Preventing Catastrophic Harm

Nuclear weapons are one of the gravest threats to public health. The nuclear ban treaty comprehensively prohibits nuclear weapons just like all other weapons of mass destruction. Guided by the tenet, "we must prevent what we cannot cure," the medical community's research and testimony on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons underlines that we must ban and eliminate these weapons to avert their dangers.

"[We] advise the government of the United States, and all national governments, to continue to work to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons.

American Medical Association
November 2015 Resolution

Treaty Elements

- **Production**: Uranium mining exposes workers and communities to toxic byproducts. Mining and waste storage cause long-lasting environmental damage.
- **Testing**: Physicians estimate 2.4 million people will die of cancers from exposure to nuclear testing from 1945-1980.
- **Use**: Using less than 1% of the global nuclear stockpile would disrupt the climate, causing a global famine impacting 2 billion people.
- **Possession**: Defense experts warn that nuclear dangers are at an historical high. Miscalculation or human error could cause a catastrophic accident.

- **Fills the "legal gap"** by prohibiting nuclear weapons, including their use, development, testing, production, manufacturing, and possession.
- **Introduces verification standards**. Strong, transparent safeguards will ensure that countries meet their obligations.
- **Compensates victims** of nuclear use, testing and production and requires countries to mitigate environmental contamination.

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## How the Treaty Impacts the United States

### 1. Requires a Shift in U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy

The 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty requires the U.S. to negotiate nuclear disarmament. However, the U.S. is planning an extensive upgrade of its existing arsenal. The nuclear weapons ban treaty fills in the legal gap by comprehensively prohibiting nuclear weapons. The treaty signals to the U.S. that nuclear-armed countries must stop perpetuating their nuclear weapons program.

### 2. Disarmament for Global Leadership

The treaty creates an international norm against nuclear weapons. All nuclear-armed countries are global outlaws. These countries must comply with their disarmament obligations to reclaim their leadership. Stigmatizing nuclear weapons also discourages rising powers from acquiring them for prestige.

### 3. Financial Divestment from Nuclear Weapons

The illegal status of nuclear weapons and the prohibition against financing in the treaty significantly aids the existing citizens’ divestment movement. Nuclear weapons are now a risky and controversial investment for financial institutions.

### 4. Energizes Citizen Advocacy for Disarmament

The ban treaty inspired young and old citizen activists from 450+ civil society groups. The public health, human rights, and environmental protection principles embedded in the treaty resonate with the values and concerns of today’s society.

## About Us


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