

## United for the elimination of nuclear weapons

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the role played by **Hibakushas** and Japanese peace movements, whose continued mobilisation has contributed greatly to the successful adoption of a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

### A victory for citizen mobilisation

The United Nation's adoption of a treaty banning nuclear weapons is a victory for millions of individuals and NGOs worldwide. For decades, they have laboured for the full elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, working together with a number of states and with national and international institutions such as the UN, the International Red Cross, the International Labour Organisation, the ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation), etc.

### Global challenges

Nuclear weapons are obviously a mortal danger for all of humanity. They need to be eliminated. The struggle for their elimination is also linked to other global challenges. These include conflict and peace, sustainable development, and climate change, and more broadly the search for justice, **fraternity**, **solidarity** and equality (especially between men and women), and general human rights issues. Nowadays, humanity has the means to confront these problems and to create conditions so that all people may live in peace and security.

**Nevertheless**, the capitalist and neoliberal globalization of the world's economy constitutes a major obstacle to a world of peace, free of nuclear weapons. Indeed, the pursuit of immediate and large profit feeds the arms trade and creates arms races, including in the development of nuclear weapons. This will to power, domination, and monopolisation is aided by the reinterpretation of the UN Charter which benefits NATO and other supranational bodies such as the G8 and G20.

This logic encouraged the development of the military-industrial complex, the main opponent in our struggle for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Indeed, the military-industrial complex, the main cause for increased military expenses, dominates and at the same time controls the media to such a point that, in France, the adoption of the treaty banning nuclear weapons has been met with total silence. Finally, wars led by the USA in Afghanistan and the Middle East, but also by France in Libya, have set **this region** on fire and aided in the rise of the Islamic State. This type of terrorism serves as a misguided reasoning for expanding armament expenses, perpetuating a vicious cycle for the end of which we must work .

### Power relationships

We should not underestimate the success of the nuclear ban treaty, but we also should not over- or underestimate the determination of our opponents to delay the elimination of nuclear arms.

While the balance of power has shifted in favour of elimination, in 2010 the number of states which had adopted the draft convention banning nuclear weapons was 157, while the number which voted for the treaty in 2017 is only 122. This decrease is a direct result of the undermining role that some **EDAN** countries have played, together with the military-industrial complex, particularly since the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in 2014. However, we must stress China's positive declaration in favour of the elimination of nuclear arms.

### Aspirations for Peace and the Available Tools

Even though the people's aspiration for peace is immense, the military-industrial complex is so strong that it still manages to justify or impose increases in armament spending.

Thus, there is an ideological battle, that we have to lead for demonstrate that the desire to live in safety and peace cannot be realized through the augmentation of armament expenses or via increased weapon sophistication. It can, contrary, be reached with alternative solutions for peace that are based on the goals of respecting human rights, sustainable development, trust, conflict prevention via multilateral dialogue, and disarmament.

Commenté [jb1]: ? solidarity

Commenté [jb2]: Est-ce nécessaire ?

Commenté [jb3]: Ca veut dire quoi ? Europe ou États Unis ? Surement non, mais Afghanistan + Middle East + Libya n'est pas une région

Commenté [jb4]: C'est quoi ?

So we need to act together for these objectives and for a pacifist transition and elimination of nuclear weapons, with an immediate freeze in any new development of nuclear arms.

We have at **5 main tools** our disposal:

- The preamble and principles of the Charter of the United Nations
- The 1999 UN Resolution concerning a program for a culture of peace
- The 17 Sustainable development objectives adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2015
- The UN resolutions in favour of nuclear disarmament. Since international law has established the principle of the illegality of nuclear arms, the only thing to be discussed is how to eliminate them. This is a substantial argument in the ideological fight against the military, political, and industrial lobby mentioned above.
- Finally, the main and irreplaceable tool is civil society, which plays a critical role, and this includes all of the favourable political parties.

### **France and Europe**

In France, the majority of the National Assembly members and the current (Macron) administration are in favour of nuclear deterrence, the militarisation of international relations, military interventions abroad, and alignment with NATO policies.

This policy is marked by two serious aims:

1. A doubling of the budget dedicated to atomic weapons (from 3.5 to 7 billion Euros per year) in order to renew the entire fleet of nuclear submarines.
2. To increase France's military budget to 2% of GDP as required by NATO by 2022 or 2025, which means an eventual increase of 10 billion Euros per year.

Faced with these policies, the Mouvement de la Paix has initiated a collective of organisations on the basis of the call for action "*on the march for peace, stop war, stop violence.*" Today, this collective is already made up of 115 different organisations, including several labour unions, the most important of which is the CGT with its 850,000 members. The collective has introduced two main actions: a petition disputing the two aforementioned aims of the new administration; and different peace marches throughout France on Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>, around with the International Day of Peace. The Mouvement de la Paix is also calling for a gathering at nuclear development sites on October 9<sup>th</sup> of this year.

The European Parliament has voted for two resolutions in favour of nuclear disarmament, but we also need to work towards a peaceful Europe. This should include all European countries, even Russia, yielding a common security that is in line with the Helsinki Principles.

### **Proposals to debate**

- The next step is to ratify the treaty by the maximum number of countries, and in particular by those that have nuclear weapons. This must be the most inclusive and united action possible, including all movements, people, parties, NGOs, labour unions, networks, citizens, and authorities, as well as national and international institutions that fight for the elimination of nuclear arms.
- We must reinforce the importance of unity of action of peace movements around the world, as this is, in my opinion, one of our best options to fight for elimination of nuclear weapons.

**Roland NIVET**

**National Joint Secretary and Spokesman for the Mouvement de la Paix, France**

**P.S.** Generally, when we think ahead from the banning to the elimination of nuclear weapons, the question of the elimination of nuclear arms can be considered on its own. But, I believe that it is impossible to handle this issue without taking into account the impact of the existence of these weapons has on peace, particularly when it comes to geostrategic issues. For example, the subject of North Korean nuclear weapons cannot be treated solely within the context of nuclear arms and disarmament, but in fact its geographical setting and other contexts related to international relations in general must also be considered.

Thus in order to develop confidence between those who usually consider themselves to be opponents, the questions of nuclear weapons in North Korea or of the relations between Russia and EU and the U.S. must first fall under bilateral or multilateral relations, taking into account geopolitical contexts. The two issues, the elimination of nuclear weapons and political solutions for current conflicts, are mutually reinforcing, and the best chances of success are when there are confidence building measures and dialogue.