

CNANW: Canada can do more at the NPT

This letter was written by the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, which IPPNWC is a co-sponsor of.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) entered into force in 1970 and is designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of [nuclear energy](#), and to further the goal of [nuclear disarmament](#). It is supported by 191 states, but not four unofficial nuclear-armed countries: India, Israel, North Korea and Pakistan, nor South Sudan.

The Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (CNANW) recognizes the positive steps Canada has made towards the aims of the NPT, but there is much more to do. There is global urgency now as a result of war in Ukraine, but also an opportunity to push forward our shared disarmament and non-proliferation objectives at the NPT Review Conference this August.

Canada did attend The Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in June but no officials attended the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) first meeting of states parties, even as observers, despite strong efforts from the Canadian disarmament community and several parliamentarians advocating for Canada to show up.

Canada did attend the five ministerial meetings of the “Stockholm Initiative”, a diplomatic forum that proposes risk reduction measures and a “stepping stones approach” to nuclear disarmament, but the government chose not to be represented at the ministerial level, a gesture that would have increased Canada’s visibility.

At the Madrid NATO Summit in June, Canada failed to speak out against the NATO consensus that the military and political organization will “remain a nuclear alliance while nuclear weapons remain”, a mantra that logically makes nuclear weapons more permanent, not easier to eliminate in keeping with NATO’s goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Indeed, nuclear weapons will continue to be a global threat as long as NATO persists in being a nuclear Alliance.

After two years of delay due to the COVID pandemic, the NPT review conference is being held in New York in August. Divisions have worsened between nuclear weapon possessing states and those allies supporting NATO nuclear deterrence policy on one hand, and states supporting the TPNW on the other. Given global obstacles and the heightened risks of expanded war, including nuclear war, as a result of the conflict in Ukraine, **Canada needs to demonstrate leadership at the Review Conference in these areas:**

Encourage complementarity through respectful references to the TPNW, and seek to engage rather than alienate TPNW supporters in furtherance of NPT goals. Similarly, support civil society initiatives, such as Abolition 2000’s effort ([Frameworks for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World](#)) to broaden the options available towards abolition, whether it be a nuclear weapons convention; a framework of instruments; or the TPNW, bolstered by protocols or related instruments.

Constructive language: Advocate for firm language denouncing threats, explicit or implicit, of nuclear weapon use. But avoid rhetoric that undermines diplomatic progress or possibilities for conflict resolution.

Call for renewed diplomatic efforts to deal urgently with the outstanding proliferation issues of North Korea and Iran.

Promote greater transparency through the common reporting formats that Canada has championed, and which can provide for fact-based judgments on the progress of NPT parties in meeting nonproliferation and disarmament obligations.

Support operationally significant nuclear risk reduction measures such as de-alerting deployed ICBMs and adopting a No First Use policy. Advocate as well against increases in nuclear missile inventories, or any expansion of nuclear weapon use scenarios. Press also for multilateral and bilateral **nuclear force reduction talks** amongst the five nuclear weapon states in keeping with their existing NPT obligations.

CNANW encourages Canada to embrace these leadership opportunities that would also reflect the wishes of the vast majority of Canadians who support nuclear disarmament.

Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

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