

**Faith Communities Concerned about the
Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons**

Since August 1945, when the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were subjected to atomic attack, the continued existence of nuclear weapons has forced humankind to live in the shadow of apocalyptic destruction. Their use would not only destroy the past fruits of human civilization, it would disfigure the present and consign future generations to a grim fate.

Nuclear weapons are incompatible with the values upheld by our respective faith traditions—the right of people to live in security and dignity; the commands of conscience and justice; the duty to protect the vulnerable and to exercise the stewardship that will safeguard the planet for future generations. Nuclear weapons manifest a total disregard for all these values and commitments. There is no countervailing imperative—whether of national security, stability in international power relations, or the difficulty of overcoming political inertia—that justifies their continued existence, much less their use.

We raise our voices in the name of sanity and the shared values of humanity. We reject the immorality of holding whole populations hostage, threatened with a cruel and miserable death. We urge the world's political leaders to muster the courage needed to break the deepening spirals of mistrust that undermine the viability of human societies and threaten our shared future.

For decades, the obligation and responsibility of all states to eliminate these weapons of mass destruction has been embodied in Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Progress toward the fulfillment of this repeatedly affirmed commitment has been too slow; today it is almost imperceptible. Instead, ongoing modernization programs divert vast resources from limited government budgets when public finances are hard-pressed to meet the needs of human security. This situation is unacceptable and cannot be permitted to continue.

Therefore as people of faith, we pledge to:

1. Communicate within our respective faith communities the inhumane and immoral nature of nuclear weapons and the unacceptable risks they pose, working within and among our respective faith traditions to raise awareness of the moral imperative to abolish nuclear weapons;
2. Continue to support international efforts to ban nuclear weapons on humanitarian grounds and call for the early commencement of negotiations by states on a new legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons in a forum open to all states and blockable by none.

As people of faith, we call on the world's governments to:

3. Heed the voices of the world's *hibakusha* (atomic bomb survivors) urging the abolition of nuclear weapons, whose suffering must never be visited on any other individual, family or society;
4. Take to heart the realities clarified by successive international conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons; take concrete action leading to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, consistent with existing obligations under the NPT.
5. Associate themselves with the Pledge delivered by Austria at the Vienna Conference and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.