

UNPACKING THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (TPNW)

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) represents a landmark international agreement aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Adopted on July 7, 2017, and entering into force on January 22, 2021, the TPNW prohibits the development, testing, production, acquisition, possession, stockpiling, use, or threat of use of nuclear weapons. It also includes provisions for victim assistance and environmental remediation, acknowledging the disproportionate harm caused by nuclear weapons, particularly to Indigenous Peoples and women.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TREATY AND MEETING OF STATE PARTIES

The TPNW is groundbreaking as it is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons, with the ultimate goal of their total elimination. The Meetings of States Parties (MSPs) serve as crucial platforms for signatory nations and supporting entities to assess progress, address challenges, and develop strategies for the treaty's implementation and universalisation. Serving as preparation for review conferences, these meetings facilitate dialogue, promote cooperation, and reinforce the global commitment to a nuclear-free world.

TIMELINE OF THE TPNW AND MEETING OF STATE PARTIES (MSP)

1. 2017 — Treaty Adoptions
 - a. On July 7, 2017, 122 states voted to adopt the TPNW at the United Nations in New York
2. 2021 — Treaty Enters into Force
 - a. On January 22, 2021, after receiving 50 ratifications, the TPNW became legally binding under international law.
3. First Meeting of State Parties (1MSP) — 21-23 June 2022, Vienna, Austria.
 - Key outcomes:
 - Adoption of a strong Declaration and Action Plan outlining steps for the treaty's implementation and efforts toward universalisation
 - Emphasis on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and the necessity for the total elimination
 - Commitments to provide victim assistance and environmental remediation, and the creation of a Scientific Advisory Group
4. 2nd Meeting of State Parties (2MSP) — 27 November-1 December 2023, New York City, USA
 - Key Outcomes
 - Reaffirmation of the commitment to delegitimise, stigmatise, and eliminate nuclear weapons

- Condemnation of nuclear deterrence policies and nuclear sharing arrangements
 - Recognition of the increasing nuclear risks and the urgent need for disarmament
 - a. Focused on strengthening implementation and universalising the treaty
5. 3rd Meeting of States Parties (3MSP) — 3-7 March 2025, New York City, USA
- Key Outcomes
 - Adoption of a report, a declaration, and a set of decisions focusing on:
 - Establishment of an intersessional structure for treaty implementation
 - Creation of an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation
 - Review process for the renewal of the mandate and terms of reference for the Scientific Advisory Group
 - a. Held again in New York
 - b. Key achievements included the adoption of a political declaration, further work on verification, and steps to establish a trust fund for victims.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE THIRD MEETING OF STATES PARTIES

The Third Meeting of State Parties to the TPNW convened from March 3-7, 2025, in New York. This gathering provided a platform for member states to reaffirm their commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons and to discuss actionable steps towards this goal. Key sessions included high-level opening remarks, panel discussions on preventing nuclear war and understanding its true costs, and a general exchange of views.

HIGH-LEVEL OPENING SESSION:

[Izumi Nakamitsu, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs](#): “The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons necessitate urgent action. The TPNW is a beacon of hope in these perilous times.”

[Melissa Parke of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons \(ICAN\)](#): “We must reject the illusion of security that nuclear weapons provide and instead embrace the collective responsibility to ensure a world free from the threat of nuclear war.”

FIRST PANEL DISCUSSION: MOBILISING EFFORTS TO PREVENT A NUCLEAR WAR — INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE GROWING GLOBAL CONSENSUS

“It is very urgent to find a way to resolve the problem through diplomatic efforts. Instead of a show of force and an arms race through nuclear deterrence, we should focus on dialogue, negotiations, and improving relations” — [Lee Youngah](#), People’s Solidarity for Participatory Democracy.

**SECOND PANEL DISCUSSION: THE TRUE COST OF NUCLEAR WAR —
UNDERSTANDING THE KNOWN AND UNKNOWN AND COUNTERING THE
FALLACY OF A “LIMITED NUCLEAR CONFLICT”**

Experts highlighted the fallacy of “[limited nuclear conflict](#),” warning of the irreversible humanitarian and environmental consequences of any nuclear weapon use.

GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS

Many state parties condemned the continued reliance on nuclear deterrence and called for accelerated disarmament.

“The TPNW is more than a treaty — it is a moral imperative,” stated an ambassador from [South Africa](#)

**DECLARATIONS REGARDING OWNERSHIP, POSSESSION, OR CONTROL OF
NUCLEAR WEAPONS (ARTICLE 2)**

These declarations will not happen until the treaty is adopted by the state parties.

UNIVERSALITY (Article 12)

The urgency of universalising the TPNW was reiterated, with multiple countries advocating diplomatic outreach to nuclear-armed states.

TOWARDS THE ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (Article 4)

Article 4 (Elimination of Nuclear Weapons Programmes): [Austria](#) stressed, “Transparency and accountability mechanisms must be robustly enforced to ensure total disarmament.”

Statements from other countries have not been updated on the Reading Critical Will website.

**VICTIM ASSISTANCE, ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION, AND INTERNATIONAL
CAMPAIGN AND ASSISTANCE (Articles 6 and 7)**

“The *International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons* recommends the use of complementarities to achieve the TPNW’s ends, as does the *Vienna Action Plan*, and by particular means, many working papers submitted to us” - [Costa Rica](#).

“Ireland strongly supports the objective of the TPNW and its efforts to address the impact of nuclear weapons, with victims and affected communities at its core. We welcome further opportunities to strengthen the implementation of these provisions and ensure the object and spirit of the Treaty is realised.” - [Ireland](#).

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES (Article 5)

To read the full thematic statement on national implementation measures:

https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban/3msp/statements/6March_ICAN_Art5.pdf

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVICE FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATY

The [Scientific Advisory Group](#) recommended continued research on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

INTERSESSIONAL STRUCTURE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TREATY

“We encourage states parties to reaffirm their commitment to inclusivity in the intersessional process and build on steps taken so far” - [Rico Robertson](#).

IMPLEMENTING THE GENDER PROVISIONS OF THE TREATY

States reaffirmed the need for gender-sensitive disarmament policies, noting the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapons on women and marginalised communities.

COMPLEMENTARITY OF THE TREATY WITH THE EXISTING NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION REGIME

“These treaties, establishing nuclear-weapon free zones (NWFZs) in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa, are fundamental pillars of the international nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation regime, and share a common foundation marked by historical pacifist advocacy, political determination to denuclearise their territories, and the promotion of peaceful use of nuclear energy” - [Ambassador Flávio Roberto Bonzanini](#).

CONSULTATIVE PROCESS ON THE SECURITY CONCERNS OF STATES UNDER THE TPNW

“It is not idealistic or naive to expect that nuclear disarmament must take place now. What is naive is the assumption that nuclear weapons will not be used, intentionally or by accident or miscalculation, leading to catastrophic and cascading consequences for all. All the warning signs are there that the status quo is untenable and unacceptable” - [ICAN Thematic Statement on Security Concerns, 3MSP](#).

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE THIRD MSP ON THE TPNW

The Third MSP to the TPNW took place in March 2025 at the UN Headquarters. Key decisions included:

- **Continuing Treaty Implementation Work:** Working groups on universalisation, victim assistance, disarmament, and gender integration were extended.

- **First Review Conference:** Scheduled for late 2026 in New York, with South Africa as President.
- **Support for Victims & Environment:** Plans to explore an international trust fund for assistance and remediation.
- **Scientific Advisory Review:** A process to evaluate and potentially update the Scientific Advisory Group's mandate.

Read the full package of decisions:

[https://docs-library.unoda.org/Treaty_on_the_Prohibition_of_Nuclear_Weapons_-ThirdMeeting_of_States_Parties_\(2025\)/TPNW_MSP_2025_CRP.4_Draft_political_declaration.pdf](https://docs-library.unoda.org/Treaty_on_the_Prohibition_of_Nuclear_Weapons_-ThirdMeeting_of_States_Parties_(2025)/TPNW_MSP_2025_CRP.4_Draft_political_declaration.pdf)

DRAFT DECISIONS OF THE THIRD MSP ON THE TPNW: “STRENGTHENING OUR COMMITMENT TO A WORLD FREE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AMIDST THE RISING GLOBAL INSTABILITY”

The draft declaration from the Third MSP to the TPNW reaffirms the commitment to nuclear disarmament, warning of the growing threat posed by nuclear weapons amid rising geopolitical tensions and arsenal expansions. It marks the 80th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, honoring all victims and survivors.

The declaration recognises past achievements from previous meetings and stresses the importance of inclusive engagement, involving civil society, academia, and non-nuclear states in advancing disarmament. It calls for strengthening multilateralism to counter the weakening of arms control agreements and urges renewed diplomacy and trust-building to prevent catastrophic consequences.

Read the Political Declaration:

[https://docs-library.unoda.org/Treaty_on_the_Prohibition_of_Nuclear_Weapons_-ThirdMeeting_of_States_Parties_\(2025\)/TPNW_MSP_2025_CRP.4_Draft_political_declaration.pdf](https://docs-library.unoda.org/Treaty_on_the_Prohibition_of_Nuclear_Weapons_-ThirdMeeting_of_States_Parties_(2025)/TPNW_MSP_2025_CRP.4_Draft_political_declaration.pdf).

CONCLUSION

The Third MSP to the TPNW marked a significant step forward in the global movement toward nuclear disarmament. While other states are still to implement the treaty, the adoption of concrete measures, such as the establishment of an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation, demonstrates the treaty's commitment to addressing both the humanitarian and environmental legacies of nuclear weapons. The continued engagement of state parties, civil society, and affected communities is vital to achieving the treaty's ultimate goal: a world free of nuclear weapons.

For more information and statements, visit the Reading Critical Will website:

<https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/nuclear-weapon-ban/3msp/statements#article2>.