

Physicians are often one of the first groups invited to deal with the aftermath of a disaster. And we have had our share of these recently. Earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and nuclear bombs have devastation in common but, in true Sesame Street fashion, one of these is not like the others.

Nuclear bombs have been created, used and stockpiled by human beings - and only humans can prevent their use. That is why Physicians for Global Survival, the Canadian affiliate of the Nobel winning International Physicians for Prevention of nuclear War supports a global grassroots movement for total nuclear disarmament. ICAN - the International Campaign for Abolition of Nuclear Weapons calls for a legally binding and verifiable Nuclear Weapons Convention. Such a treaty would ban the production, testing, use and possession of nuclear weapons and establish a timeframe for their elimination. A model convention has already been prepared and endorsed by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The concept is not the invention of raving lunatics or social fringe elements. The Campaign for a Nuclear Weapons Convention has been supported by more than 3000 mayors through the Mayors for Peace campaign initiated by Mayor Akiba of Hiroshima, many countries such as Ireland, New Zealand, Belgium, the Philippines, Morocco and Egypt, organizations such as Concerned Scientists and the Association of Physicists of Germany and the 505 members of the Order of Canada, the highest civilian honour bestowed upon Canadians.

Because there is no medical response to a nuclear war - there is only prevention, we are asking the government of Canada to begin preparatory work on a Nuclear Weapons Convention.