

# 2025 NPT Preparatory Committee

## April-May 2025

### Background

This Preparatory Committee of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) takes place amidst developments that we have not seen since the Cold War: an escalation of nuclear threats and rhetoric – even at the highest political levels – promoting new nuclear proliferation, cooperation, sharing and stationing arrangements. **These developments are not only in direct conflict with existing NPT non-proliferation and disarmament commitments, but also further increase the already all-time high risk of nuclear weapons use.** This meeting is thus of particular importance and States Parties must, in accordance with their non-proliferation obligations under the NPT, address these developments directly, as a matter of priority, ahead of the Review Conference in 2026.

Nuclear weapons are the most destructive, inhumane and indiscriminate weapons ever created. A single nuclear bomb detonated over a large city could kill more than a million people in a matter of seconds. The complex, cascading and catastrophic impacts of a nuclear detonation would not be limited to “ground zero” alone, producing transboundary short and long-term impacts on the environment, socio-economic and sustainable development, food security and the health of current and future generations, including the disproportionate impact that nuclear weapons have on women and girls<sup>1</sup>, as well as on infants and children.<sup>2</sup> **The perpetual reliance on nuclear weapons in some states' security strategies actively diminishes the legitimate right to security of non-nuclear-armed states.**

The escalatory behaviour demonstrated by some states in issuing nuclear weapons threats, or conducting activities designed as “show of force” or capability demonstrations with their nuclear arsenals is increasing risks to all states. This risk is further increased by exercises to use nuclear weapons and tests of nuclear weapon delivery systems, particularly by states engaged in an armed conflict.

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<sup>1</sup> *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, New York, 7 July 2017.

<sup>2</sup> International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, “The Impact of Nuclear Weapons on Children”, August 2024

States have failed to implement agreed actions from past Review Conferences, including ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, negotiation of further bilateral reductions between United States and Russia, lowering the operational status of warheads, reduction of the role and significance of nuclear weapons in military doctrines, the unequivocal undertaking for nuclear disarmament under Article VI, and implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East.

While nuclear-armed states and their allies are failing to articulate a pathway for nuclear disarmament, half of all UN Member States have strengthened their commitment towards the elimination of nuclear weapons by joining or signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). On 7 March 2025, the third Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW reaffirmed their commitment to the nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament regime through a unanimous declaration and decisions to advance the treaty's implementation. In the adopted declaration, governments proclaimed that **“nuclear weapons are a threat to the security, and ultimately the existence, of all states, irrespective of whether they possess nuclear weapons, subscribe to nuclear deterrence or firmly oppose it”** and thus **“all States therefore have an urgent security interest in their total elimination.”**<sup>3</sup>

## Key points to raise at the NPT Preparatory Committee

In statements to the NPT PrepCom, ICAN encourages states to:

1. Recognise that nuclear weapons programmes and the increasing reliance on nuclear weapons in security strategies are a **significant and legitimate security concern for all states, and undermine the principles and objectives of the NPT**, including by:

- Deploing the fact that more than fifty years after the NPT entered into force, there are still more than 12,000 nuclear weapons in the world, many ready to be used within minutes.<sup>4</sup>
- Unequivocally condemning any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances.
- Expressing alarm at the consideration of new sharing and stationing arrangements that contravene the 2010 Outcome document's Action 5(c) in which nuclear weapons states committed to “further diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies”.
- Condemning nuclear-armed states' qualitative and quantitative advancements of their nuclear arsenals as violations of Article VI.
- Reiterating the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon states to accomplish

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<sup>3</sup> Declaration of the third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons: “Strengthening our commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons amidst the rising global instability” (7 March 2025) [TPNW/MSP/2025/CRP.4](https://www.ican.int/tpnw/msp/2025/crp4)

<sup>4</sup> Federation of American Scientists, Status of World Nuclear Forces, March 2025, <https://fas.org/initiative/status-world-nuclear-forces/>.

the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament to which all States parties are committed under Article VI.<sup>5</sup>

- Condemning the practice of “nuclear sharing” or deploying nuclear weapons on foreign territory, including recent calls by a small number of European states to expand this practice by offering to “host” nuclear weapons on their territory, and calling on all states to end any such arrangements.
- Condemning non-nuclear-armed states’ plans to use highly-enriched uranium for military purposes, including Australia’s proposed acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines, as undermining the NPT and weakening the IAEA safeguards system.<sup>6</sup>

## **2. Highlight the greatly heightened risk of nuclear weapons use due to the recent actions of nuclear-armed states and their allies, including by:**

- Expressing alarm at international developments, which include nuclear weapons threats, and calls for increasing and expanding reliance on nuclear weapons in security doctrines, all of which increases the risk of proliferation and the risk of use.
- Highlighting the fact that the ongoing possession of nuclear weapons and reliance on nuclear weapons in security doctrines by some countries threatens the security of all countries.
- Reaffirming that nuclear deterrence is posited on the very existence of nuclear risk, thus eliminating nuclear risks is a prime and legitimate concern and national responsibility of all states.<sup>7</sup>
- Expressing concern about the emerging nuclear arms race, and the fact that nuclear-armed states spent \$91.4 billion in 2023.<sup>8</sup>
- Expressing concern that the risk of emerging technologies incorporated into nuclear weapons systems heightens the risks of nuclear weapon use – intentional, inadvertent or accidental – by increasing miscalculation, escalation, and loss of control, and; reaffirming that nuclear-armed States must maintain meaningful human control over nuclear weapons and their delivery systems.<sup>9</sup>

## **3. Highlight the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, including by:**

- Expressing deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from any use of nuclear weapons as well as at the ongoing humanitarian and

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations, 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document: Volume I, *NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II) (2000)*.

<sup>6</sup> ICAN Australia, “Briefing Note: Nuclear-powered submarines,” October 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Report of the coordinator for the consultative process on security concerns of States under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, 2025, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/4077296?v=pdf#files>.

<sup>8</sup> International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, “Surge: 2023 Global Nuclear Weapons Spending”, June 2024. [https://www.icanw.org/surge\\_2023\\_global\\_nuclear\\_weapons\\_spending](https://www.icanw.org/surge_2023_global_nuclear_weapons_spending)

<sup>9</sup> United Nations, third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Final Declaration, TPNW/MSP/2025/CRP.4 (2025)

environmental harms caused by nuclear weapons use and testing.<sup>10</sup>

- Recognizing that new scientific evidence has shown that these effects are more severe, long-lasting, and complex than previously understood.<sup>11</sup>
- Welcoming the recent establishment by the UN General Assembly of an independent Scientific Panel on the Effects of Nuclear War.

#### 4. **Welcome the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**, including by:

- Welcoming the successful third Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW in March 2025, the progress in the TPNW's implementation including its universalisation, which underscores the commitment of TPNW states parties to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.
- Calling on all states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the TPNW without delay.
- Emphasising that the TPNW complements and strengthens the NPT as an effective measure for nuclear disarmament as called for in Article VI, alongside nuclear-weapon-free zones.<sup>12</sup>
- Welcoming efforts to address the rights and needs of affected communities through victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance as provided for by the TPNW.
- Recognizing the TPNW as the strongest legal norm against nuclear proliferation, including through its explicit prohibitions in Article 1 (a-g) on possessing, transferring, receiving the transfer and stationing of nuclear weapons.

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<sup>10</sup> United Nations, 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, *Final Document: Volume I, NPT/CONF.2010/50(Vol. I) (2010)*.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations, third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Working paper submitted by the Scientific Advisory Group, TPNW/MSP/2025/WP.5 (2025)

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, 10th Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Joint Statement delivered by Mexico on behalf of TPNW states parties and signatories, 17 August 2022, [https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/17Aug\\_MCI\\_TPNW.pdf](https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/revcon2022/statements/17Aug_MCI_TPNW.pdf)