



15 September 2016

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, PC, MP
Prime Minister
Government of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: Negotiation of a Treaty to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons

We are writing to urge your government to support the negotiation of a United Nations (UN) treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons.

In December 2015, the UN General Assembly passed a resolution to convene an Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) to “address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons.” On 19 August 2016, the OEWG adopted a draft report which recommends a UN General Assembly resolution to convene a conference in 2017 for the purpose of negotiating a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons.¹ The OEWG will present its report and recommendations to the General Assembly in October 2016.

Of the 103 States members of the OEWG, 68 voted to adopt the draft report, 22 were opposed, and 13 abstained.² Canada was among the minority of States opposing adoption of the report. This is disappointing, given that 90 percent of Canadians support nuclear disarmament and 73 per cent support an enforceable ban.³ A 2008 poll indicated that 76 percent of populations around the world favour disarmament, including populations of countries possessing nuclear weapons.⁴

¹ See the OEWG report at:

[http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/\(httpAssets\)/B7F8C26BC8E15317C1258018003E1D71/\\$file/Final+Report+of+the+OEWG,+as+submitted+to+GA+\(clean\).pdf](http://www.unog.ch/80256EDD006B8954/(httpAssets)/B7F8C26BC8E15317C1258018003E1D71/$file/Final+Report+of+the+OEWG,+as+submitted+to+GA+(clean).pdf)

² While no official vote was recorded by the UN, an informal count was done by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. See

<http://www.icanw.org/campaign-news/support-for-a-conference-in-2017-to-negotiate-a-treaty-banning-nuclear>

³ Environics, *Canada's World Poll*, January 2008, as cited in Cesar Jaramillo, “Is a nuclear weapons ban in sight?” *The Ploughshares Monitor* 35(1)(Spring 2014), http://ploughshares.ca/pl_publications/is-a-nuclear-weapons-ban-in-sight/

⁴ WorldPublicOpinion.org, “World Publics on Eliminating All Nuclear Weapons,” 2008, summary available at http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/international_security_bt/577.php

International law favours nuclear disarmament. The International Court of Justice in its 1996 Advisory Opinion⁵ unanimously stated its view that in international law “[t]here exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.”

In June 2016, at the Federal Liberal Policy Convention in Winnipeg, the Liberal Party passed a resolution calling upon the Government of Canada to “take a leadership role in advancing global efforts toward nuclear disarmament” and to “commence negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention that would ban nuclear weapons.”

We urge your government to ensure that Canada votes in favour of any forthcoming General Assembly resolution to negotiate a treaty to ban nuclear weapons.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Morris, BA, JD, LLM
Director
Peacemakers Trust

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⁵ International Court of Justice, Advisory Opinion of 8 July 1996 on Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons.