



**Statement by the Holy See
at the Main Committee I
of the Eleventh Review Conference of the of the Parties to the Treaty on
the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
*New York, 1 May 2026***

Mr. Chair,

In an era of increasing strain on the foundations of international security, it is crucial to consider the core conditions necessary for lasting peace.

As Pope Leo XIV observes, “When peace is not a reality that is lived, cultivated and protected, then aggression spreads into domestic and public life. In the relations between citizens and rulers, it could even be considered a fault not to be sufficiently prepared for war, not to react to attacks, and not to return violence for violence. Far beyond the principle of legitimate defense, such confrontational logic now dominates global politics, deepening instability and unpredictability day by day.”¹

This warning speaks directly to the present moment: it is precisely this logic that nuclear disarmament seeks to overcome. A model of security grounded in fear, in the threat of force, and in the perpetuation of mutual vulnerability cannot provide a stable or lasting foundation for peace.

Concurrently, there are evident trends that are moving in an unsettling direction, including the resurgence of nuclear rhetoric, the expansion and modernization of nuclear arsenals, and the evolution of deterrence doctrines in ways that risk lowering thresholds. These trends continue to divert significant resources from pressing human needs and sustainable development.

These concerns are further compounded by the erosion of longstanding arms control and disarmament agreements, which have long contributed to stability, transparency, and trust.

The obligation enshrined in Article VI must be implemented with clarity and renewed determination. It constitutes a binding commitment to pursue, in good faith, concrete and verifiable progress towards nuclear disarmament. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is not a distant aspiration, but a necessary responsibility that calls

¹ POPE LEO XIV, *Message for the LIX World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2026.

for concrete and credible steps, directed at achieving a more just, secure, and enduring peace.

Mr. Chair,

The rapid integration of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, into nuclear systems is a cause for serious concern. These developments not only further complicate efforts towards nuclear disarmament, but also carry the risk of increasing misjudgment and accelerating escalation. They also compress the time available for human decision-making in moments of crisis. In particular, delegating decision-taking over nuclear weapons to automated systems raises profound ethical and security concerns. Therefore, efforts to prohibit and regulate the use of such technologies in relation to nuclear weapons are of particular importance.

Against this backdrop, the need to advance nuclear risk reduction and de-escalation measures have never been greater. In a context marked by heightened tensions and diminishing trust, reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines, enhancing transparency, and strengthening channels of communication remain essential.

Mr. Chair,

The catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of the use of nuclear weapons must remain at the center of our reflections, as it would have devastating and far-reaching effects, transcending borders and generations. In this regard, the Holy See calls upon all States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), as it offers a necessary and complementary path toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Rather than perpetuating deterrence, what is needed is a renewed commitment to disarmament - the only foundation for a just, secure, and lasting peace.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.