

ICAN Statement regarding the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) deplores the irresponsible destruction of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty by the current leaders of the United States and Russia. At the height of the Cold War, this important bilateral Treaty banned and eliminated over 2,600 of the most destabilising class of intermediate-range missiles, thereby pulling the world back from the brink of nuclear war and kick-starting further deep cuts in the two largest nuclear arsenals.

By walking away from the INF Treaty, Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin have further undermined the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and put the world at heightened risk of nuclear weapons use and war.

In just a few days, the world will mark the 74th anniversary of the use of nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which killed hundreds of thousands of people and caused long-term health and environmental harm that continues to affect generations born long after the war. With over 13,000 nuclear weapons in nine arsenals, amidst rising tensions between nuclear-armed leaders, the terrible legacy from nuclear weapons being used and tested reminds us that such weapons of mass destruction must never be used again.

Having received the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for raising awareness of the catastrophic humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons and contributing to treaty-based nuclear disarmament, ICAN calls on the United States and Russia to:

- uphold international law, including international humanitarian law;
- undertake urgent talks to restore compliance and fully implement the INF Treaty;
- make deeper cuts in their arsenals;
- and pave the way for nuclear-free security by joining the UN's multilateral Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was negotiated and adopted by over 122 nations at the UN General Assembly in 2017.

Our global security cannot be left solely in the hands of a few governments and leaders who are willing to sacrifice humanity's collective needs and survival for their own political ends. Their actions and policies are not just undermining the bilateral and regional treaties of the past fifty years, but also risking the future security of all life on Earth.

ICAN's civil society partners and the majority of UN nations are working hard to bring the TPNW into force by 2020, as this will strengthen all aspects of disarmament and security, including efforts to prevent further proliferation. The TPNW's comprehensive nuclear weapon prohibitions and disarmament requirements need to become fully embedded in international law

as soon as possible, in order to plug current legal gaps, reinforce other disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, and establish effective monitoring, enforcement and accountability by all UN Member States.

Available for interview

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Or [contact ICAN's partner organisation in your country](#)

About ICAN

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a coalition of non-governmental organizations in one hundred countries promoting adherence to and implementation of the United Nations nuclear weapon ban treaty. This landmark global agreement was adopted in New York on 7 July 2017. The campaign was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize 2017, for their "groundbreaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition" of nuclear weapons. More information about ICAN can be found at: www.ICANw.org

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Additional Background on INF Treaty and TPNW

August 2nd, 2019 marks six months since US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin put the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty in jeopardy by suspending first US and then Russian compliance respectively. Since neither leader has done anything since then to save the INF Treaty, it is likely that on 2 August the US and Russia will formally pull out of this important bilateral Treaty and start deploying the intermediate-range ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles that the INF Treaty kept out of Europe for over 30 years.

The INF Treaty was achieved after years of massive anti-nuclear protests during the 1980s, centring on the deployment of "theatre" nuclear weapons with pre-emptive, first use capabilities. These protests mobilised millions of people, especially in Europe, and led to the establishment of the famous Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp, a non-stop living protest from 1981 (when USAF Greenham Common, near Newbury, UK, was designated as the first NATO base in Europe to receive 96 ground-launched cruise missiles armed with 200 kiloton warheads) to 1991 (when the last INF missiles were removed and eliminated).

In prohibiting and eliminating all US and Russian ground-launched cruise, Pershing and SS20 missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers, the INF Treaty halted the US-Soviet cold war arms race, provided detailed verification provisions, and resulted in a total of 2,692 short, medium and intermediate-range missiles being destroyed by the deadline of 1 June 1991.

The 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted by 122 UN Member States on 7 July 2017 and opened for signature by the UN Secretary-General on 20 September 2017. The TPNW enshrines clear legal prohibitions on a range of activities that for over seven decades have enabled states to acquire, produce, station, deploy, use and threaten to use nuclear weapons. It provides two practical pathways for governments of nuclear armed and endorsing states in nuclear alliances to join the Treaty and take the requisite steps to comply with its objectives and provisions.

Recognising that one size does not fit all, the TPNW was framed with prohibitions and obligations that are universally applicable, while its structure has in-built adaptability to enable different levels of nuclear weapons programmes and policies to be addressed and eliminated without conferring special status or privileges on anyone.

To date the TPNW has 70 signatories and 24 states parties. Negotiated under a UN General Assembly mandate, it requires 50 states parties before it enters into full legal force. As a global legal instrument under international law, including international humanitarian law, the TPNW is applicable to all UN Member States, and remains legally in force under conditions of war as well as peace.