

Public statement to the Open-ended Working Group
Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (OEWG)

Faith Communities Concerned about the
Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons
May 2016, Geneva

Since August 1945, when the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were subjected to atomic attack, the continued existence of nuclear weapons has forced humankind to live in the shadow of apocalyptic destruction. Their use would not only destroy the past fruits of human civilization, it would disfigure the present and consign future generations to a grim fate.

Nuclear weapons are incompatible with the values upheld by our respective faith traditions—the right of people to live in security and dignity; the commands of conscience and justice; the duty to protect the vulnerable and to exercise the stewardship that will safeguard the planet for future generations. Nuclear weapons manifest a total disregard for all these values and commitments. There is no countervailing imperative—whether of national security, stability in international power relations, or the difficulty of overcoming political inertia—that justifies their continued existence, much less their use. Their catastrophic humanitarian consequences demand that nuclear weapons never be used again, under any circumstances.

We raise our voices in the name of sanity and the shared values of humanity. We reject the immorality of holding whole populations hostage, threatened with a cruel and miserable death. We urge the world's political leaders to muster the courage needed to break the deepening spirals of mistrust that undermine the viability of human societies and threaten our shared future.

For decades, the obligation and responsibility of all states to eliminate these weapons of mass destruction has been embodied in Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Progress toward the fulfillment of this repeatedly affirmed commitment has been far too slow, at times imperceptible.

The Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (OEWG) presents an important opportunity to fulfill its mandate as a truly global enterprise involving all states and fully engaging civil society. It should seize this opportunity to pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

As people of faith, we urge the OEWG to:

1. Heed the voices of the world's hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) urging the abolition of nuclear weapons, whose suffering must never be visited on any other individual, family or society, by reaffirming that the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons remains at the core of all nuclear disarmament efforts;
2. Continue to call upon all states to participate in the OEWG and subsequent processes in order to fulfill their obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament;
3. Outline in its report to the UN General Assembly, with the maximum degree of detail, a legal framework that will facilitate the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons under strict international control, which should be negotiated without delay in a forum open to all states and blockable by none.

No	Name (Alphabetical order)	Title	Organization
1	The Rev. Chris J. Antal		Unitarian Universalist New York, USA
2	Rev H. P. Barkham		
3	Christian Mose-Christensen		
4	Professor Kevin P Clements	Chair and Director	The National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Otago
5	Benjamin Cortes	Principal	Universidad Evangelica Nicaraguense Martin Luther King Managua, Nicaragua
6	David Culp	Legislative Representative	Nuclear Disarmament, Friends Committee on National Legislation (Quakers)
7	Marie Dennis	Co-President	Pax Christi International
8	REV. DR. ROGER GAIKWAD	GENERAL SECRETARY	NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES IN INDIA
9	Ela Gandhi	Honorary Executive Trustee	Gandhi Development Trust
10	Sabine Johanna Glameyer		
11	Johann Glameyer		
12	Howard W. Hallman	Chair	Methodists United for Peace and Justice
13	Akemi Bailey-Haynie		Soka Gakkai International-USA
14	Stephen Herman		Religions for Peace UK
15	Bernie Holland		Soka Gakkai International-UK
16	Viktoria Isaksson	Communication Strategist	Member of Fridhems kyrkan, that is part of the congregation Interact in Sweden
17	Sanjay Jagatia	Director/Secretary General	Hindu Council UK (HCUK)
18	Rev. Michael Kinnamon, PhD	Former General Secretary	National Council of Churches USA
19	Dr. Jack Kornfield	Founding Teacher	Insight Meditation Society
20	Rev. Paul Lansu	Senior Policy Advisor	Pax Christi International
21	Gerry Lee	Director	Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
22	Rev. Taigen Dan Leighton PhD	Guiding Dharma Teacher	Ancient Dragon Zen Gate, Chicago
23	Peter Low		Quaker New Zealand
24	Rev. Michael Neuroth	Policy Advocate for International Issues	United Church of Christ, Justice & Witness Ministries
25	Rev./Rvda. LeDayne McLeese Polaski	Executive Director/Directora Ejecutiva	BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America
26	Guy Quinlan	Nuclear Disarmament Task Force	All Souls Unitarian Church, New York
27	Matthias Reichl	Press Speaker	Center for Encounter and active Non-Violence
28	Dr Harshad N Sanghrajka	Deputy Chair	Institute of Jainology
29	Jehangir Sarosh OBE	Secretary General	European Council of Religious Leaders – Religions for Peace (ECRL)
30	Dr. Sayyid M. Sayeed	National Director	Office for Interfaith & Community Alliances Islamic Society of North America
31	Rev. Hozan Alan Senauke	Director	Clear View Project (Buddhist)
32	Philip Silk		Unitarian
33	Mandla Sewa Singh		The Nishkam Civic Association (NCA)
34	Susi Snyder	Nuclear Disarmament Programme Manager	PAX
35	Rev Chris Sullivan		Catholic Deacon Auckland, New Zealand
36	Hirotsugu Terasaki	Executive Director of Peace and Global Issues	Soka Gakkai International
37	Dr. Emily Welty	Acting Moderator of the World Council of Churches Commission on International Affairs	World Council of Churches
38	Jim Winkler	President and General Secretary	National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

Titles and affiliations provided for identification purposes only; names appear in alphabetical order.