

Good news for humankind: Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Arms

The Social Action Ministry Office joins in the call to rid the world of nuclear arms and encourages the Parliament of Canada to debate this country's participation in the new Treaty.

Montreal, January 12, 2021 – The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will go into effect on January 22, 2021. Fifty countries signed and ratified this document! Canada abstained, despite the appeals of Jean Chrétien and other political figures¹. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICANW), which brought this treaty about, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017; Japanese-Canadian Mrs. Setsuko Thurlow was one of the organization's two representatives who were invited to accept the award.

The Social Action Ministry of the Catholic Church of Montreal supports the campaign², encouraging Parliamentarians to debate the matter and to empower the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development to conduct public hearings on the Treaty and on Canada's role in advocating global nuclear disarmament.

The Social Action Ministry's involvement in this broad grassroots movement is motivated by the Church's social teachings. In his latest encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti* § 262, Pope Francis did not mince words: “*the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons becomes both a challenge and a moral and humanitarian imperative.*” (October 2020). The teachings of Canada's bishops uphold this same position³.

Director of the Social Action Ministry Louise Royer has also signed an international appeal⁴: **Protect people and the planet**, which invites cities, parliaments and governments to:

- 1- Affirm that nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought, and therefore the nuclear armed States should stand down their nuclear forces and affirm policies never to initiate a nuclear war (no-first-use policies);

¹ Open letter published on 21 September, 2020, International Day of Peace: <https://www.wagingpeace.org/open-letter-in-support-of-the-2017-treaty-on-the-prohibition-of-nuclear-weapons/>

² See the appeal launched by the Hiroshima Nagasaki Day Coalition (Toronto): <http://www.hiroshimadaycoalition.ca/> Échec à la guerre (Montréal) supports the campaign.

³ Statement on Nuclear Weapons, Plenary Assembly, 2019: <https://www.cccb.ca/justice-and-peace/peace-and-security/>

- 2- Commit to the elimination of nuclear weapons by 2045, the 100th anniversary of the United Nations;
- 3- Cut nuclear weapons budgets (if they are a nuclear-weapon State), end investments in the nuclear weapons industry (all governments), and redirect these investments and budgets to support the United Nations, COVID-19 management and recovery, drastic reductions in carbon emissions to protect the climate, and financing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mrs. Royer is pleased to note that the City of Montreal did not wait until this appeal before committing to the cause, as it has for several years been engaged as Executive City within the organization Mayors for Peace. In that capacity, the City of Montreal hailed the introduction of the Treaty in an open letter calling for nuclear disarmament by all countries⁵.

If you are in agreement with this proposal, you can:

- Sign the petition demanding that the Government adhere to the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Arms*: <https://petitions.ourcommons.ca/en/Petition/Sign/e-3028> by February 6th;
- Inform the elected official in your federal riding about the Treaty and invite him/her to consult the website *Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament*: <http://www.pnnd.org>;
- Raise awareness among those in your circle;
- Sign and invite others to sign the appeal by the Unfold Zero movement and share the hashtag #wethepeople2020.
- In this year consecrated to him, pray Saint Joseph, patron saint of Canada, to intercede for the protection of the people and the planet.

Canada – and Montreal – contributed to the development of the atomic bomb⁶. Would it not be right if we contributed even more to ridding the world of the nuclear threat?

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⁴ <https://www.unfoldzero.org/protect-people-and-the-planet-appeal-for-a-nuclear-weapon-free-world/#endorsers>; see also #wethepeople2020

⁵ Open letter:
http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/statements/calling/201025_openletter_en.html

⁶ <https://echecalaguerre.org/armes-nucleaires-et-role-du-canada/>