



THE UN NUCLEAR BAN TREATY

SCOTLAND'S PART

Scottish CND, an ICAN partner, works in Scotland and internationally for the abolition of all nuclear weapons in Britain as a step towards the global elimination of these weapons of mass destruction.

*Here's the good news. The United Nations has voted to hold a conference in 2017 to negotiate a legally binding treaty to **prohibit nuclear weapons**. The conference will start in New York during March and continue during June and July. All the UN member states can participate, and civil society organisations will be there too.*

The UK Government is ignoring the voice of Scottish people and their elected representatives; the Scottish Parliament and Government, and all but one of the Scottish MPs at Westminster oppose nuclear weapons in Scotland and any renewal of the UK's nuclear weapons anywhere. And yet the UK bases its nuclear weapons system in Scotland and misrepresents the views of Scottish people in negotiations on the ban treaty. It was in the minority of 38 who voted against the ban treaty. The nuclear-armed states and those in military alliances with them claim that 'multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations' are the only way to achieve nuclear disarmament while they actually made desperate efforts to prevent nuclear-free states from supporting the ban treaty.

Scotland did not vote for independence in 2014 but it has spoken clearly through the democratic process against UK nuclear policy. And yet **the UK Ambassador in New York** declared the decision to renew Trident was not reversible, and that it was taken "democratically". He went on to opine that the 123 of the world's states which support a ban treaty are 'foolhardy' and 'do not understand international security'

This gives the **Scottish Government** a clear responsibility. We need to challenge and also support our Government in speaking out for us.

In 2010, a **Red Cross/Red Crescent resolution** made it clear that the impact of the use of nuclear weapons would be so devastating that they could not respond effectively to such a catastrophic humanitarian disaster. Three international conferences about the effect of nuclear weapons on humans followed, which showed that the harm nuclear weapons could do to people and to the earth meant that urgent action was required. Nuclear weapons must be eliminated completely if we are to safely survive. By the third and final conference, a group from all continents had pledged to outlaw nuclear weapons, and UN set up a **working group** to look at this.

The **International** Committee of the Red Cross support a ban treaty, as a “unique opportunity” to ban the “most destructive weapon ever invented” because nuclear weapons pose a unique threat of destruction to the environment and human survival. A very limited regional nuclear war involving around 100 Hiroshima-sized weapons would not only raze cities and contaminate whole states, but cause global climate disruption and agricultural failure so severe that famine would be universal beyond borders. This impact could result from firing the warheads on just one of **Trident** subs at Faslane.

The **Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty** (NPT) had been signed in 1970 and reviewed every 5 years, but even so, the nuclear-armed states hold 15,000 nuclear weapons, and although the treaty says that those states must pursue nuclear disarmament, it does not contain any explicit prohibition on use or possession. The **working group in 2016** recommended work on a new treaty to fill that **legal gap**.

Like the Land Mine and Cluster Munition Ban Treaties, a Nuclear Weapons **Ban Treaty** will start the process of prohibiting and eliminating these devastating weapons of mass destruction.

At the UN in October 2016, even nuclear-armed states **India, Pakistan and China** abstained from voting and will participate in the conference: **North Korea** voted for **the resolution**, clearly thinking disarmament was a better solution to its own security concerns than acquiring nuclear weapons.

It was **the UK** and the other nuclear-armed nations who voted against the UN resolution - along with most European states that host NATO nuclear weapons. Those states were put under intense pressure. Notwithstanding, the nations of Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia and the Pacific voted overwhelmingly in favour, and they will be working on the ban treaty along **with Ireland and Austria** at the negotiating conference in New York next year.

When states banned land mines in 1997 and cluster munitions in 2008, the focus was on the human impact of the weapons and they were prohibited under International Humanitarian Law. Nuclear weapons impact on the whole world. Nations in any part of the world can reject nuclear weapons and help to change “the rules” about them.

The **ban treaty** will challenge the idea that possessing nuclear weapons is legitimate for some states. Bill Kidd MSP (who was participating as co-chair of PNND) put it this way:

"This result at the UN in New York is a very powerful symbol of the feelings of people the world over that nuclear weapons aren't needed and aren't wanted. Only the arrogance of politicians in the Nuclear Weapons States stands in the way of a world without these weapons of mass-murder where real international security can be built."

We need the **Scottish Government's** view to be represented at the negotiations. The public at home and abroad need to know Scotland is part of the negotiations because we have a critical stake in the outcome. The Scottish Government has responsibilities to uphold international humanitarian law regarding the nuclear weapons deployed here. It is time to explore how those responsibilities might be met.

***Scotland** is in the unique position of having more potential capacity to disarm a nuclear-armed state than any other government in the world. This is far better understood outside Scotland than within it.*

We can also support **ICAN UK and CND UK** in their efforts to persuade the UK Government to support and participate in the UN Conference and to send representatives of UK political parties to the negotiations.

Ask your MSP and MP how they will support the ban treaty conference, and what they will do to ensure that Scotland's voice is heard.

Scottish CND has set up a working group from its own membership and with other groups to support the global ban treaty.

To get involved, please email scnd@banthebomb.org with GLOBAL BAN in the subject line.