

Faith leaders across the UK call on nuclear weapons states to join with other states to implement new approaches to eliminate nuclear arsenals

13 March 2015

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26 faith leaders from eight faith traditions among them Archbishop Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool and National President of Pax Christi, have signed a statement in advance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference meetings scheduled for April urging nuclear weapons states, of which the UK is one, and the international community to develop a robust plan of action that will lead us to a world free of nuclear weapons. (Full list of signatories here <http://www.endnuclearweapons.org.uk/signatories.htm>)

Pat Gaffney, General Secretary of Pax Christi commented. We should be encouraged by this initiative which expresses deeply held values of people of faith that peace and security cannot be found in the use or threatened use of nuclear weapons. It indicates that our skills and resources must be redirected to a pursuit of non-nuclear approaches to security for the people and planet. In his message to the Vienna Conference on Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Pope Francis made it clear that "now is the time to counter the logic of fear with the ethic of responsibility, and so foster a climate of trust and sincere dialogue"

The statement was accompanied by a letter published today in The Times signed by Most Rev Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool, Maulana Shahid Raza, founder trustee, British Muslim Forum; Bharti Taylor, executive director, Hindu Forum of Europe; Lord Indarjit Singh of Wimbledon, director, Network of Sikh Organisations, Ven B Seelawimala, head priest, London Buddhist Vihara

The statement has been developed and co-ordinated by Religions for Peace UK, Pax Christi UK and a range of Churches and other faith groups.

The full statements here <http://www.endnuclearweapons.org.uk/index.htm> and below:

"Nuclear weapons are by their nature indiscriminate in their effect. Any use of nuclear weapons would have devastating humanitarian consequences, be incompatible with International Humanitarian Law and violate the principle of dignity for every human being that is common to each of our faith traditions. Our world faces many challenges including oppressive poverty, climate change, violent extremism and emerging national rivalry. Addressing these challenges requires strong relationships across nations, founded on mutual co-operation, trust and shared prosperity. Security policies based on the threat of the use of nuclear weapons are immoral and ultimately self-defeating.

We must move beyond the division of our world into nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states and ensure that all states make good their commitment to negotiations on the universal, legally verifiable and enforceable elimination of nuclear weapons. We call on all nuclear weapon states to join in this endeavour.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference begins next month, and we urge nuclear weapons states, and the international community, to develop a robust plan of action that will lead us to a world free of nuclear weapons. "

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