosive devices.
- Finally, we call upon every person of good will to increase educational efforts at the local level to create and build the political will and pressure necessary to achieve such a ban.

Brussels, 6 August 2014

³ Read more in the July 2014 paper, [“Toward principled security policy”](#)

⁴ The [Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons](#).

⁵ The People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and the United States of America. For all states, [see http://www.ctbto.org](http://www.ctbto.org)