

Catholic church leaders' statement welcoming the new UN treaty to ban nuclear weapons

We, Catholic church leaders from around the world, welcome the entry into force on 22 January 2021 of the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

We are encouraged that a majority of UN Member States actively support the new treaty through adoption, signatures, and ratifications. It is fitting that the Holy See was among the first states to join the accord in 2017. In addition, public opinion surveys worldwide demonstrate the global conviction that nuclear weapons must be abolished. The worst of all weapons of mass destruction has long-since been judged to be immoral. Now it is also finally illegal.

We are concerned by the continued risk to humanity that nuclear weapons could be used and by the resultant catastrophic humanitarian consequences. It is heartening that this new treaty is based on a growing body of research about the catastrophic humanitarian and ecological consequences of nuclear attacks, tests, and accidents. Two examples that speak to all people are the disproportionate impacts of radiation on women and girls and the grave effects on Indigenous communities whose lands have been used for nuclear tests.

We, the undersigned, support the leadership Pope Francis is giving to nuclear disarmament. During his historic visit to the bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in November 2019 the pope condemned both the use and the possession of nuclear weapons by any state. Peace cannot be achieved through "the threat of total annihilation," he said. Pope Francis urged support for "the principal international legal instruments of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons." Prior to his visit, the Conferences of Catholic Bishops in Canada and Japan urged their governments to sign and ratify the new treaty.

Like them, some of us are from countries allied with a nuclear power or that have nuclear arsenals. Surely, in this era of increasing global interdependence and vulnerability, our faith invites us to seek the common and universal good. "We are all saved together or no one is saved," the Pope's new encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* says. "Is it possible for us to be open to our neighbors within a family of nations?" it asks. International cooperation is essential for addressing the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, the gap between rich and poor, and the universal threat of nuclear weapons.

No matter where we are from, we join in urging governments to sign and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We thank those who have already done so and we urge them to invite other countries to join the treaty as well.

We invite fellow church leaders to discuss and deliberate about the significant role the church can play in building support for this new international norm against nuclear weapons. It is especially important for national and regional bishops' conferences as well as Catholic institutions and foundations to review whether church-related funds are invested in corporations and banks involved in producing nuclear weapons. If this is the case, then take remedial action by ending existing financing relationships and look for ways for disinvestment.

We believe that God's gift of peace is at work to deter war and overcome violence. Thus, on this historic day, we congratulate members of the Catholic Church who for decades have been at the forefront of grassroots movements to oppose nuclear weapons and Catholic peace movements which are part of the Nobel Prize-winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

Signatories

Patriarch Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem

Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich of the Archdiocese of Luxembourg, President of Pax Christi Luxembourg

Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti of the Archdiocese of Perugia-Città, President of the Italian Bishops' Conference

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon of the Archdiocese of Liverpool, President of Pax Christi England & Wales

Archbishop Giovanni Ricchiuti of the Diocese of Altamura-Gravina-Acquaviva delle Fonti, President of Pax Christi Italy

Archbishop Antonio Ledesma of the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro, President of Pax Christi Philippines

Archbishop Joseph Mitsuaki Takami of the Archdiocese of Nagasaki, President of the Japanese Bishops' Conference

Archbishop González Nieves of the Archdiocese of San Juan, Puerto Rico

Archbishop José Domingo Ulloa Mendieta of the Archdiocese of Panama

Bishop Emeritus Marc Stenger of the Diocese of Troyes, France, Co-president of Pax Christi International

Bishop Hubert Herbreteau of the Diocese of Agen, President of Pax Christi France

Bishop Peter Kohlgraf of the Diocese of Mainz, President of Pax Christi Germany

Bishop Gerard de Korte of the Diocese of Den Bosch, The Netherlands

Bishop Lode Van Hecke of the Diocese of Ghent, Belgium

Bishop Emeritus Luigi Bettazzi of the Diocese of Ivrea, former President of Pax Christi International and Pax Christi Italy

Bishop William Nolan of the Diocese of Galloway, Scotland
Bishop Brian McGee of the Diocese of Argyll and the Isles, Scotland
Bishop Joseph Toal of the Diocese of Motherwell, Bishop President of the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund
Bishop John Stowe of the Diocese of Lexington, President of Pax Christi USA
Bishop Robert McElroy of the Diocese of San Diego, USA
Bishop Terry Brady of the Archdiocese of Sydney, Australia
Bishop Emeritus Peter Cullinane of the Diocese of Palmerston North, President of Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand
Bishop Alexis Mitsuru Shirahama of the Diocese of Hiroshima, Japan
Bishop Wayne Berndt of the Diocese of Naha, Japan
Bishop Bernard Taiji Katsuya of the Diocese of Sapporo, Japan
Bishop Paul Daisuke Narui of the Diocese of Niigata, Japan
Bishop Timothy Yu of the Archdiocese of Seoul, South Korea
Bishop Allwyn D'Silva of the Archdiocese of Bombay, India
Bishop Kevin Dowling of the Diocese of Rustenburg, former Co-president of Pax Christi International, South Africa

Australia

Reverend Peter Smith of the Archdiocese of Sydney, Justice & Peace Promoter of the Justice and Peace Office
Reverend Bernard McKenna, Councilor to the Superior General of the Society of Mary (Marist)
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Ms. Pam Nair, Secretary of Pax Christi Queensland
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Brother Michel Coppin, Provincial Superior of the Salvatorians Belgian Province
Mrs. Annemarie Gielen, Director of Pax Christi Flanders
Mr. Wim Vandewiele, President of the Board of Pax Christi Flanders
Ms. Josianne Gauthier, Secretary General of the International Family of Catholic Social Justice Organisations (CIDSE)
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Sister Lydia Liong, General Superior of the Congregation of Sisters of Divine Providence

Italy

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Reverend Antonio Porcellato, General Superior of the Society of African Missions

Reverend Krzysztof Pachut, General Counsel of the Society of African Missions

Sister Sheila Kinsey, Executive Co-Secretary of the JPIC Commission of the Union of Superiors General (USG) and International Union of Superior Generals (UISG)

Reverend Amado Picardal, Executive Co-Secretary of the JPIC Commission of USG-UISG

Reverend Thomas Smolich, International Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service

Sister Pauline Macharia, Coordinator of the JPIC Commission of the Loreto Sisters

Sister Marinez Capra, International Coordinator of the Network of JPIC of the School Sisters of Notre Dame

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Sister Mario Abzalón Alvarado Tovar, Superior General of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart

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Reverend Seong-hoon Jeong of the Diocese of Uijeongbu

Reverend Osoon Kwon of the Diocese of Chuncheon

Reverend Yousun Hong of the Diocese of Uijeongbu

Reverend Sinsoon Kim of the Diocese of Seoul

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Tanzania

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Sister Elaine Davia, President of the Sisters of Bon Secours
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Mr. Ted Miles, Executive Director of Maryknoll Lay Missioners
Ms. Susan Gunn, Director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns