



Canadians for a
Nuclear Weapons Convention



Rassemblement canadien pour une
convention sur les armes nucléaires

Conference: Canada and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Convened by
Canadians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention (CNWC)

Hosted by
The Simons Foundation Canada

The Fairmont Château Laurier Hotel, Ottawa, Canada
November 29-30, 2021

Conference Framework Statement

The Entry into Force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is the most significant event for nuclear disarmament since the Gorbachev/Reagan meeting at Reykjavik in October 1986, when the two leaders came close to agreeing to eliminate their entire nuclear arsenals. As such, the TPNW has the potential to spur the kind of urgent, concrete action on the full range of disarmament measures needed to fulfil the Reykjavik vision.

The two-day conference will build a strategy for bringing Canada into conformity with the TPNW through re-energized and re-focused action on disarmament and by challenging NATO's current strategic posture of reliance on the threat of nuclear attack.

The successful negotiation, adoption, and entry-into-force of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on January 22, 2021 is a notable bright spot in the grim picture of the failure to move forward on nuclear disarmament. This breakthrough was achieved by a majority of United Nations members acting together. The Treaty they negotiated bans nuclear weapons possession by States Parties to the Treaty, and it thus parallels the treaties banning biological and chemical weapons. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres calls it a "historic" development that will "form an important component of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime," and will reinforce the global norm against nuclear weapons. The inauguration of U.S. President Joe Biden has bolstered hopes for progress on global security issues, and it has already joined with Russia to extend the New Start Treaty. But nuclear disarmament is still in crisis, with comprehensive negotiations for the elimination of nuclear weapons still far off, and with all the nuclear weapons states modernizing their nuclear arsenals.

The Treaty outlaws nuclear weapons for all who join it, and it directly challenges the military threat and counter-threat doctrine of nuclear deterrence. The Treaty framers recognize that neither morality nor law can justify the continued possession, by any state, of weapons that threaten to annihilate humanity. It strengthens the foundational Treaty on the Non-Proliferation Treaty of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and challenges all states with nuclear weapons to enter into the meaningful, good faith negotiations leading to the elimination of their respective arsenals, as mandated by the NPT.

The conference will issue a call for Canada to welcome, support, and join the TPNW, and challenge Canada to commit anew to active disarmament diplomacy and programming. It will examine ways in which Canada can take advantage of the momentum generated by the TPNW entry-into-force to promote measures to halt the current nuclear “modernization” arms race, to further reduce arsenals, and to mitigate risks of nuclear use. The conference will focus on the legal, humanitarian, and political dimensions of nuclear disarmament. It will examine NATO’s current nuclear strategy and explore ways in which Canada and like-minded states within the alliance can effectively challenge those policies and bring the organization into alignment with the TPNW and with NATO’s self-declared commitment to creating conditions for a world without nuclear weapons.

Conference Goal

The goal of the conference is to better inform the CNWC so that it is in a better position:

- to challenge the Government and Parliament of Canada to welcome, support, and join the TPNW;
- to set out an agenda for urgent Canadian action on nuclear disarmament;
- to contribute to the renewal of the nuclear disarmament movement;
- to promote education and raise awareness of the critical dangers of nuclear weapons; and
- to challenge Canada to reaffirm the global commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons and to ending to the dangerous system of threats of nuclear attack and counterattack that is central to the doctrine of nuclear deterrence.

Canadians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention (CNWC) supports public policy dialogue on nuclear arms control and disarmament, including the development of a comprehensive Nuclear Weapons Convention to codify and consolidate the agreements, regulations, institutional arrangements, and verification measures essential for accomplishing the agreed global objective of the prohibition and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Simons Foundation Canada is a private foundation committed to advancing positive change through education in peace, disarmament, international law and human security. The Simons Foundation initiates and participates in major worldwide peace projects, convenes global leaders for high-level strategic and policy dialogues, sponsors important academic research through fellowships and chairs, acts as a major convener of academic and public events and partners on policy-driven publications.