

ALERT FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS MILITARY FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS: NUCLEAR BAN TREATY ENTRY INTO FORCE 1/22/21

On 1/22/21, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons enters into force as law in the 50 ratifying countries. That means that everything to do with nuclear weapons will be completely illegal in those countries. Many more countries are expected to ratify in the near future, and the treaty will become law in those countries 90 days after ratification.

As of late December 2020, 135 countries have indicated their support for this Treaty, 86 countries have signed it, and 51 have ratified it. New signatures and ratifications are documented at:

www.icanw.org/signature_and_ratification_status

This treaty will not enter into force in the US or in any of the other nuclear-armed nations (Russia, UK, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea) until they decide to join the treaty. However, nuclear weapons-related military activities will be affected in ratifying countries.

It has *never* been legal to *use or threaten to use* nuclear weapons, in almost every imaginable scenario, under the US Department of Defense Law of War Manual. (To be legal, they would have to be used without causing disproportionate harm to civilians, without causing prolonged and superfluous suffering to soldiers, without adversely affecting neutral countries downwind, without causing long-term damage to the environment, etc.)

With this nuclear ban treaty, it is now *also* illegal to develop, test, produce, manufacture, transfer, station, possess, or stockpile nuclear weapons. Significantly, under this treaty, it's also illegal to assist, encourage, or induce anyone else to do any of those things. That includes financing those activities, in at least some of the countries that join the Treaty. The consequences for violating treaty-enforcement laws in the ratifying countries will vary. But for example, in Ireland and Switzerland, any person who violates these laws may be subject to large fines and a prison term as long as five years to life.

The Treaty represents an absolute rejection of “deterrence theory” by most of the world. It stigmatizes nuclear weapons as a grave danger to all humanity, whether they are used as designed or detonate by accident. And it lays out a clear pathway for the elimination of all nuclear weapons from all countries, in line with the existing legal obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty that the US and other nuclear-armed nations have already committed themselves to.

Personnel at this facility are certainly very aware of the humanitarian consequences at stake. With that reality as its guiding concern, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons won the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for its role in facilitating the Treaty. The world is striving to eliminate all nuclear weapons, before they eliminate us.

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