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## Now is the Time: Ban and Abolish Nuclear Weapons!

### *Declaration of Scientists for Peace Germany (NatWiss) of March 27 2017 on the UN-Negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty*

Today, on March 27, in New York, negotiations start on a treaty "to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination". The large majority of United Nations supports the negotiations, except the nuclear weapons states and their allies. The arguments for a Ban Treaty and total nuclear abolition are overwhelming and urgent like never before:

[1] Nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction which have not been banned by an international agreement even though they are the most destructive of all weapons. The explosion of a nuclear weapon can erase whole cities and kill hundreds of thousands of people immediately; it can contaminate whole regions with radioactive fallout, and can power down electronic devices via an electromagnetic impulse over large areas.

[2] Even if only a fraction of about 15,000 existing nuclear weapons is deployed there is a risk of a nuclear winter in which debris of the nuclear explosion would darken the atmosphere worldwide, leading to a total collapse of global food supply and possibly killing billions of human beings.

[3] The deployment of nuclear weapons cannot be excluded: by accident, misjudgment, deterrence, military escalation or terrorists. It is pure luck that nuclear weapons have not been used after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Great risks for health and environment remain due to a nuclear arms race, the development of nuclear weapons, the close entanglement of civil and military use of nuclear power, and the spreading of uranium and plutonium.

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[4] Almost three decades after the end of the Cold War the nuclear weapons states – despite their obligations in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) – still have not ended the nuclear arms race but rather intensify it by the modernization of their nuclear arsenals. New areas of crisis spur a new dynamic of armament, like the new East-West-conflict between Russia and the West as well as in the Middle East, South East Asia and East Asia, where the spiral of threat between missiles, missile defense and military use of space increases the risk of nuclear war.

[5] The NATO states, gathering behind the heavily armed nuclear power USA, have a considerable responsibility in this escalation. While the government of US President Donald Trump strives to enlarge the US nuclear arsenal and questions disarmament, its NATO partners hold on to nuclear deterrence and follow instructions to enlarge their own military programs.

[6] The German government continues to build on nuclear deterrence and insists on nuclear sharing of NATO in loyalty to the alliance. US nuclear weapons remain at the Bundeswehr military base in Büchel in the Eifel area. Furthermore, some circles fabulate about increasing the nuclear access of Germany. This would violate the status as a non-nuclear weapons state in the NPT, 60 years after the Göttingen Declaration of 18 nuclear scientists who spoke out against a nuclear-armed German Bundeswehr in 1957. The non-participation of Germany in the Ban negotiations is contradictory to former statements of German governments and parliament, and places Germany at the side of the nuclear weapons states.

[7] The nuclear weapons states and their allies also act against the will of their own population who in a clear majority is in favor of a nuclear weapons ban. In Germany, the people are also for a withdrawal of nuclear weapons from their territory. This is well justified as it is the people and civil society which would be particularly affected in case of nuclear war.

The arguments show: a legal ban and the elimination of all nuclear weapons are in the interest of whole humanity. The times of promises are over, now it is the moment of truth. A ban treaty, developed by a coalition of states and civil society would make the manifold statements of willingness for a world free of nuclear weapons concrete. A binding treaty according to international law increases the pressure on the nuclear weapons states and would be a decisive step towards a comprehensive convention for the abolition of all nuclear weapons, like the already existing ones for biological and chemical weapons.

Therefore we demand:

- All states, including NATO member states and nuclear weapons states, should participate in the negotiations on a ban treaty of nuclear weapons leading to their elimination.
- The German government should end nuclear sharing in NATO, make Germany nuclear weapons free and contribute to a success of the ban treaty negotiations.

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The declaration is available at: <http://natwiss.de/menu/nachrichten/>