

Sir Keir Starmer
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street, London, SW1A 2AA

20 February 2025

Dear Prime Minister,

We, the undersigned NGO experts, academics and scientists, are writing to encourage the UK Government to attend - as an observer - the 3rd Meeting of States Parties (3MSP) to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in New York, 3-7 March 2025.

This meeting represents an essential opportunity for the UK to reaffirm its commitment to nuclear disarmament and multilateral diplomacy, areas where the UK has historically played a vital role on the global stage. We are heartened by the growing support for the UK's engagement with the TPNW, particularly following recent statements by Scottish Secretary Ian Murray, who has pledged to lobby colleagues within government to attend the 3MSP. This commitment underscores the momentum building within the UK Parliament for deeper involvement in global efforts to reduce nuclear threat. At a time when multilateral cooperation is essential to addressing the most pressing global challenges, the UK's participation would send a strong signal of leadership in international peacebuilding.

As a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the UK has long been committed to the goal of nuclear disarmament, and attending the 3MSP would be a significant step toward reinforcing this commitment. The TPNW presents a valuable framework for addressing the devastating humanitarian and environmental impacts of nuclear weapons, an issue of particular importance given the UK's historical involvement in nuclear testing. The TPNW's focus on victim assistance and environmental remediation - highlighted in Articles 6 and 7 - offers the UK an important opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue about the ongoing legacy of nuclear testing, including support for indigenous communities and nuclear test veterans. Moreover, it provides the Labour Government with the opportunity to prove that they are willing to step away from the past denialist attitudes towards the continuous impacts of British nuclear testing.

By participating in the 3MSP, the UK would reaffirm its leadership in multilateral diplomacy, strengthen its standing within the United Nations, and demonstrate a steadfast commitment to advancing global nuclear disarmament. This engagement would align with the UK's long standing support for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, positioning it as an active partner in the UN's efforts to reduce nuclear risks and create a safer, more secure world. With growing support across Parliament, civil society, and political lines for a more active UK role in these critical discussions, the UK's participation in the 3MSP would further cement its dedication to international peace and security while contributing meaningfully to the future of nuclear disarmament.

We urge you to lead by example and ensure the UK Government's participation at the 3MSP, sending a clear message that the UK is committed to multilateralism, peace, and the vital work of reducing the nuclear threat. The opportunity to engage in this significant global forum should not be missed.

We look forward to your response and to the UK playing a constructive role in this important global initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Carol Acutt, SGI-UK

Dr Becky Alexis-Martin, Lecturer of Peace and international Development, University of Bradford

Philip Austin, Coordinator, Northern Friends Peace Board

Dr Keith Baker FRSA, Director and Convenor of the Energy Working Group, Common Weal

Kirsten Bayes, Chair, Nuclear Information Service

Sophie Bolt, General Secretary, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Dr Matthew Bolton, Director, International Disarmament Institute, Pace University

Malcolm Bruce, Secretary, Edinburgh Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Sue Claydon, Chair, Anglican Pacifist Fellowship

John Cooper, Director, Fellowship of Reconciliation (England/Scotland)

Dr Gari Donn, Executive Director, UN House Scotland and Co-Convenor, ICAN UK Network; member of ICAN Int Steering Group

Janet Fenton, ICAN Scottish Partners Liaison and Secretary, Scottish Parliament Nuclear Disarmament CPG, Organiser Secure Scotland

Andrew Jackson, Chief Executive, Pax Christi England and Wales

Dr Rebecca Eleanor Johnson FRSA, Executive Director, Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy and Co-Convenor of the ICAN UK Network

Brian Jones, Vice Chair, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Cymru

Gina Langton, Chief Executive Officer, 80,000 Voices

Ms Sarah Lasoye, Transforming Peace and Security - Campaigns and Programme Lead, Medact

Sam Legg, Yorkshire Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

Cllr Dylan Lewis-Rowlands, National Secretary, Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament Cymru

Fiona MacGregor, Member and Supporter, Global Justice Now, CND, Christian CND, Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, WILPF, Greenpeace, Hastings Stand Up For Nature

David Mackenzie, Trident Ploughshares

Elizabeth Minor, Advisor, Article 36

Cllr Lawrence O'Neill, Chair, UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities

Richard Outram, Secretary, Mayors for Peace UK/Ireland Chapter

Alan Owen, Founder, Legacy of the Atomic Bomb Recognition for Atomic Test Survivors (LABRATS)

Angie Pankhania, Chief Operating Officer, United Nations Association - UK

Dr Stuart Parkinson, Executive Director, Scientists for Global Responsibility (SGR)

Tim Street, Secretary, British Pugwash

Martin Tiller, Co-Chair, Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

The Rt Hon David Lammy
Secretary of State
Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
King Charles Street, London, SW1A 2AH

20 February 2025

Dear Secretary of State,

We, the undersigned NGO experts, academics and scientists, are writing to encourage the UK Government to attend - as an observer - the 3rd Meeting of States Parties (3MSP) to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in New York, 3-7 March 2025.

We were encouraged to learn that Scottish Secretary Ian Murray has publicly expressed his strong support for the UK's participation in the 3MSP and pledged to lobby his colleagues to attend. This commitment, alongside increasing backing from a growing number of parliamentarians, signals a significant shift towards a more proactive role for the UK in global nuclear disarmament efforts. With over two-thirds of UN Member States supporting the TPNW and 73 states having ratified it, the UK has a valuable opportunity to contribute to the global nuclear disarmament agenda. Whether or not the UK is ready to fully support the Treaty, attending the 3MSP as an observer would enhance the UK's standing as a leader in multilateral diplomacy, demonstrating a strong commitment to addressing nuclear threats and reinforcing the importance of multilateral collaboration in securing international peace and security.

The TPNW provides an essential framework for addressing the humanitarian and environmental impacts of nuclear weapons, a matter of particular relevance to the UK given its history of nuclear testing in Australia, Kiribati, and the USA between 1952 and 1991. The Treaty's focus on victim assistance and environmental remediation - Articles 6 and 7 - present a valuable opportunity for the UK to engage in meaningful dialogue about the ongoing legacy of nuclear testing. Engaging with the TPNW could allow the UK to play a proactive role in supporting affected communities, including indigenous peoples and British nuclear test veterans, whose voices will be heard at the 3MSP.

Attending the 3MSP would reaffirm the UK's leadership in nuclear disarmament, aligning the country with the global movement toward nuclear abolition and reinforcing its commitment as a party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). This crucial opportunity would not only enhance the UK's global standing but also contribute to vital discussions on nuclear weapons and disarmament.

With strong support for nuclear disarmament from UK parliamentarians and civil society, we urge the government to reconsider its position and attend the 3MSP as an observer, engaging with the TPNW and other international efforts to address the devastating impacts of nuclear weapons and build a safer, more secure world for all.

We look forward to your response and to the UK playing a constructive role in this important global initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Carol Acutt, SGI-UK

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