



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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# 137<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly

St. Petersburg, Russian Federation  
14–18 October 2017



## The UN process for the prohibition of nuclear weapons: What hope for nuclear disarmament?

Monday, 16 October 2017 (3.30 – 5.30 p.m.)  
Hall no.1 (ground floor), Tavrichesky Palace

*Interactive session convened by the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs and the Standing Committee on Peace and International Security, in cooperation with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)*

### Concept note

In January 2017, the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the "Doomsday Clock" to two and a half minutes to midnight, highlighting the increased tensions between nuclear-armed countries and risks of the use of nuclear weapons by accident, miscalculation or intent.

In response to the growing awareness about the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, on 7 July 2017 the United Nations adopted a ground-breaking Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (<https://undocs.org/A/CONF.229/2017/8>). The Treaty binds State Parties to never "develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices." It also prohibits the transfer of nuclear weapons as well as the stationing or installation of third party weapons in a state's own territory. The 122 non-nuclear States all voted for the Treaty. None of the nuclear states or their allies supported the Treaty - as such, its provisions will not apply to them. The Treaty however does include provisions to allow these countries to join at a later stage.

Significantly, the nuclear weapons ban Treaty acknowledges the important efforts of parliamentarians in stressing the role of "public conscience in the furthering of the principles of humanity as evidenced by the call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons".

In March 2014, the IPU adopted a resolution entitled *Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The contribution of parliaments*. Among other things, this resolution recommends that parliaments urge their governments to start negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or on a package of agreements to help achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world. In July 2017, PNND released a Parliamentary Action Plan for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, which had been developed in consultation with the IPU and which includes a focus on the various UN initiatives for nuclear disarmament.

In 2018 the United Nations will hold a High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament which most UN Members are expected to attend, including the nuclear-armed and allied states, and which will examine modalities to move ahead towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. One area of progress could be building ratifications for the nuclear weapons ban Treaty to ensure its entry-into-force. Another area of progress could be moving nuclear armed and allied states to agree to lower nuclear threat postures, reduce the role of nuclear weapons, decrease their nuclear stockpiles and adopt a framework for achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. The Conference provides a significant opportunity for progress - one that must be seized.

#IPU137

This interactive panel discussion will reflect on the political and security context of the new Treaty and the 2018 UN High Level Conference. The discussion will foster dialogue among parliamentarians with a view to building support for concrete and effective measures to achieve the shared vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

**Moderator:**

Hon. Mr. **Anti Avsan**, President of the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs

**Keynote speakers:**

H.E. Ambassador **Elayne Whyte Gómez**, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office in Geneva, and President of the United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination

Mr. **Bruce Blair**, President and Founder of Global Zero

**Discussants**

Senator **Laura Rojas Hernandez**, President of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and International Security

Mr. **Alyn Ware**, Global Coordinator, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)

**Mr. Jean-Marie Collin**, Associate Researcher at the Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security (GRIP) and co-chair of the French Steering Group for the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN-France)