

**Seventy-five years since Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed. Stop nuclear weapons and support Treaty to ban them**



(Brussels, 5 August 2020) A United States B-29 warplane dropped a nuclear bomb on Hiroshima in the morning of August 6, 1945. Several days later Nagasaki was bombed. More than 130.000 died directly and an estimated 340.000 people did not survive by 1950. Since those days, several countries including the US, Russia (ex-Sovjet-Union) and China have built huge arsenals of nuclear weapons, many times more powerful than the bombs dropped on Japan. Many organisations have been campaigning that such terrible weapons should be banned to prevent the horror of nuclear conflicts. Unions support this call for a ban as working women and men and our families, our communities would suffer beyond imagination from nuclear attacks. Our health and other public services would no longer exist and our environment would be contaminated dealing a blow to food production and fresh water. European countries are lagging behind signing the Treaty on the Prohibition

of Nuclear Weapons.

EPSU's General Secretary "It is disgraceful that so many European countries have not signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. 75 years on we should work to prevent that the events of 1945 happen again. The President of the European Council Charles Michel should encourage the EU members to sign and all follow the example of Austria and Ireland."

Progress to dismantle nuclear weapons is slow. The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty was terminated when the US withdrew, there are still an estimated 14.000 nuclear bombs, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is not in force as China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, Israel, Iran, Egypt and the United States have not ratified it and expenditure on nuclear arms is estimated to be around 100 bn US dollars. Tensions between states with nuclear weapons and allied countries have risen as multi-lateral approaches are attacked and nationalist reflexes often take an upper hand over cooperation. New nuclear arms races are possible. The threat of a conflict that involves nuclear weapons remains high.

Unions through our global organisations like PSI and the ITUC have campaigned to ban nuclear weapons. We welcomed the Treaty on the Prohibition to Nuclear Weapons in 2017. The Treaty will become legally binding for countries that ratify it after 50 do so; to date 40 have. The treaty prohibits the development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons. For nuclear-armed states that join the Treaty, it provides for a time-bound framework for the verified elimination of their nuclear weapons program. In Europe only Austria, Ireland and Kazakhstan have signed the Treaty and only Austria and Kazakhstan have ratified it as well.

**Update:** Austria and Kazakhstan were joined by Ireland on the 7th August. Ireland ratified the Treaty. Please find the press release of the [Irish Congress of Trade Unions](#).

- For more [background on the Treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons](#)
- In 2017 the [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons \(ICAN\)](#), a coalition of non-governmental organizations including the ITUC, promoting adherence to and implementation of the United Nations nuclear weapon ban treaty received the Nobel Peace Prize.
- See also the work of the [UN Office for Disarmament](#) that includes information on nuclear, chemical, biological and other weapons

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