

Nomination of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize

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26 January 2015

Nomination

On behalf of the Board of Directors of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), we are pleased to nominate the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) for the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize.

About ICAN

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a global campaign coalition working to mobilize people in all countries to inspire, persuade and pressure their governments to initiate and support negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. ICAN currently has over 360 diverse partner organisations in more than 90 countries. They include peace, anti-nuclear, environment, development, faith-based, human rights, workers', women's, young people's, social justice and professional organisations.

The principal basis for ICAN's advocacy for prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons is their inevitably indiscriminate, inhumane and unacceptable effects.

ICAN was initially established as a project of the Medical Association for Prevention of War (the Australian affiliate of IPPNW), and hosted and nurtured as an international campaign by IPPNW. It was formally launched in 2007 in Australia and then internationally at the NPT PrepCom in Vienna, and has now evolved into an independent international campaign for a nuclear weapons ban treaty.

Prominent supporters of ICAN include UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Jody Williams, the Dalai Lama, musician Herbie Hancock, artist Yoko Ono and actor Martin Sheen.

Current context

Since the Reagan-Gorbachev Summits of 1985/6 where the elimination of nuclear arsenals was seriously considered, the end of the Cold War a few years later and the associated nuclear disarmament initiatives, progress on nuclear disarmament has

been piecemeal, stuttering and moving at a snail's pace.

Despite a growing number of past and present leaders speaking in support of the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, the convening of Nuclear Security Summits, the first session of the UN Security Council dedicated to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and a UN General Assembly Open-ended Working Group to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons, the existential danger facing the biosphere and all species including humans from nuclear weapons has not diminished. Indeed most experts concur that the risks of nuclear war are growing with each day that nuclear weapons eradication remains stalled. No negotiations for nuclear disarmament are currently underway, and the Conference on Disarmament has produced nothing useful since the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1996, still awaiting entry into force.

The moving of the hands of the Doomsday Clock forward from five to three minutes to midnight by the Science and Security Board of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists on 23 Jan 2015 underscores the massive failures of global political leadership to address the urgent and grave risks of nuclear war. The Board noted that "... global nuclear weapons modernizations, and outsized nuclear weapons arsenals pose extraordinary and undeniable threats to the continued existence of humanity, and world leaders have failed to act with the speed or on the scale required to protect citizens from potential catastrophe. These failures of political leadership endanger every person on Earth."

Within this bleak, worrying landscape, ICAN has developed a fresh, persuasive, and energizing strategy for banning and eliminating nuclear weapons, which has already resulted in powerful partnerships between civil society and the burgeoning humanitarian initiative on nuclear weapons. Realizing that new initiatives are needed to achieve nuclear disarmament, ICAN has proposed a ban treaty as the best opportunity for a game-changing, decisive advance since the end of the Cold War 25 years ago. ICAN played a central role in organizing civil society participation at the three intergovernmental conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in the past two years (Oslo in March 2013, Nayarit, Mexico in February 2014 and, most recently, Vienna in December 2014). These conferences, attended successively by 127, 146 and 158 governments, UN agencies, international organisations including the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, academic experts, and diverse civil society participants, were the first ever intergovernmental meetings held to examine the full range of evidence related to the medical, environmental, and humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons and their use.

As stated by Angela Kane, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology on 22 Oct 2014: "In the field of disarmament today, we are seeing a groundswell of interest – seen both among states and civil society alike – in what is called the humanitarian approach to disarmament. This approach has the potential to be a real game-changer in this field."

This humanitarian initiative has changed the international discourse in relation to nuclear weapons. New and compelling evidence has been presented, reinforcing key conclusions:

- Any nuclear explosion/war would have long-term catastrophic effects in almost every sphere, not constrained by borders, that could threaten the very survival of humankind. Radioactive contamination, disproportionately harming women and children, would cause genetic mutations and cancer over countless generations. Disruption of the global climate from even a regional nuclear war involving a tiny fraction of the global arsenal would lead to food shortages and famine threatening as many as two billion people with starvation.
- The risks of nuclear weapons being used is real, and has previously been underestimated. Aggravated by international conflicts and tensions, there are many circumstances in which nuclear weapons could be used by intent; or due to accidental, mistaken, unauthorised or malicious use, including through machine failures, human errors and increasingly, cyberattack. Limiting the role of nuclear weapons to deterrence does not remove the danger of their use. On the contrary, the vulnerability of nuclear command and control systems; maintaining arsenals on high alert, ready to be fired within minutes; forward deployments and continuing modernisation of nuclear arsenals; increase the risks over time. The only assurance against the risk of nuclear war is the total elimination of nuclear weapons.
- The evidence presented by the Red Cross and other humanitarian organisations at all three conferences is clear that no capacity exists – either now or foreseeably - in any country or internationally, to provide adequate assistance to the victims of nuclear explosions in populated areas.
- Legal experts in Vienna confirmed that while we have international treaties banning biological and chemical weapons, anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, there is a legal deficit in relation to the worst of all weapons. No comprehensive legal norm characterises nuclear weapons as unacceptable under international law; or universally prohibits their production, possession, transfer or use. Effective measures delivering complete nuclear disarmament are required by the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the unanimous ruling of the International Court of Justice. These measures are the obligation of all states, not only the nuclear-armed.

Some nuclear-armed states, which initially dismissed the Oslo conference as an unhelpful and misguided distraction, felt compelled to join the Vienna conference. The Vienna conference concluded with the landmark Austrian Pledge, a commitment by the government of Austria “to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons,” and “to cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve this goal.” This has laid the foundations for a

negotiating process to ban nuclear weapons. All governments are now being invited to associate themselves with the Austrian Pledge.

Immediately after the Vienna Conference, Nobel Peace Prize laureates gathered in Rome for their annual Summit. Reflecting the danger of the current conflict in Ukraine, which could embroil nuclear-armed Russia and NATO and escalate, they stated: "We are gravely concerned about the danger of war - including nuclear war - between large states. This threat is now greater than at any time since the Cold War."

The laureates welcomed the Austrian Pledge, and urged all states to commence negotiations on a treaty to ban nuclear weapons at the earliest possible time, and to conclude the negotiations within two years. "Negotiations should be open to all states and blockable by none. The 70th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 2015 highlights the urgency of ending the threat of these weapons."

Reasons for the nomination of ICAN

It would be significant and appropriate for the Prize to be awarded for work towards the eradication of nuclear weapons in this, the 70th anniversary year of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The burgeoning humanitarian initiative on nuclear weapons is the most promising development in the nuclear weapons field since the end of the Cold War. Awarding the Prize to the key civil society actor in this initiative would give great impetus, profile and encouragement to the Campaign, assist and propel its work, and encourage more organisations to join ICAN. It would also promote the Austrian Pledge, help build support for it, and encourage leading governments to muster the courage and exercise the leadership needed to begin negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons.

ICAN has been crucial in leading international civil society advocacy for a treaty prohibiting and providing for the elimination of nuclear weapons. Over 70 years of the nuclear weapons era and efforts to eliminate them, the civil society contribution has often been weakened by being rather uncoordinated and fragmented. Similar to the cohesion and synergy brought by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munitions Coalition to their respective fields, ICAN has brought a new and unprecedented degree of coordination among civil society efforts for nuclear disarmament. ICAN has also made its unequivocal focus not arms control, or acceptance of the continuing deployment and risk of use of nuclear weapons under different circumstances or at reduced levels, but eradication of nuclear weapons.

ICAN is the principal civil society partner for the governments promoting the "humanitarian initiative" focusing the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. It was invited by the governments of Norway and Mexico to coordinate civil society participation in the Oslo and Nayarit Conferences respectively, and was also the lead

civil society partner for the Austrian government in relation to the Vienna Conference. ICAN organized large Civil Society Forums just prior to the Oslo and Vienna official conferences, bringing together in Oslo and Vienna around 600 civil society participants from 70 countries. These provided profile, impetus and encouragement for the intergovernmental conferences, and also major opportunities to build international campaign coordination.

ICAN has demonstrated success in building a global campaign coalition that prominently employs and engages young people, that includes significant participation among activists from low-income countries, and that involves organizations and individuals who have not previously addressed the issue of nuclear disarmament as a priority.

ICAN provides the main vehicle for coordination of civil society advocacy on nuclear disarmament at other key international occasions, such as the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty PrepComs and 2010 Review Conference, and the annual UN General Assembly and First Committee meetings. ICAN has particularly campaigned at these forums for governmental statements emphasizing the centrality of humanitarian considerations and the need to prevent the use of and eliminate nuclear weapons. In part as a result of ICAN's efforts, support for these statements has grown from 16 states at the 2012 NPT PrepCom, to 155 at the 2014 UN General Assembly.

ICAN has initiated the first comprehensive and ongoing work to research and document global investments by financial institutions in private companies engaged in the production of key components for nuclear weapons systems. ICAN Australia and ICAN partner PAX (Netherlands) have published three successive editions of a comprehensive annual report entitled "Don't Bank on the Bomb". This has underpinned international campaigning to encourage both public and private financial institutions investing in nuclear weapons production to divest themselves of these holdings, and enabled individuals in many countries to discuss their bank or pension funds' investment policies and advocate and choose accordingly. As a result of this work to stigmatise nuclear weapons, a number of financial institutions in several countries no longer invest in nuclear weapons producers, and others are reviewing their policies.

ICAN collaborates closely with a number of international organisations and has played an important role in supporting and encouraging their engagement in advocacy for nuclear disarmament. These include the global Red Cross and Red Crescent movement (for example, in the organization of joint events, and contributions to Red Cross publications). ICAN has helped disseminate and promote awareness of the established and emerging evidence of the humanitarian effects of nuclear weapons, such as the IPPNW reports on nuclear famine, and the work of climate scientist Professor Alan Robock from Rutgers University and his colleagues, through report launches, work with mass media, events and conferences, and including their evidence centrally in its campaign materials.

ICAN has been important in promoting and facilitating dialogue between government officials and civil society campaigners on nuclear weapons issues and building support for a ban on nuclear weapons at a regional level. For example, this has occurred through ICAN-initiated regional roundtables involving diplomats and campaigners in New York, and ongoing roundtables in different global regions in collaboration with the Norwegian International Law and Policy Institute. In 2013-14 such roundtables have been held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia (July 2013); Lagos, Nigeria (Nov 2013); Nairobi, Kenya (Dec 2013); Lusaka, Zambia (May 2014); Tagaytay, Philippines (June 2014). Further roundtables are planned in 2015, including in Bangkok, Thailand in Feb 2015.

In 2014, ICAN was the most active campaign network coordinating worldwide activities in support of the first UN-declared International Day for the Complete Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26 September 2014.

In summary, ICAN has helped reinvigorate the global nuclear disarmament movement by engaging new actors, providing an effective mobilising and coordinating vehicle for civil society, and reframing the debate about nuclear weapons. It has become the key civil society partner for governments in the humanitarian initiative around nuclear weapons, the most promising development in relation to the unfinished business of nuclear disarmament in over 20 years. In 2013 and 2014 ICAN worked in partnership with the governments of Norway, Mexico and Austria to convene landmark diplomatic conferences examining the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, which brought together more than 150 nations and have laid the foundations for a negotiating process to ban nuclear weapons.

Further information

Some suggestions for further information about ICAN and the developments described include:

ICAN's website has information about many aspects of the campaign, many documents and publications freely downloadable, videos, and links to the websites of a number of national ICAN campaigns, and in 9 different languages:

<http://www.icanw.org>

The "Don't Bank on the Bomb" reports, campaigners guides and further information can be found at:

<http://www.dontbankonthebomb.com>

The Chair's Summaries of the 2013 Oslo, 2014 Nayarit and Vienna Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons are available at the following sites:

Chairs' Summary of the 2013 Oslo Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons:

https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/nuclear_summary/id716343/

Chair's Summary of the 2014 Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

<http://www.sre.gob.mx/en/index.php/humanimpact-nayarit-2014>

Chair's Summary of the 2014 Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons:

http://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Abruestung/HINW14/HINW14_Chair_s_Summary.pdf

Austrian Pledge delivered at the 2014 Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons:

http://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Abruestung/HINW14/HINW14_Austrian_Pledge.pdf