

**COUNCIL OF DELEGATES
OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS
AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

Working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons

Draft elements of resolution

**Document prepared by
the International Committee of the Red Cross
in consultation with
the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

Geneva, March 2021

Background

The draft elements of the proposed resolution on working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons seek to provide an outline of the possible substance of individual paragraphs, without providing a definitive draft text. Each paragraph is followed by a rationale explaining why it would be useful to include such a paragraph in the resolution.

This document is being shared for consultation with the members of the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) in order to gather a first round of comments and feedback, and to gain an initial understanding of whether the proposed approach would be acceptable and garner consensus.

When providing comments and feedback on this document, please consider the following questions:

- Do you agree with the proposed elements for the preambular and operative paragraphs of the proposed resolution?
- Are there any elements that are missing or should be included in the resolution?

Detailed comments on the wording of the draft elements of this resolution are not expected at this stage. There will be an opportunity to comment on specific wording at a later stage, once the draft zero of the resolution is available.

Introduction

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has been calling for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons since 1945. This call was first driven by the unspeakable suffering and devastation caused by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Japanese Red Cross Society witnessed first-hand while attempting to bring relief to the dying and injured. This call has been widely echoed: aware of the dangers to global order and the rule of law, the first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 similarly called for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. The 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) also committed the States Parties to undertaking “negotiations in good faith” on nuclear disarmament.

In July 2017, 122 States responded to the Movement’s call by adopting the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The process to develop this treaty was driven by the compelling evidence of the massive scale of the suffering that the use of nuclear weapons would cause, in terms of the immediate and long-term effects on people, societies, health-care systems and the environment. A few months later, in December 2017, the Council of Delegates welcomed the historic adoption of the TPNW as an essential step towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons and committed, through the Action Plan on the Non-Use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons 2018–2021, to promote adherence to and full implementation of this treaty.

On 22 January 2021, thanks in part by efforts to implement this action plan, the TPNW entered into force as a new instrument of international law. This development marks a victory for our common humanity and is testament to the global impact of the Movement.

The purpose of this resolution is to build upon the success of the Action Plan on the Non-Use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons 2018–2021, and adopt a new four-year Movement action plan for the period 2022–2025. The new, draft action plan updates the current action plan (for the period 2018–2021) to reflect recent developments related to nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament. Under the new action plan, the components of the Movement commit to intensifying their global action based on

commitments made in Resolution 1 of both the 2011 and 2013 Councils of Delegates and Resolution 4 of the 2017 Council of Delegates.

The 2022–2025 Action Plan on the Non-Use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons is inspired by the Nagasaki Appeal and Action Plan adopted by 35 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies), the ICRC and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) at a high-level meeting in Nagasaki in April 2017, and by the adoption and implementation of the 2018–2021 action plan. It is driven by the knowledge that our efforts have contributed to the unprecedented mobilization of States in recent years to address and prevent the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. An informal consultation on the content of the new action plan will be carried out in the Movement Support Group, established under Resolution 4 of the 2017 Council of Delegates, “Working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons”.

Preambular paragraphs

PP1: The preambular paragraph could reiterate the Council of Delegates’ deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and the lack of any adequate humanitarian response capacity; stress that it is extremely doubtful that nuclear weapons could ever be used in accordance with the principles and the rules of international humanitarian law; and underscore the urgent need for concrete action leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Rationale: Building upon previous resolutions, notably Resolution 4 of the 2017 Council of Delegates, the resolution should reiterate the Movement’s main reasons for concern about the continued existence of nuclear weapons.

PP2: The preambular paragraph could express alarm at the increasing risk that nuclear weapons will again be used with intent or by miscalculation or accident, and describe current and new sources of risk.

Rationale: In line with previous resolutions, notably Resolution 4 from the 2017 Council of Delegates, and the 2018 appeal by the ICRC to States to act on the increasing risk of use of nuclear weapons, the resolution should recognize that the increasing risk of the use of nuclear weapons adds urgency to efforts to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.

PP3: The preambular paragraph could celebrate the entry into force on 22 January 2021 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as a historic milestone and a fitting response to the long-standing call of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement), welcome the beginning of a new era for nuclear disarmament that this development constitutes, and emphasize that the TPNW and existing nuclear weapons agreements, notably the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and regional nuclear-weapon-free zones, will serve as mutually reinforcing instruments of international law towards the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Rationale: In line with the Movement’s long-standing position and in response to the entry into force of the TPNW, the resolution should recognize the efforts made by Movement components to achieve this objective; and emphasize the complementarity between different nuclear weapons instruments.

PP4: The preambular paragraph could reaffirm the position and actions called for in Resolution 1 of the 2011 Council of Delegates, Resolution 1 of the 2013 Council of Delegates and Resolution 4 of the 2017 Council of Delegates and commend the efforts of the

components of the Movement to implement these resolutions at the national and international levels, including through the 2018 workshops held in Geneva and Doha with National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies), the 2019 high-level meeting of the Movement Support Group, the 2019 Youth Action Forum organized in Hiroshima by the Japanese Red Cross Society and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), and the 2020 commemorations of the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings.

Rationale: The resolution should build upon past Movement resolutions and action plans on nuclear weapons and highlight key global activities that have been carried out over the past four years to implement the 2018–2021 action plan on nuclear weapons.

Operative paragraphs (OP)

OP1: The operative paragraph could call on all States that have not yet done so to promptly sign, ratify and faithfully implement the TPNW, the NPT, the CTBT and regional treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Rationale: In line with Resolution 4 of the 2017 Council of Delegates, the resolution should reiterate the call on States to adhere to and implement the TPNW and other nuclear weapons agreements, which the TPNW complements.

OP2: The operative paragraph could call on all States to ensure that nuclear weapons are never again used, and call in particular on nuclear-armed and nuclear-allied States to take urgent steps to lower the risks of intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons and to reduce and ultimately eliminate their nuclear arsenals, based on existing international obligations and commitments.

Rationale: In line with past resolutions, notably Resolution 4 of the 2017 Council of Delegates, the resolution should call on States never to use nuclear weapons again and, pending their total elimination, reiterate the call on States to pursue nuclear risk reduction and nuclear disarmament, in line with Article 6 of the NPT and the Outcome Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT.

OP3: The operative paragraph could urge all components of the Movement to promote adherence to and full implementation of the TPNW as well as other, complementary international nuclear weapons agreements, including the NPT, CTBT, and regional treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones *and, in this context, urge States to implement also the commitments they will have undertaken at the 2021 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, depending on when exactly it takes place and its outcome.*

Rationale: In line with past resolutions and based upon the Movement's ongoing work under the 2018–2021 action plan, the resolution should commit Movement components to adding their voice to the calls made in OP1 through OP3.

OP4: The operative paragraph could adopt the 2022–2025 Action Plan on the Non-Use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and urge all components of the Movement to make its implementation a priority in their humanitarian diplomacy efforts.

Rationale: To enable the Movement to continue and scale up its work towards the elimination of nuclear weapons.

OP5: The operative paragraph could invite the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and other Movement components to support the implementation of the 2022–2025

action plan and to report, as necessary, to the Council of Delegates on the progress made on the issue of nuclear weapons and the implementation of the resolution.

Rationale: To ensure support for, coordination of and effective implementation of the action plan. Other Movement components may be included or specified, depending on the outcome of the consultations.

Annex

Provisional structure and draft elements of a 2022–2025 Action Plan on the Non-Use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

1. Objectives and rationale

- Promote adherence to and full implementation of the TPNW by all States
- Promote adherence to and full implementation of other nuclear weapons agreements, including the NPT, CTBT and regional treaties establishing nuclear weapon-free zones
- Further raise awareness of the incalculable human suffering that can be expected to result from any use of nuclear weapons, and of the lack of any adequate humanitarian response capacity to meet the needs of victims in the event of such use
- Raise awareness of the increased risk of nuclear-weapon detonations in the current international environment, and promote concrete measures by all States to reduce the risk and work towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons so as to ensure that they are never used again
- Promote a better understanding, in particular among young people, of the experiences of survivors of past atomic bombings (*hibakusha*) and nuclear testing, and of the humanitarian, environmental and development implications of any use of nuclear weapons, so that future generations will remain committed to continuing efforts to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again and are completely eliminated

2. National-level commitments

a. In States that negotiated the TPNW

- Ensure that these States, if they have not already done so, sign the TPNW as soon as possible, and promote, through public communications and contact with parliamentarians and government officials, these States' rapid ratification of or accession to the TPNW
- Promote the early adoption of national legislation, policies and other measures to ensure effective implementation of the TPNW, notably meeting the obligation to provide assistance to victims and remediate contaminated environments
- Urge these States to encourage States not party to sign and ratify or accede to the TPNW, with the goal of universal adherence by all States to the TPNW
- Support these States' preparations for and participation in the meetings of States party to the TPNW

b. In States not involved in the TPNW negotiations

- Encourage these States to adhere to the TPNW, and, until they do, urge them to adopt planning, policy and military practices that will not undermine the TPNW
- Urge States associated with nuclear weapons to adopt measures to reduce the risk of nuclear-weapon use with intent or by miscalculation or accident, based on the States' existing international commitments, including the Action Plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT (and other commitments that will have been made at the 2021 Review Conference, TBC)
- Urge States associated with but not in possession of nuclear weapons to engage in dialogue with nuclear-weapon States on steps that will diminish the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies

- Promote further deep reductions in nuclear-weapon arsenals in accordance with long-standing legal obligations and existing commitments, including the Action Plan of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT
- Urge States to cease any efforts at modernizing their nuclear arsenals, including efforts to develop novel nuclear weapons with seemingly more utilizable capabilities

c. All National Societies

Each National Society should name a focal point on nuclear weapons within the National Society, if this was not already done under the 2018–2021 action plan, and inform the ICRC and the IFRC who this person is by 1 March 2022.

Each National Society, to the extent feasible according to its specific circumstances and capacities, and bearing in mind other key humanitarian diplomacy objectives, will:

- support and participate in the Movement's global humanitarian advocacy strategy on nuclear weapons and cooperate with the ICRC, the IFRC and other National Societies in this effort
- further increase the role and visibility of National Society leaders in communicating about the current risks and opportunities regarding nuclear weapons
- scale up outreach to young people to raise awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and to promote their active involvement in support of Movement objectives
- continue to invite youth sections of National Societies to consider supporting the organization of regional Red Cross and Red Crescent youth conferences on nuclear weapons, to include the testimony of nuclear-bomb survivors (*hibakusha*), populations affected by nuclear testing, and other experts, with international support as provided for in section 3 of this document
- continue to integrate the voices of nuclear-bomb survivors (*hibakusha*) and those affected by nuclear testing into outreach activities
- brief national committees on international humanitarian law and/or other relevant national bodies on the entry into force of the TPNW
- write to or meet with ministries of foreign affairs, defence, environment, health and emergency response and relevant parliamentarians to communicate the Movement's urgent concerns and position on nuclear weapons
- continue to communicate publicly – including through opinion pieces, interviews and letters to the editor – to raise awareness of current nuclear-weapon-related risks, of the TPNW and its historic importance, and of other nuclear weapons agreements, including the NPT, based on the Movement's position, ICRC briefings and other materials produced in support of this action plan
- continue to convey to National Society members, volunteers and staff the Movement's views on nuclear weapons and on current risks and opportunities through National Society websites, publications and meetings of staff and volunteers
- host public seminars and events on nuclear weapons for specific groups, such as parliamentarians, health professionals, the scientific community, emergency responders and academics
- continue to communicate and cooperate with national organizations working in the fields of health, the environment and emergency response, and with long-standing organizations working on nuclear-weapon issues, in accordance with the National Society's mandate and the Fundamental Principles
- continue to include lectures on the humanitarian consequences and legal aspects of nuclear-weapon use during training in international humanitarian law and other dissemination activities for the armed forces and civil society

- intensify efforts to promote this action plan through regional Movement structures to share information with other National Societies and, where possible, consider joint approaches to governments on a regional basis
- pursuant to Article 8(5) of the TPNW, endeavour to attend the TPNW meeting of States Parties and the review conferences as observers
- assess to what extent they have investments that have a nexus to companies that are involved in producing or selling nuclear weapons or components, with the eventual aim of divesting.

3. Global coordination and support

- The Movement Support Group, established under Resolution 4 of the 2017 Council of Delegates, will continue its work for the period of this action plan.
- At the global level, the ICRC, with the assistance of the Movement Support Group, will lead the promotion of adherence to and faithful implementation of the TPNW, as well as other international agreements with similar objectives, including the NPT, including through participation in multilateral forums and other relevant global, regional and national events, and support to National Societies as needed.
- Red Cross and Red Crescent youth sections are invited to consider how to integrate the Movement's objectives on nuclear weapons into global Red Cross and Red Crescent youth conferences and other events to raise the awareness of new generations of the risks of nuclear weapons and of the need for their prohibition and elimination.
- The ICRC will provide interactive briefings on the content of the TPNW and the formulation of key messages for National Societies in specific regions and contexts, to promote and facilitate timely national action among authorities and the public.
- The ICRC, with the assistance of the Movement Support Group, will prepare professional communication materials, including social and traditional media tools, model letters, talking points and opinion editorials to support National Societies in reaching out to their audiences.
- Pursuant to Article 7(5) of the TPNW, the ICRC, the IFRC and National Societies will give the assistance provided for therein whenever so requested by States, to the extent feasible and according to their respective capabilities.
- In recognition of the role provided for in Article 8(5) of the TPNW, the IFRC will, on behalf of and through National Societies, coordinate the involvement of its members in meetings of the States party to the TPNW, and coordinate with the ICRC to ensure messaging is aligned.

4. Implementation

- The ICRC, with the assistance of the Movement Support Group, will maintain a lead role within the Movement in promoting and monitoring the implementation of this action plan.
- All National Societies in a position to do so are requested to contribute material, financial and expert support to the common effort of implementing this action plan.