
Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

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Universalizing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Working paper submitted by the Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition

1. The Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (JANA)¹ welcomes the Second Meeting of States Parties (2MSP) to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), taking place between 27 November to 1 December 2023. This opportunity reaffirms the weight of our responsibility as Japanese NGOs and citizens with the experience of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to universalize the TPNW and achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.
2. What we have witnessed in recent years demonstrates the urgent need to make all efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date. The Russian invasion of Ukraine accompanied by President Putin's saber-rattling, as well as a recent Israeli official's statement that using a nuclear weapon against Gaza is "one way," are a stark reminder that as long as nuclear weapons exist, so does the risk that they will be used. Therefore, as the preamble of the TPNW reaffirms, the total elimination of nuclear weapons is "the only way to guarantee" that there will be no more hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) created in the future.
3. To this end, we recall that the First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW adopted the Political Declaration and Action Plan with a strong and resolute commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons.
4. Action 1 of the Action Plan calls for "[making] universalization efforts a priority of States Parties" and states, "These efforts should focus on increasing the number of signatures and ratifications, as well as actively engaging in promoting the norms, values and underlying arguments of the Treaty, such as concern about the inherent risks and catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons."

¹ The Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition was founded in 2010, comprising of NGOs and individuals, and is working in particular on the following objectives: (1) Building a global system toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, including the universalization of the TPNW; (2) Reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security policies; (3) New measures to ensure nuclear non-proliferation while safeguarding the civilian use of nuclear energy; and (4) A regional security system ensuring a peaceful nuclear-weapon-free Northeast Asia. For more details, see <https://nuclearabolitionjpn.com/>.

5. Action 12 calls for “[engaging] with those States that for the moment remain committed to nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence, inter alia by providing opportunities for dialogue, highlighting the underlying rationale of the Treaty and the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and their inherent risks.”

6. Consistent with these two Action items, JANA, as a coalition of NGOs and individuals based in Japan, has been working hard over the past years to universalize the TPNW. We have called upon the Japanese government to sign and ratify the Treaty and, as a first step toward that end, to participate in the 2MSP as an observer. We have also dedicated ourselves to build greater public support for the TPNW. Our recent activities and achievements include the following:

- Ahead of the 2MSP, JANA handed its policy proposals to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan on 16 November 2023, followed by a substantive discussion on nuclear disarmament issues. The proposals call upon the government to attend the 2MSP as an observer with the goal to sign and ratify the TPNW at the earliest possible date. While the government’s position remains that the TPNW is “*an important treaty* that could be regarded as *a final passage* to a world without nuclear weapons” (emphasis added),² this is a significant shift from its previous stance several years ago that Japan cannot support and sign the TPNW³;
- On 5 August 2023, in Hiroshima, JANA hosted a meeting among Japanese parliamentarians from all major political parties to discuss Japanese nuclear disarmament policy. In the meeting, the participants from all parties aside from one of the ruling parties have expressed their support for Japan’s observer participation in the 2MSP.⁴ According to surveys conducted by Giin Watch, a civil society project to monitor views of parliamentarians on nuclear weapons, 36% of Japanese Diet members support the TPNW and more than 50% embrace Japan’s observer participation in TPNW meetings⁵; and
- Toward the G7 Hiroshima Summit in May 2023, member organizations of JANA conducted efforts by joining the Japan Civil Society Coalition on the G7 Summit 2023 (C7), which consists of more than 100 civil society organizations working on various issues including nuclear disarmament, climate change, gender, human rights, public health, economic inequality and others. The C7 issued a joint Communiqué which includes a call on the G7 leaders to attend TPNW meetings and cooperate with States parties to the Treaty.⁶ Throughout the process toward the Summit, our member organizations conducted activities to raise public awareness on the TPNW and nuclear weapons abolition. According to a recent public opinion poll in 2023, 61% of Japanese believe that Japan should join the TPNW.⁷

² *Diplomatic Bluebook 2023*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2023/pdf/pdfs/2023_all.pdf.

³ Taro Kono, “Dai 195 kai kokkai sangiin gaikoubouei-iinkai kaigiroku dai 2 gou [195st Session of the House of Councilors of the National Diet of Japan, Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence],” no.2, 137, December 5, 2017, <https://kokkai.ndl.go.jp/#/detail?minId=119513950X00220171205&spkNum=137¤t=3>.

⁴ Recording (in Japanese) is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asJI_4njDX4&t=4s.

⁵ See the webpage of Giin Watch at <https://giinwatch.jp/>.

⁶ “Communiqué 2023,” The Japan Civil Society Coalition on G7 Summit 2023, https://civil7.org/wp/C7/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/C7_communique2023_0412.pdf.

⁷ “‘Syasetsu’ heiwa ni kansuru yoron chousa: sensou wo okosasenai kousou wo [‘Editorial’ Public Opinion Poll Regarding Peace: A Call For a Vision to Prevent Wars],” *Ryukyū Shimpou*, July 31, 2023, <https://ryukyushimpo.jp/editorial/entry-1757162.html>.

7. JANA's activities have thus far produced tangible outcomes as outlined above. In order to strengthen our efforts and make further progress, we are launching a new, nation-wide campaign calling for Japan's signing and ratification of the TPNW by 2030 – tentatively named the “Japan Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.”⁸ It is our determination that this new campaign will build greater domestic support for the TPNW, changing the government position into signing and ratifying the Treaty.

8. Key takeaways from our universalization efforts so far are as follows:

- Comprehensive and sustained engagement with the government, politicians, and general public in each country is critical for bringing a positive shift in the position of States that rely on nuclear weapons for their security;
- Those States generally share the goal of realizing a world free of nuclear weapons; however, they at best regard the TPNW as “a final passage” toward that end. We therefore need to further strengthen the case that the Treaty serves as an “entry point” to eliminate nuclear weapons; and
- While the recognition of and support for the TPNW appear to be steadily growing within those States, the public also remains supportive of nuclear deterrence. More efforts are hence needed to highlight that nuclear weapons are not only immoral and illegal but also impractical and unnecessary for their security because of the precarious nature of policies of nuclear deterrence.

9. Based on these above takeaways, JANA asks the Meeting to consider the following recommendations in order to universalize the TPNW:

- (a) Reaffirming the importance of communicating first-hand accounts of hibakusha in highlighting the inherent risks and humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons;
- (b) In cooperation with the Scientific Advisory Group, tasking the informal working group on Article 12 to comprehensively examine problems associated with policies of nuclear deterrence, including, inter alia, political, legal, and social problems, with the aim to further strengthen and promote the underlying arguments of the TPNW;
- (c) Tasking the informal working group on Article 12 to consider practical ways for States parties, in cooperation with civil society and other relevant parties, to engage with States that rely on nuclear weapons for their security; and
- (d) Creating a framework that allows governments, politicians, and civil society representatives from States that rely on nuclear weapons for their security to participate in intersessional work on Article 12 to expand and accelerate universalization efforts.

⁸ For more details about the campaign, see <https://nuclearabolitionjpn.com/>.