

## FACT SHEET

### TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

[The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons \(TPNW\)](#) was adopted on 7 July 2017 at the United Nations. It was opened for signature on 20 September 2017. As of 15 May 2020, 81 States have signed the Treaty and 36 have ratified.



**“This historic instrument, for which the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, will form an important component of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime when it enters into force, and enable States that so choose to subscribe to some of the highest available multilateral norms against nuclear weapons.”**

*Secretary-General’s Agenda for Disarmament  
24 May 2018, Geneva*



The TPNW contains a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon-related activities. This includes undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. The Treaty also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory and the provision of assistance to any State in the conduct of prohibited activities. States parties are required to prevent and suppress any prohibited activities undertaken on their territory or by persons under their jurisdiction or control. The TPNW requires States parties to assist individuals affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons, as well as to take environmental remediation measures in areas under their jurisdiction or control that have been contaminated due to the testing or use of nuclear weapons.

#### Background

By resolution 71/258, the General Assembly decided to convene in 2017 a United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. The Conference took place from 27 to 31 March 2017 and from 15 June to 7 July 2017 in

New York. The Conference was chaired by Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN Office at Geneva.

### **The Humanitarian Consequences**

A key driver behind the initiative to seek a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons was the discourse centred on promoting greater awareness and understanding of the humanitarian consequences that would result from any use of nuclear weapons.

Interest in the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons was first manifested in the final document ([NPT/CONF.2010/50 \(Vol. I\)](#)) of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which expressed its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons.

In 2012, expressing concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, the General Assembly established an open-ended working group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. The open-ended working group's findings were reflected in its report ([A/68/514](#)).

A series of three international conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, convened in 2013 and 2014 respectively in Norway, Mexico and Austria, sought to present a facts-based understanding of the short- and longer-term effects of a nuclear weapon detonation. These conferences played an important role in building demand for urgent action to advance nuclear disarmament negotiations.

**“The goals the TPNW pursues remain as necessary as ever. A deteriorating international security environment and rising nuclear risks continue to demonstrate the wisdom of the adage that the only guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.”**

*High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu  
26 September 2019, New York*

### **TPNW Facts**

- The Secretary-General of the United Nations is the depositary of the TPNW.
- This Treaty shall enter into force 90 days after the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession has been deposited.



**For more information:** <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/>