



DISARMING Pax Christi TIMES

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THE THREAT OF OUR SELF EXTINCTION

Harry Kerr

This issue of Disarming Times takes a new direction. The Pax Christi Victoria Committee has decided that each issue should focus on a single theme which may lead to further Pax Christi activity. We would be interested in your feedback.

In this issue the focus is the **Eleventh Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ("NPT")**, which has just concluded. We include comments from Pax Christi representatives who attended, a comment on the moral ramifications by Fr. Justin Glynne SJ, a member of the Pax Christi Victoria committee, Professor Tilman Ruff, founder of ICAN on how Nuclear Disarmament is stalling, Fr. Claude Mostowik, president of Pax Christi Australia, on the possibility of a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific.

Philosopher Henry Wieman wrote: *The bomb that fell on Hiroshima cut history in two like a knife.* (The Source of Human Good 1946). Philosopher Arthur Koestler wrote *From the dawn of consciousness until 6th August 1945 man had to live with the prospect of his death as an individual; since the day when the first atomic bomb outshone the sun over Hiroshima, man has had to live with the prospect of his extinction as a species,* (article in *The Observer*, 1 January 1978.) Since 1945 the nuclear powers and their allies and dependents have been inducted into what can only be described as a

Nuclear Culture. We have been led to see our "security" to be the possession of nuclear weapons or hiding under the "nuclear umbrella" of those who do. We are party to a threat to destroy millions of people and potentially, humanity as a whole. Since 1945 the size and reach of nuclear weapons has expanded exponentially and many more countries have adopted them.. Although they have not been used again, they are now destroying humanity and the earth. The cost of building and maintaining them diverts massive resources from feeding the poor, from providing health, education and development resources where they are most needed. The effects of radiation from nuclear testing continues to kill people, in Australia, the Pacific and elsewhere. Whole communities Fukushima, Chernobyl, three Mile Island and some Pacific Islands have been poisoned and rendered uninhabitable. The long term effects of nuclear waste threaten humanity going forward.

Where is the Christian community in the face of this threat to all of God's children and God's creation? In years gone by many church leaders and their followers, not least Pax Christi, were in the forefront of opposition to nuclear weapons. Today this energy, where it still exists has diverted to other no less worthy causes: Climate change, militarisation, and the deadly conflicts around the world. The nuclear threat is the focus of the conflict between and

within nations between those who wield power through wealth and others who do not.

What is the Christian response? We find ourselves like the Israelites in the wilderness: asking: *Is God with us or not?* We do not hear Christian leaders question the morality of relying on the American "Nuclear Shield" or actively participating in it through AUKUS. This is no less than attempted murder. Likewise we do not hear a challenge to the hypocrisy of demanding that Iran for example give up its nuclear programme when others have a much greater arsenal which they will not give up or indeed continue nuclear testing. Christians need to develop a vision of a "New Heaven and a New Earth" which God promises. What might this look like? Where is it happening? How might we be liberated from our fear of each other? How do we resist the powers who have a vested interest in fuelling the threat?

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DISARMING TIMES

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PAX CHRISTI AUSTRALIA
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Human rights, justice and integrity of
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We take a stand against militarism, nuclear
weapons and the arms race.
As an ecumenical Christian movement
Pax Christi fosters the spiritual and scriptural
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A visitor to Hiroshima after the bomb noticed the outline of a person on a ruined wall. The person had been completely vaporised and only this imprint was left. The visitor saw in this human imprint, the presence of the crucified Christ. Christ was there carrying in Christ's own body the suffering of Hi-

roshima as he carries the marks of the wars and cruelties which humans do to each other. We know that the cross was not the God's last word. Nuclear bombs and nuclear umbrellas are not God's way. It is for us to imagine and live the road to " a New Heaven and New Earth."

The Eleventh of the Parties Non-



Review Conference to the Treaty on the Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 27 April to 22 May 2026, was attended by a

Pax Christi International Delegation composed of Mary Yelenick (PCI UN Main Representative, New York), Anthony Donovan (PCI UN Representative, New York) and Sr Carol Gilbert (Catholic Peace Advocate).

Despite the absence of a final agreement, several UN Missions sponsored and participated in events organised by NGOs and civil society. Pax Christi International co-organised a side event, together with Veterans for Peace and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, held on 12 May.

Pax Christi International reiterates the urgent need for renewed political courage and moral responsibility to prevent further erosion of the global disarmament framework. We call on States Parties and the international community to:

- **Uphold the integrity of the NPT** by rejecting nuclear threats and practices that undermine disarmament commitments.
 - **Advance concrete nuclear disarmament** through transparent reductions in arsenals and an end to nuclear modernisation programmes.
 - **Redirect nuclear spending** towards human development, climate actions, healthcare, poverty eradication and peacebuilding.
 - **Support independent scientific research** on the humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons, including through the new UN scientific panel.
 - **Strengthen support for the TPNW** through signature, ratification, victim assistance and environmental remediation initiatives.
- We also encourage Catholic and faith leaders to start and continue speaking out** against nuclear deterrence and its immorality and to promote a culture of peace, nonviolence and integral human disarmament and security.

Giulia Bordin
Advocacy Officer

NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE DELIVERS DÉJÀ VU!

Pax Christi international reports from the Conference

Mary T. Yelenick, Anthony Donovan (*Members of the Pax Christi International UN NGO Team in New York*), Divina Mokeira Gekonge (*Pax Christi Kenya*)

At the Eleventh Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ("NPT"), the Nations of the World Failed Yet Again to Protect Our Planet. So It is Tasked to All of Us to Do

Once again, the nations of the world assembled at United Nations headquarters in New York pursuant to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty ("NPT") are returning to their capitals empty-handed. And once again, the principal obstructionists to reaching consensus on a final outcome document were the nuclear-armed states – including the United States, the only nation to unleash nuclear weapons upon another country. In legal circles, this fact alone would suggest bad faith, and at a deeper level, grave moral turpitude. Domination, arrogance, and a refusal to abide by one's Treaty obligations: it is these characteristics that continue to govern the responses to the NPT by nuclear-armed nations.

There is a growing divergence between the Treaty's promise of disarmament and a reality increasingly defined by nuclear permanence, with existential risk. The erosion of the promises made in the NPT suggests that while the world may recognize the threat of nuclear catastrophe in principle, it tolerates its possibility in practice.

The NPT The NPT entered into effect in March of 1970. Those nations that had tested nuclear weapons prior to 1967 -- the United States, France, the UK, Russia, and China -- agreed, pursuant to the NPT, that over time they would eliminate their nuclear arsenals, in exchange for the other nations of the world agreeing never to develop or acquire nuclear weapons.

In subsequent years, four additional nations nonetheless proceeded to develop nuclear weapons: Israel (though never publicly acknowledging so), India, Pakistan, and North Korea.

While to date 189 nations have ratified the NPT, thereby becoming States Parties to the Treaty, there persists a compliance imbalance – a consequence of history, money, and military might. This imbalance is reflected in determinations of whose security is "global," whose is "national," and whose is worthy of little attention.

The fulfillment of disarmament obligations lags far behind non-proliferation commitments. Nuclear-armed nations are increasingly intent upon expanding and "modernizing" their arsenals, thereby increasing their weapons' lethality. Those nations further proclaim that "nuclear-sharing" agreements, such as those among NATO nations (in which Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and Turkiye have hosted on their soil American nuclear weapons), somehow support non-proliferation goals, and strengthen the NPT – though those agreements are at odds with the very purpose of the NPT. Similarly, nuclear technology- and weapons-"sharing" agreements, such as that of the Australia-United Kingdom-United States ("AUKUS") military alliance (pursuant to which Australia might acquire nuclear-powered submarines), and the stationing by Russia of nuclear weapons in Belarus, fly in the face of the NPT.

States Parties to the NPT meet every five years to review the status of the Treaty, but have generally failed to make headway. The 2015 NPT Conference culminated in rejection of the final text by the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada. At the NPT Conference in 2022, the parties ultimately proffered a draft, rejected by Russia. And now, in 2026, the assembled nations have again failed to reach agreement on a final outcome document. That refusal to agree seems to have included the United States pointing fingers at Iran – the very nation that, under an earlier US Administra-

tion, had expressly signed an agreement not to pursue nuclear weapons – until that agreement was nullified by the current US Administration. The hypocrisy is dizzying.

The Power Imbalance Infecting the 2026 NPT

The 2026 NPT Conference – while failing to deliver what most of our world needs, and actively seeks – demonstrates distressingly the imbalance of power and influence exercised by certain of the "Permanent Members" of the UN Security Council, who effectively possess a veto power of not only Security Council Resolutions, but of other resolutions as well. This power is a consequence of history, money, military might, and global bullying.

The Key Role of Civil Society at NPT Conferences

Notwithstanding the failure to reach agreement, a number of UN Missions did endorse, sponsor, and attend events presented by civil society Non-Governmental Organizations ("NGOs"), which attempted to pull back the veils of secrecy, falsehoods, and bullying that too often characterize discussions about nuclear weapons. In a process too often dominated by States speaking in carefully-calibrated abstractions, it is NGOs that continue to speak truth to power – spotlighting the horrific human consequences and realities too often missing from the vocabulary of diplomats.

Civil society organizations presented oral and written statements to the assembled delegations; engaged in lobbying activities with UN Missions; sponsored "side events" on the dangers of nuclear testing, deployment, and waste disposal, as experienced in various communities; hosted a weekend-long educational event on nuclear weapons' horrific effects on communities and lands around the globe; and participated in public rallies in New York, and marched peacefully across Manhattan, carrying signs decrying the use

nuclear weapons. And global agencies dedicated to public health – including the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Health Organization – effectively employed data making clear that nuclear war could lead to the end of all that we on earth know and love.

Pax Christi International, one of the many global NGOs present and active in nuclear weapons abolition work at the United Nations, sponsored a side event at the NPT highlighting nuclear weapons profiteers, spotlighting the connection between private industry and global catastrophe — with there being a significant overlap between private firms that profit from nuclear weapons and those profiting from war. The extent to which particular global behemoths profit financially from killing is shocking; by sharing the identities of the worst corporate offenders, members of civil society can formulate programs and strategies to share this information more widely, ideally leading to public boycotts or other pressures on those who profit from killing. And it is killing, after all, that nuclear weapons are designed to do.

Civil society was able to do what diplomats are often precluded from doing: remind the world, in plain language, that what is at issue is nothing less than the survival of all that we know, and all that we hold dear. As the Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations warned in its remarks at the close of the 2026 NPT,

"We are living in a time marked by rising nuclear risks, increasingly dangerous rhetoric, the continued modernization and expansion of nuclear arsenals . . . What is ultimately at stake . . . is human life itself. . . . The pursuit of a world free of nuclear weapons remains... a profound responsibility toward present and future generations."

Critical Role of Witness, Memory, Art, and Image in Conveying the Horrors of Nuclear Weapons

The most effective way to impress on citizens of the world the satanic character of nuclear weapons is arguably found not in words, or



reports, alone, but instead in realistic visual images of the damage wrought, on lands, on bodies, and on our common futures, by nuclear bombs. For when confronting the inconceivable, language and the ability of the human mind fully to grasp the risk and consequences of planetary destruction as being something more than an abstraction, fall short.

The Powerful Role of Personal Witness

Nowhere is moral clarity more powerfully embodied or expressed than in the testimonies of those who have experienced firsthand the horrors of nuclear weapons. The powerful presence and witness of the Hibakusha – people whose families, lands, and futures were ravaged by the bombing by the United States of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; South Pacific Islanders – whose soil, waters, bodies, and future generations have been irradiated and scarred by nuclear testing by the United States and others; and members of communities in the Southwest United States poisoned by nuclear testing and mining: theirs were the most powerful testimonies to the necessity of adhering to the NPT. The human mind cannot fully escape the moral force, and mental imprint, of witnessed suffering.

The Powerful Role of Visual Art

A single image is indeed worth a thousand words.

Among the events sponsored by NGOs during this year's NPT was a film newly released by a young Japanese filmmaker, "From the Shadows of Nagasaki." The visual images from that film — which depict the horrific disfigurement and death to people, land, and all of life in

Nagasaki there — remain lodged painfully in the mind and hearts of viewers in a way verbal arguments have not. Indeed, in the midst of all the legalistic rumblings and mumblings by the nuclear-armed nations, and their feint-and-spin justifications for possessing and threatening to use nuclear weapons, it is the raw, honest images of the devastation wrought upon the earth and all its inhabitants by the use of nuclear weapons that interrupt sleep at night. One of the most haunting examples of this is the photograph that has been widely circulated, including on a card (*attached to this article*) carried by the late Pope Francis, bearing the inscription "il frutto della Guerra," of a sad little boy waiting outside a crematorium in Nagasaki, carrying —

strapped to his back — his dead baby brother. Having once seen that image, one cannot forget the horror. If anything gave us hope at the NPT this year, it was the presence of so many knowledgeable, committed, and creative young people from around the world who are committed to speaking truth — and doing so with fearlessness and courage — to power.

Conclusion

We cannot rely on governments, annual meetings, or international institutions, to lead the way to nuclear abolition. There is simply too much profit to be made by some, and too much bullying of others. Instead, it will be truth-telling by civil society; disruptions of the status quo; unvarnished testimonies and visuals; memories; and consciences shining a light on the truth regarding nuclear weapons — that will, if anything will, save us. The quiet irony of the nuclear age is that the preservation of our precious planet will be found not in documents, nor in choreographed diplomatic assemblies, but in love.

HOW WE SHOULD LEARN TO START WORRYING AND STOP LOVING THE BOMB

Fr. Justin Glynn

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (“NPT”), first concluded in 1968, raises several questions from a theological perspective. On the one hand, it might be argued that, as an attempt to limit access to nuclear weapons, it represents a way of minimising the risk of their use – agreed by most faith communities to represent an evil. Against that, it might equally be said that it entrenches an unjust power imbalance in favour of existing nuclear weapons states. This paper briefly considers the terms and effects of the NPT and their theological ramifications.

The NPT enshrines a two-tier approach to nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons states agree not to transfer military nuclear technologies to non-nuclear states (Art. I) and to work towards disarming themselves of nuclear weapons (Art. VI). Non-nuclear weapons states are obliged to retain that status in exchange for access to peaceful use of nuclear power, ensure International Atomic Energy Safeguards on nuclear material and a right to withdraw if their interests are threatened (Arts. II, III, IV, V and X). In addition, non-nuclear states were given “negative guarantees” of protection by nuclear powers of protection in the event of nuclear attack in exchange for extending the treaty.

Where does this leave us theologically? It is clear that the Catholic Church and other religious groups are correct in arguing that the effects of nuclear weapons use are evil. The death of thousands in the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (to say nothing of the fact that genetic damage has continued over generations, and the effects of depleted uranium and the pollution caused by nuclear weapons tests all make it hard to argue otherwise.

The question that then arises is whether the NPT is a theologically effective answer to that evil. US official, Elbridge Colby, does not deal with the NPT specifically but



argues (quoting Winston Churchill) that since “peace is the sturdy child of terror”, the fear of nuclear counter attack, is indeed justified by the principle of “double effect” – that a lesser evil (the possession and even use of nuclear weapons by the great powers) is justified by a greater (the threat of possession and use by others). Similarly, Paul Biggar argues that nuclear force can be proportionate and that the NPT at least has the advantage of creating areas of the world which are nuclear weapons free.

Let us consider the theological arguments in favour of the NPT (and the possession of nuclear weapons) on the basis proposed by their defenders. The principle of double effect mentioned by Colby and referenced by Biggar (where a lesser evil is permitted to avoid a greater one), originates with Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica*. The modern formulation is traditionally set out as follows:

1. The act to be done must be good in itself
2. The good intended must not be obtained by means of the evil effect.
3. The evil effect must not be intended for itself, but only permitted.
4. There must be proportionately grave reason for permitting the evil effect.

The NPT seems wobbly on all counts. While it is true that preventing some states from acquiring nuclear weapons (with their concomitant evils) is a good act, the evil effect (allowing some states to re-

tain the option for possession and use of nuclear weapons, bearing in mind their indiscriminate nature) is not prevented or offset merely by preventing others from doing so. The test therefore seems to fail on the second leg.

In addition, the NPT explicitly (and impermissibly, in terms of the doctrine of double effect) mandates the evil effect as a quid pro quo for the good. The test thus fails on the third limb also.

Indeed, even on the bare test of effectiveness of its actual provision (the fourth limb), with the benefit of some fifty eight years of hindsight we can say that the proportionality argument has also empirically been shown to fail. In practice, non-nuclear states have had good reason to doubt the assurances contained in the NPT and surrounding negotiations. Since 1968, the arsenals of the nuclear states have grown rather than shrunk. It is noteworthy that North Korea and Israel (nuclear states outside the NPT regime) have not been the victims of aggression by outside states while Iran (a party to the NPT) has been under conventional attack in an unprovoked war by at least two state parties to the NPT (US and UK) and one nuclear non-party (Israel).

As we will see below, the Catholic Church, along with other faith based groups, has been consistent in opposing the possession and use of nuclear weapons, it is also uncomfortably true that actually possessing such weapons seems to have served as a better protection against attack than relying on the “safeguards” in the NPT.

Accordingly, if deterrence is indeed the logic behind the NPT’s unequal regime, then it would seem that the better course would be to allow all states access to nuclear weapons. As noted above, this is a key reason why India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea feel safer outside the NPT regime than in it. Given that

they seem to have gone largely un-attacked by nuclear states, the evidence would seem to favour their case.

Indeed, as we have seen, one of the key arguments in favour of allowing some states to possess nuclear weapons is that this makes them less vulnerable to attack by others. On this basis alone, it would seem that the NPT has been less effective in preventing the evil it was supposed to combat (nuclear attack) than actually allowing states to possess nuclear weapons. Even on its own terms, therefore, it is hard to see the NPT as the "lesser evil".

Further, the International Atomic Energy Agency, established by the NPT, has allegedly assisted rather than preventing attacks by nuclear weapons states on non nuclear weapons states. Even the NPT itself does not give it a meaningful role in holding actual nuclear weapons states to their obligations under it.

Accordingly, as mentioned above and as even nuclear proponents like Biggar acknowledge, the NPT's provisions that were meant to benefit the non-nuclear weapons states have largely been unobserved by the nuclear weapons powers.

It follows inevitably that the NPT is a theologically problematic – even on the basis proposed for it by its advocates. It is therefore unsurprising that recent statements by Catholic and other faith groups have been consistent in their opposition to any form of nuclear possession or use – even as regulated by the NPT.

While the Holy See has acknowledged that the NPT was an attempt to combat proliferation (and has urged observance of all its provisions – including those mandating universal disarmament – as an interim measure), it has also been consistent in its view that its inequality makes it inadequate as a solution – and have linked this to the broader issue of attaining peace. As Pope Leo XIV told the Bishop of Hiroshima in his message on the eightieth anniversary of the Allied bombing of that city:

As a survivor from Nagasaki, Dr. Takashi Nagai wrote, "The person of love is the person of 'bravery' who does not bear arms" (*Heiwato*, 1979). Indeed, true peace demands the courageous laying down of weapons—especially those with the power to cause an indescribable catastrophe. Nuclear arms offend our shared humanity and also betray the dignity of creation, whose harmony we are called to safeguard.

This is not new and builds on consistent papal teaching on the impermissibility of nuclear weapons. Pope Francis too stated that:

Among the threats caused by these instruments of death, I cannot fail to mention those produced by nuclear arsenals and the development of increasingly sophisticated and destructive weapons. Here, I once more affirm the immorality of manufacturing and possessing nuclear weapons.

The Catholic view was echoed by the World Council of Churches in its

statement on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the Hiroshima bombing:

The work for nuclear abolition vitalizes and prioritizes ethical ways of being that are based in truth, right relationship, and very real analyses of survival. We must rise to the occasion and act together, as called by our faith traditions, moral compasses, and spiritual commitments.

Indeed, while there are minority views arguing for the possession and use of nuclear weapons as a tool of last resort, the consensus across the Abrahamic faiths of Christianity, Judaism and Islam seems to hold that these are not permissible weapons. Any regime (such as the NPT) therefore, which allows for the retention and possible use of nuclear weapons would therefore generally be regarded as theologically problematic.

In conclusion then, it would seem that the NPT is not a moral solution to the evil of nuclear weapons, even on the most favourable case proposed for it by its proponents. Instead, Churches (and others of faith) are left with the harder task of working for the absolute prohibition of these evil and potentially planet destroying weapons.

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NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT IS STALLING – AND THE 777 RISKS ARE GROWING

Tilman Ruff

May 4, 2026

As global tensions rise, nuclear-armed states are failing to meet their disarmament obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, while recent conflicts risk accelerating proliferation.

This week in New York, diplomats from almost every nation have convened for the month-long 11th Review Conference (RevCon) of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of

Nuclear Weapons (NPT). While the stakes could barely be higher, in the current environment of imperial aggression and rampant violations of international law, expectations are low.

Most states, including Australia, consider the NPT as a cornerstone of international law in relation to nuclear technology, weapons and disarmament. The NPT is essentially a bargain struck between the states in

the late 1960s that had nuclear weapons and those that did not. The first five nuclear-armed states – China, France, Russia/USSR, UK and US – World War II victors and permanent members of the UN Security Council with veto rights, made a legally-binding commitment to end the nuclear arms race and eliminate their nuclear arsenals; the only place where they have done so. In exchange, states without nuclear

weapons agreed to forego them, with the sweetener of assistance in peaceful uses of nuclear technology. While the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and its safeguards and inspections regime serve the non-proliferation parts of the NPT, there are no comparable organisation, timeframes, defined processes, verification or enforcement mechanisms to drive the disarmament side.

The five-yearly NPT RevCon cycles have been fraught. Consensus process means an outcome can be blocked by one state, and condemns agreements to rock-bottom lowest common denominator. In 2015 Canada, the UK and US blocked adoption of a painstakingly negotiated text at the behest of Israel, nuclear-armed and not party to the NPT, and at the 2022 conference (delayed due to Covid) Russia blocked adoption of the final text, mainly due to references to the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in Ukraine it attacked and occupied.

Of the three Preparatory Committee meetings preceding this year's RevCon, only the 2024 meeting was able to [adopt](#) even a Chair's summary.

Some states, notably Russia, have even disagreed whether decisions adopted apply beyond the next RevCon. Since 1995, only two RevCons have produced an agreed outcome document. In 2000, 13 practical steps to progress nuclear disarmament were agreed, however these remain almost completely unimplemented. In 2010, a 64-point action plan was agreed, but implementation has been variable and weak, particularly for the 22 actions relating to disarmament.

It was always envisaged that additional instruments would be required for disarmament, including for the now four nuclear-armed states outside the NPT. No specific disarmament agreement or outcome can be firmly attributed to the NPT, and the single greatest challenge to its future lies in the failure of nuclear-armed states, now 56 years after its entry into force, to uphold their side of the bargain by disarming.

Two recent developments cast further shadows across this year's

RevCon. Despite Russia's unprecedented, ongoing attacks on nuclear power plants in Ukraine, risking a radiological disaster, the last (2022) RevCon agreed no measures to

protect nuclear facilities from attack. The second is the Israel-US attacks on Iran, including nuclear facilities, under false pretext of Iran's claimed imminent production of nuclear weapons.

Iran does not have a nuclear weapons program and is a member of the NPT. It complied with safeguards until the first Israel-US attacks last June, and it was the United States that withdrew from the agreement limiting its nuclear activities. Despite this, Iran was attacked by two nuclear-armed states in actions illegal under the UN Charter, including Israel, which has never joined the NPT or accepted nuclear safeguards.

Despite going to war over Iran's uranium enrichment, President Trump has supported Saudi Arabia and South Korea enriching uranium, and reprocessing spent fuel to extract plutonium. Not surprisingly, Iran has threatened to leave the NPT.

These attacks are a serious setback to nuclear governance. Non-proliferation cannot be secured by war. The risk of Iran and others following North Korea in acquiring nuclear weapons to prevent military aggression and regime change has been raised by the Israeli-US attacks.

Australia's role

The NPT makes no distinction between states parties with and without nuclear weapons in relation to its nuclear disarmament obligation. The International Court of Justice has affirmed that

this [obligation](#) applies to all states. Australia claims the NPT is central in its efforts for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Officials use the NPT as a figleaf to justify the government's failure to yet join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), as La-



bor's National Policy Platform has committed since 2018, consistent with Australia previously joining, under both Coalition and Labour governments, every other treaty banning a weapon of mass destruction or other inhumane weapon.

If we follow what Australia does rather than simply what we say, then like 32 other nuclear 'complicit' or 'umbrella states' – NATO members, Japan, South Korea and Belarus, Australia contributes more to nuclear weapon dangers than to reducing them. These nations justify nuclear possession as a claimed national security asset, retarding disarmament and acting as an incentive to proliferation, and envision circumstances where they regard use of nuclear weapons as legitimate.

Most also provide assistance for the possible use of nuclear weapons through participating in nuclear planning and exercises, and/or hosting communication and intelligence facilities integral to nuclear targeting, command and control. Belarus, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Türkiye hosting nuclear weapons on their soil undermines the NPT's bargain. They, and from later this year, Australia, also provide operational support, providing or hosting aircraft capable of delivering nuclear weapons. These arrangements violate the purpose and spirit of the NPT if not always its legal letter.

While Australia criticised Russia's attacks on Ukraine's nuclear facilities, shamefully, it supported the recent Israeli-US attacks on Iran, despite the IAEA drawing attention to the great risks of attacking nuclear facilities or risking disruption to the essential power and water for cooling, urging against such attacks and for negotiations. This support also doesn't rest well with Australia having joined the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Australia currently chairs the IAEA Board of Governors, which has also been inconsistent in condemning Russia's attacks on nuclear facilities, but not those by Israel and the US.

Australia claims to support minimisation of fissile material which can be used to build nuclear weapons (HEU

as fuel – up to 20 nuclear weapons per submarine. Even the spent fuel, to remain in Australia, will still be weapons-useable for many millennia. Australia plans to be the first nation to exploit a previously dormant IAEA provision that allows nuclear material to be taken out of safeguards for a time for non-explosive military uses. Applying effective safeguards to stealthy mobile platforms which spend most of their time hidden is a problem the world doesn't need. Australia's precedent is already being followed by South Korea. Iran, too, has expressed interest in nuclear-powered submarines. Brazil's indigenous nuclear-powered submarine development is of far less proliferation concern, as Brazil's planned submarines, like Chinese and French

ones, will be powered by low-enriched uranium, unusable for weapons without further enrichment. Through its plans to permanently host nuclear-capable B-52 bombers, and US submarines planned to again become nuclear-capable in the next several years, Australia is on the cusp of adding operational deployment support to its long-standing communications, intelligence and staffing support for possible use of US nuclear weapons. If Australia really wants to help disarmament and non-proliferation in this dark time of unprecedented nuclear dangers, we should end lip service to the NPT, draw a red line on nuclear weapons in our own policies, sign the TPNW in this term of government, keep nuclear weapons out of Australia and end assistance for their possi-

ble use, just as other US allies New Zealand, the Philippines and Thailand have .

Tilman Ruff AO is immediate past Co-President and a board member of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (Nobel Peace Prize 1985); and co-founder and founding international and Australian Chair of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, the first to an entity born in Australia. He is Hon Principal Fellow in the School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne, and a member of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Scientific Network.

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FOR A NUCLEAR FREE AND INDEPENDENT PACIFIC

Claude Mostowik

One of the most chilling developments in this new era is the integration of A.I. into nuclear response systems where the lack of human sensitivity could trigger a war due to computer failure. As I write, Pope Leo is about to publish (May 25, 2026) his Encyclical, 'Magnifica Humanitas,' on preserving humanity, the protection of the human person, in the A.I. age especially in its application in warfare and everyday life. Though the Pope is concerned with the connection of A.I. to poverty, workers' rights and human dignity, this cannot be separated from the intrusion of A.I. in the military establishment. In June 2024, Pope Francis when addressing the G7 summit warned of the misuse of artificial intelligence in war, and denounced how investments in artificial intelligence and high-tech weaponry were leading the world into a 'spiral of annihilation':

'We must also keep a watchful eye on the development and application of artificial intelligence in both military and civilian contexts, to ensure that they do not absolve humans of responsibility for their choices and do not exacerbate the tragedy of conflicts. What is happening in Ukraine, Gaza and the Palestinian territories,



Lebanon and Iran illustrates the inhuman evolution of the relationship between war and new technologies into a spiral of annihilation. Study, research and investment must move in the opposite direction: Let them be a radical "yes" to life! Yes to innocent life, yes to young life, yes to the life of peoples who invoke peace and justice!' (Pope Leo, Address to Professors and Students at La Sapienza University, Rome, May 21, 2026). In a similar vein, Dr. Francis Kuria Kagema, Secretary General of Religions for Peace condemned the reductionist worldview that prioritises mechanisms of death with a need to 'rejuvenate our commitment to the Sacred to protect the vulnerable – and indeed all of life and our common home.'

In 2019, Pope Francis at Hiroshima clearly stated: 'The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral.' For Aus-

tralia, the call is for good relations with our neighbours in the Asia Pacific region and all other nations. It involves co-operation on shared global challenges the make the world safe with good relations with our neighbours and all nations instead of fear-based reactions that lead to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Military operations have continually contaminated indigenous lands across the Pacific as well as the ocean itself, endangering lives and ecosystems with radioactive waste, nerve agents, and chemical weapons like Agent Orange. Nuclear weapons – and all military spending – represent a distinct moral failure as resources that could be used to feed the hungry, educate all, heal the sick and prevent disease, and address climate change – with billions left over – are constantly diverted.

Delinking national security and preparation for war

Our political leaders always tie security to warfare where national security always leads to talk of warships, submarines, jet fighters, tanks, and bombs. For those countries that present nuclear weapons as part of their strategic planning, most countries assert that the shield of deterrence is illusory. They fail to appreciate that

national security lies in relationships that include foreign aid without strings attached, increased welfare, and decent and affordable housing, better education, building climate-resilient communities in Australia and in the Pacific, supporting Indigenous communities, and transport infrastructure. These will contribute to security of Australian and overseas communities. It is about prioritising people and their needs.

The basis for arguing for nuclear deterrence theory comes down to mistrust and deep-seated suspicion that exacerbates hatred and increase the risk of nuclear deployment. In recent years, we have fixated on the supposed threats posed by China as we ignore US actions against other countries. Francis Kuria says, 'Our true security lies in our interdependence,' where we may be 'the voice that calls for the world to honour the Sacred. Only by honouring the Sacred can we build a world of shared sacred flourishing for all of humanity and for all life of our common home.'

Former Labor PM Paul Keating commenting on the AUKUS deal said, 'The notion that Australia is in a state of military apprehension about China, or needs to be, is a distortion and lie of the worst and most grievous proportions. By its propagation, Australia is determinedly casting China as an enemy – and in the doing of it, actually creating an enemy where none exists....' (<https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/morrison-is-making-an-enemy-of-china-and-labor-is-helping-him-20210921-p58tek.html>). We have spent billions on AUKUS and expanding our military infrastructure. Australia's commitment to AUKUS could cost anywhere from \$268 billion to \$368 billion over the next 30 years. It is great surrender of sovereignty. The call is to greater co-operation and celebration of the achievements of our neighbours rather than being confronted by them.

In the mid-1970s Pacific Islanders, activists, and environmentalists opposed to nuclear colonialism, testing, and waste dumping in the Pacific established the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP)

movement to advocate for a nuclear free and independent Pacific. This was linked to environmental security and self-determination and opposed foreign militarisation and forced displacement. It was a response in the 1960s-70s to U.S., British, and French atmospheric nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands, Australia, and French Polynesia. Led by Indigenous activists, it centred on the rights of Pacific people who were often treated as "guinea pigs" by foreign nuclear powers.

The Pacific Islands have long been at the forefront of global nuclear disarmament efforts. They have suffered from hundreds of nuclear and radioactive material tests by powerful nuclear weapons states between 1946 to 1996 and continue to endure the intergenerational human and environmental effects of those nuclear tests. Australia, a supposedly good Pacific neighbour, must join in these Pacific states to keep the region free from nuclear weapons. As in the case of the Marshall Islands, the worsening climate crisis has made the question of nuclear risks and safety more urgent with the geopolitical competition and increasing military of the major powers.

The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Religious and peace groups including MAPW (Medical Association for the Prevention of War) and ICAN (International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons) called for Australia to sign and ratify the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In 2020, an interfaith letter endorsed by 61 faith organisations exhorted the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition for Australia to join the Treaty. Grave concern was expressed at the persistent global threat posed by nuclear weapons with a call to pursue peace and love and care for humanity and creation. In accord with Pope Francis, they expressed the belief that nuclear weapons are illegitimate, inhumane and indiscriminate. Though the recent Review Conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) concluded without adopting a final document, and despite fierce resistance by nuclear

arms states to advance nuclear disarmament, a great majority of states, vigorously called for action to reduce nuclear risks demonstrating that the majority of countries reject nuclear weapons and want to see urgent action towards their elimination. ICAN Director of Programmes, Susi Snyder said "There is a reason why the countries that claim protection from nuclear weapons are afraid of discussion of what these weapons actually do to people and the environment. They simply don't want people to know the true extent of the horror and cruelty nuclear weapons wreak, because acknowledging these harms will eliminate any credible legitimacy for retaining nuclear weapons."

Pax Christi Australia calls on the Government to join half the world's nations in signing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This Treaty champions collective security beyond nuclear weapons and sets a new stand for nations seeking nuclear abolition, to ensure these weapons are never used again. This is the only global instrument that is leading us towards a nuclear weapons free world. Australia's signature would be by far the strongest indication we could give other nations of our commitment to this goal.

In 2022, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said, 'Today, humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation.' In recent years, geopolitical tensions, conflicts and erratic leadership have escalated, increasing nuclear danger. Proliferating nuclear weapons in response to insecurity will just increase the likelihood of their being used. The only rational approach to the risks posed by these weapons is disarmament. Let us not dismiss diplomacy and other statecraft in favour of Australian nuclear weapons, and the global arms race they would aggravate is a recipe for nuclear proliferation.

What would it take for the UN Security Council to avoid that misunderstand and miscalculation that could to nuclear annihilation?

Fr. Claude Mostowik msc is President of Pax Christi Australia

WHY THE NPT MATTERS TO THE PHILIPPINES:

Gail R. Galang, PhD

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is one of the most important international agreements aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, promoting the peaceful use of nuclear technology, and encouraging global nuclear disarmament. Opened for signature in 1968 and entering into force in 1970, the treaty established a framework in which countries without nuclear weapons agree not to develop or acquire them, while countries that already possess nuclear weapons commit to pursuing negotiations toward eventual disarmament. At the same time, the treaty protects the right of states to access nuclear science and technology for peaceful purposes such as medicine, agriculture, research, and energy, under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Philippines is a signatory to the NPT and has consistently supported its principles through both domestic policy and international diplomacy. The country's commitment to remaining free from nuclear weapons is reinforced by the 1987 Constitution, which reflects a broader national preference for maintaining peace and avoiding involvement in nuclear arms competition. By supporting the treaty, the Philippines contributes to regional stability and

strengthens its role within Southeast Asia's nuclear-weapon-free zone. Participation in the NPT also allows the country to benefit from peaceful nuclear applications, particularly in healthcare through radiation therapy for cancer treatment, as well as in agriculture and food safety programs supported by international cooperation.

Although public awareness of the NPT itself is relatively limited among Filipinos, national attitudes generally align with its goals. Surveys and policy discussions suggest that many Filipinos support keeping the country free from nuclear weapons while remaining open to the responsible use of nuclear technology for development needs, especially in addressing energy shortages and improving medical services. However, some concerns remain regarding the safety and environmental risks associated with nuclear facilities, influenced by global nuclear accidents and the country's own historical experience with the unused Bataan Nuclear Power Plant. These mixed views reflect a cautious but pragmatic public outlook that distinguishes between nuclear weapons and peaceful nuclear applications.

Civil society organizations also play an important role in supporting nuclear disarmament and monitoring related developments in the Philip-

pines. Groups such as the Nuclear-Free Philippines Coalition advocate for policies that prevent the presence of nuclear weapons in the country and promote regional peace initiatives. Academic institutions like the Centre for Peace Education contribute through public education programs that raise awareness about the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and encourage youth engagement in peace advocacy. In addition, Philippine partners of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons help connect local advocacy efforts with global movements supporting nuclear disarmament. Overall, while the NPT may not be widely discussed in everyday public discourse, it plays a meaningful role in shaping the Philippines' foreign policy, security commitments, and scientific cooperation. Through its participation in the treaty and the efforts of government institutions and civil society organizations, the Philippines continues to support international efforts to prevent nuclear weapons proliferation while promoting peaceful uses of nuclear technology for national development and regional stability.

Dr Gail R. Galang, Ph.D. is Associate Director of the Centre for Peace Education at Miriam College

NPT: A NEW ZEALAND PERSPECTIVE

Bridget Crisp

The New Zealand public has long protested nuclear weapons, and many flotillas of boats left New Zealand to sail up into the Pacific to disrupt and oppose nuclear testing by France, the United Kingdom and the United States in the 70's, 80's and 90's. This conviction against nuclear weapon testing became more entrenched following the bombing of Greenpeace's flagship 'The Rainbow Warrior', berthed in Auckland on the 10th of July 1985, by the covert actions of the French

government. By their actions, the French government had murdered Greenpeace photographer Fernando Pereira, who was asleep on board at the time. New Zealand political parties are aware that shifting away from a nuclear-free stance or from supporting initiatives for nuclear weapons will cost them votes. The actions of the French in 1985 in New Zealand territory galvanised the New Zealand government to pass the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Con-

trol Act 1987 into law. This act includes New Zealand's binding agreement to the United Nations Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, 1968, which the government signed shortly after it was introduced at the United Nations. It has been nearly 60 years since the Non-Proliferation Treaty was introduced. New Zealand ministers, on behalf of the government, have consistently spoken at the United Nations in support of nuclear non-proliferation and have endorsed the

peaceful use of nuclear technology (i.e., for energy purposes) if it is coupled with transparency and robust safety measures. Since the introduction of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, technology related to nuclear fusion and military hardware has developed exponentially. Major nuclear States may state that the number of nuclear weapons they hold has diminished. The capabilities of the weapons they now hold are more deadly and devastating than those they had over a decade ago. Of concern is the focus by major nuclear powers on potentially weaponising space. Unfortunately, new companies focused on rocket technology could be contrib-

uting to this future development. New Zealand-founded Rocket Lab operates in New Zealand and the United States and works closely with the US Department of War. Our laws in New Zealand prevent them from launching rockets with nuclear weapons. However, their US rocket site would not be subject to such restrictions. Currently, Rocket Lab denies assisting the US War Department in deploying weapons into space and says its work for the US War Department is primarily for intelligence gathering. Weaponising space will be the new frontier as superpowers again look to the stars to conquer and control the narrative of power dominance. There is a

United Nations Outer Space Treaty that prohibits placing nuclear weapons in space. If nation-states continue to recognise and abide by this treaty, nuclear weapons won't be placed in the atmosphere; however, the sophistication in weapons technology may also allow nation states to circumvent this treaty. *Sr Bridget Crisp is a Sister of Mercy, and a Member of the International Board of Pax Christi International. With various studies including a Master's in Peace and Conflict Studies, and long teaching experience, she is involved in initiatives for peacemaking.*

GOD'S WITNESSES IN BANGKOK

Dianne de Vos

March 12th, 2026

Pakistani Christians fleeing threats of death can enter Thailand on tourist visas, but if they remain longer than two months, they risk arrest and detention as illegal aliens. These brothers and sisters have nowhere to go to live safely. Some refugees are detained for many years and may die in the cramped un-hygienic conditions without adequate food and medical support. Most Pakistani refugees hide in one room apartments using a small balcony as a kitchen, about 5 people in one room. As illegal aliens, the refugees are not allowed to work, and they have no government allowances. To date there are approximately 1,600 Pakistani Christian refugees in Bangkok and 1,500 in Malaysia.

Most Christians in Pakistan are extremely poor and uneducated, sweeping roads and doing menial work so they do not have skills to make a living within a new country. There is some informal work available in Bangkok where employers risk being arrested for employing illegal workers i.e. casual work as

extras in the film industry, labourers, cleaners, kitchen hands and beauticians. If the persecuted Christians are recognised by UNHCR as refugees and have a sponsor they usually spend 10 years in Bangkok waiting in hiding until they are resettled in a new country. Many refugees live in Bangkok much longer than this and they come to experience Jesus as their Hope in a dark place. Many refugees believe God brought them to Bangkok so that they could learn patience and to know and trust him more

This morning, I spoke with Pakistani Pastor Aneel (now settled in Canada) who spent time in detention in Bangkok as did his wife, mother and three children during their 10-year sojourn in Thailand. Pr. Aneel continues to lead an online Urdu language Church for hundreds of refugees in Bangkok and Malaysia that meet 5 nights a week to sing worship songs, share testimonies, pray and hear the Word. Currently studying Revelation 16 and meditating on Gods wrath being poured out on the earth, he said they marvelled that in Gods terrible judgement there is still justice and mercy.

Pr. Aneel reminds his flock that there are many people across the world who are suffering trials and living with uncertainty just as they are. He also notes that in places of comparative peace and stability people still feel afraid and uncertain. The refugee church is encouraged to know that they, being rooted in the Gospel with their faith in Jesus, are a testimony to Gods grace, objects of faith for the world to see. The online church delights to know that they are loved by a caring God, loved and not abandoned, and that they exist to be witnesses of his grace and love.

"Please pray for us, for our protection and a free country to live in, that our faith will not fail". This is the overwhelming request from Gods witnesses in Bangkok.

Dianne de Vos lived and worked for 8 years with these refugees in Bangkok. She advocated and assisted with refugee-led initiatives and was witness to many wonderful acts of God among this community. For more information contact ddevos44@gmail.com .

NOTICE BOARD

NEW SOUTH WALES

Pax Christi Meetings

We normally meet on the First Monday of each month at 6.00pm for shared meal that members bring and the meeting follows at 6.30 pm.

Contact: **Claude Mostowik**
0411 450 953

The venue: 209A Edgeware Road, Enmore.

QUEENSLAND

Pax Christi Meetings

Pax Christi Queensland

Contact:

Pam Nair (Secretary): 07 3711 3273 pamnair@hotmail.com

VICTORIA

Agapes and Public Forums

Contact:

Catriona Devlin, Convenor
0419 109 830

catriona3171@gmail.com

**Pax Christi National Council
Meets on Zoom for national
issues**

Contact:

0411 450 953

CONVERSATION AT THE CROSS-ROADS

Invites you to

THE DECLINE OF DEMOCRACY AND THE RISE OF THE FAR RIGHT

Tuesday 30 June 2026

6:00 pm 8:30 pm

Newman College, University
of Melbourne

Join acclaimed journalist **Lenore Taylor** and leading researcher of the radical right **Associate Professor Mario Peucker** for a timely conversation exploring the causes, consequences, and future of these global trends. refreshments, audience discussion, and opportunities for engagement .

Booking <https://www.trybooking.com/events/landing/1594933>

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

Building a Peace Church

Justice and International Mission Convention of Uniting Church Vic & Tas

Saturday 25 July 2026 9.30-4.45 pm

Centre for Theology and Ministry
29 College Crescent, Parkville Vic

Cost: \$50. Concession 25

Registration:

Events.humanitix.com/2026-jim-convention

Contact Mark on 03 9340 8800

EARTH'S GREATEST ENEMY

A ground-breaking environmental and anti-war documentary. We are faced with global destruction by US military as our planet is dismissed as the side effect or collateral damage of the actions of our "great and powerful ally" the United States of America.

WHEN? Monday July 27, 6 pm

WHERE?

The Sun Theatre, Yarraville

TICKETS \$25, Concession \$15

BOOKING

<https://events.humanitix.com/earth-s-greatest-enemy-melbourne-film-and-panel-discussion-with-abby-martin-film>
MORE INFO:

www.noakusvic@gmail.com

FOLLOWED BY Q&A with Abby Martin who directed the film Abby is an independent journalist, known for her **strong voice against war, imperialism, and media bias.**

I/We wish to apply for or renew membership of the International Christian Peace Movement - Pax Christi Australia.

(Membership is from January to December)

(Please tick box if you wish to receive your copy of Disarming Times by e-mail)

New South Wales Members please return your membership application/renewal to PO Box A 681 Sydney South 1235 NSW

All others: please return your membership application/ renewal to 13 Mascoma St, Strathmore, Vic 3041 . Direct transfer to Pax Christi Victoria Inc **BSB 063-161 Account number 00900935**

Please Advise John Ball: johnball12@bigpond.com

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ENCLOSED \$..... (Single \$35; Low income \$20; Family \$45)