

Open letter to the Government of Canada
Issued by Canadian Peace Organizations, Friday, September 25, 2020

September 26, is the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, which was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2013. The objectives of the day are to enhance public awareness about the threat posed to humanity by nuclear weapons and encourage action by governments and civil society to prevent nuclear war and achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The organizations that have signed onto this letter are calling on the Canadian government to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

On July 7, 2017, the UN adopted the TPNW. It was an historic achievement with the potential to rid the world of the danger of nuclear weapons. Of the 193 UN member states, 122 voted to adopt the nuclear ban treaty, but Canada was among the 69 nations, including all NATO members, that regrettably withheld support by not voting.

The Treaty opened for signatures at the UN headquarters in New York on September 20, 2017. At the signing ceremony, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said: “The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is the product of increasing concerns over the risk posed by the existence of nuclear weapons, including the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of their use.”

Currently, there are 84 signatories and 45 states parties of the TPNW including New Zealand, South Africa and Ireland. The Treaty will enter into force 90 days after it has been ratified by 50 countries. However, the Government of Canada is refusing to sign onto this important treaty because of Canada's membership in nuclear-armed NATO.

Moreover, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will not meet with Japanese-Canadian nuclear disarmament activist Setsuko Thurlow, who survived the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945 and who accepted the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the International Campaign for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) in 2017. She is appealing to the Prime Minister to show leadership for peace by becoming a state party to the TPNW.

Public opinion shows that Canadians are overwhelmingly opposed to nuclear weapons and want the federal government to work for the abolition of these weapons of mass destruction (IPSOS 1998 and Environics 2008). In the past Canada has taken significant steps for nuclear disarmament. In 1969, Canada ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Article 6 of the NPT requires state parties to negotiate in good faith and take effective measures for nuclear disarmament.

In 1978 at the United Nations, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau declared: “We are thus not only the first country in the world with the capability to produce nuclear weapons that chose not to do so, we are also the first nuclear-armed country to have chosen to divest itself of nuclear weapons.” By 1984 the last U.S. nuclear weapons stationed in Canada were removed.

This year, on September 21, the International Day of Peace, 56 former leaders and ministers including several eminent Canadians signed an open letter issued by ICAN to urge all countries to join the TPNW. The Canadian signatories include former Prime Ministers John Turner and Jean Chretien, former Defence Ministers Jean-Jacques Blais, John McCallum and Bill Graham, and former Foreign Affairs Ministers Lloyd Axworthy and John Manley. They are urging current leaders to “show courage and boldness — and join the treaty.” The letter can be read here: https://www.icanw.org/56_former_leaders

For the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, we too are calling on the federal government to adhere to its legal obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, to abide by the United Nations' Agenda for Disarmament, to respect the will of Canadian citizens and to honour the desires of the international community to live in a world free of nuclear weapons by signing and ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as soon as possible.

. signatories ➡

Signatories as of September 24



les Artistes pour la Paix
William Sloan

B.C. Southern Interior Peace Coalition
Laura Savinkoff, Co-ordinator



Boundary Peace Initiative
Laura Savinkoff, Co-ordinator



Canadian Federation of University Women
Charlotte Akin, Advocacy Coordinator



Canadian Foreign Policy Institute
Bianca Mugenyi, Director



Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers)
Matthew Legge, Peace Program Coordinator

Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (CNANW)
The CNANW Steering Committee: Earl Turcotte (Chair), Bev Delong (Past Chair), Rob Acheson (Treasurer), Cesar Jaramillo, Dr. Adele Buckley, Dr. Nancy Covington, Dr. Jonathan Down

Canadian Peace Alliance
Leo Broderick

Canadian Peace Congress
Miguel Figueroa, President



Canadian Pugwash Group
*Paul Meyer, Senior Advisor, ICT4Peace, Chair, Canadian Pugwash Group
Adjunct Professor of International Studies and Fellow in International Security,
Simon Fraser University*

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace
National Board



Conscience Canada
Murray Lumley, Secretary

Denman Island Peace Group
Patti Willis



Geopolitical Economy Research Group
Radhika Desai, Director



Hamilton Coalition to Stop the War
Ken Stone



Hiroshima Nagasaki Day Coalition
*Vinay Jindal, MD, Co-chair, Hiroshima Nagasaki Day Coalition
Past-president, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War Canada*

Just Peace Advocates
Karen Rodman, Director



Mouvement Québécois pour la Paix
Pierre Jasmin

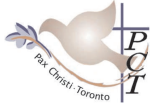


National Association of Japanese Canadians
Lorene Oikawa, President

Ottawa Raging Grannies

Ottawa Quaker Meeting (Religious Society of Friends)
Mary Girard

Nowar-Paix



Pax Christi Toronto
Rosemary Keenan



Paul Maillet Centre for Ethics
Paul Maillet, Colonel (retired)



Peace Alliance Winnipeg
Glenn Michalchuk, Chair



Peace Magazine
Metta Spencer



PeaceQuest



People for Peace London
David Heap



Pivot to Peace
Helen Peacock

Regina Peace Council
Ed Lehman

Religions for Peace Canada
Pascale Frémond



Rideau Institute / Ceasefire.ca
Peggy Mason, President



Saskatoon Peace Coalition
Christopher Hrynkow

Science for Peace
Rob Acheson



Socialist Action / Ligue pour l'Action socialiste
Barry Weisleder, Federal secretary



Vancouver Peace Poppies
Teresa Gagné

Venezuela Peace Committee
Henry Heller, Chair



Women's International League for Peace & Freedom - Canada



World BEYOND War
Rachel Small, Canadian Organizer