



Power of humanity

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Working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons: 2022–2027 action plan

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RESOLUTION 7

Working towards the elimination of nuclear weapons: 2022–2027 action plan

The Council of Delegates,

reiterating its long-standing and deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and about the lack of any adequate humanitarian response capacity in the event of their use, and the humanitarian imperative to ensure that nuclear weapons are never again used and to prohibit and eliminate them,

stressing that it is extremely doubtful that nuclear weapons could ever be used in accordance with the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, and that all States must pursue negotiations with a view to achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, pursuant to their obligations under international law, and *noting* that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) prohibits the use and threat to use nuclear weapons and reaffirms that any use of nuclear weapons would be abhorrent to the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience,

condemning any threats to use nuclear weapons and *expressing* deep alarm about the trend towards a new nuclear arms race and the growing risk that nuclear weapons will be used again with intent or by miscalculation or accident, as shown by the growing tensions between nuclear-armed States and their allies; the development of new types of nuclear weapons; the new and expanded roles of nuclear weapons in military plans, doctrines and concepts; and the increasing vulnerability of nuclear command, control and communication networks to cyberattacks,

welcoming the adoption of the TPNW and its entry into force in 2021 as a significant milestone towards a world free from nuclear weapons, and the key role played by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement) in reaching it, and *underscoring* that the TPNW and other nuclear weapons agreements, notably the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and regional treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, are mutually reinforcing instruments of international law that all seek to achieve the goal of a world without nuclear weapons,

seizing with determination and urgency the unique opportunities provided by the entry into force of the TPNW to ensure that it ushers in a new era for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, by comprehensively prohibiting nuclear weapons on the basis of international humanitarian law and by providing a further disincentive for their proliferation and new pathways for their elimination,

recalling its 2011 appeal to all States “to ensure that nuclear weapons are never again used, regardless of their views on the legality of such weapons” and “to pursue in good faith and conclude with urgency and determination negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement, based on existing commitments and international obligations”, and the other positions and actions called for in Resolution 1 of the 2011 Council of Delegates, in Resolution 1 of the 2013 Council of Delegates, and in Resolution 4 of the 2017 Council of Delegates, and *commending* the efforts of the components of the Movement to implement these resolutions at the national and international levels,

1. *adopts* the 2022–2027 Action Plan on the Non-Use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (2022–2027 action plan);
2. *urges* all components of the Movement to implement the 2022–2027 action plan, to the extent feasible, in particular by promoting and supporting the implementation by States of effective risk-reduction measures, and universal adherence to and full implementation of the TPNW as well as other mutually reinforcing instruments of international law that seek to achieve the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and regional treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones;
3. *invites* the International Committee of the Red Cross and other Movement components to support the implementation of the 2022–2027 action plan and to report, as necessary, to the sessions of the Council of Delegates on the progress made on the implementation of the resolution;
4. *calls on* all States that have not yet done so to promptly sign, ratify or accede to and faithfully implement the TPNW, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and regional treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones;
5. *calls on* all States, until nuclear weapons are completely eliminated, to take effective measures to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ensure that these weapons are never again used, and *calls in particular on* States possessing nuclear weapons and States associated with nuclear weapons to take effective measures to reduce the risk of use of nuclear weapons, in accordance with their international obligations and commitments;
6. *also calls on* all States to ensure their policies, military doctrines, legal regulations and diplomatic disarmament efforts duly consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and the continued risk for humanity posed by the possibility that nuclear weapons could be used, and to take measures to deepen their understanding of the impact of the use of nuclear weapons.

2022–2027 Action Plan on the Non-Use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (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 bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which the Japanese Red Cross Society and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) witnessed first-hand while attempting to bring relief to the dying and injured.

In July 2017, 122 States responded to the 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 any use of nuclear weapons would cause, in terms of the immediate and long-term effects on people, societies, health-care systems and the environment. On 22 January 2021, the TPNW entered into force as a new instrument of international law. This development marks a significant milestone towards a world free from nuclear weapons, and the Movement played a key role in reaching it.

While the entry into force of the TPNW marks a historic turning point, the risk of use of these weapons – whether with intent or by miscalculation or accident – has increased in recent years to levels not seen since the Cold War. This deeply concerning development adds urgency to the Movement's efforts to urge States to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons: given their catastrophic humanitarian consequences, any risk of use of nuclear weapons is unacceptable.

This action plan and the activities laid out in it are informed by the Movement's long-standing efforts to place the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the rules and principles of international humanitarian law (IHL), and the interests of humanity at the centre of the nuclear weapons debate. Through this plan, the components of the Movement are committing to sustaining their global action based on commitments made in Resolutions 1 of the 2011 and 2013 Councils of Delegates and Resolution 4 of the 2017 Council of Delegates, to the extent feasible according to their specific capacities.

This action plan builds upon the success of the Action Plan on the Non-Use, Prohibition and Elimination of Nuclear Weapons 2018–2021 and, bearing in mind other key humanitarian diplomacy objectives, aims to:

- promote adherence to and full implementation, by all States, of the TPNW, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and, as applicable, regional treaties establishing nuclear weapon-free zones
- further raise awareness of the incalculable human suffering, including the gendered impacts, 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 high and increasing risk of use of nuclear weapons, and promote concrete measures by all States to reduce this risk and work towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons 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.

A. National-level commitments

All the components of the Movement commit to doing the following, to the extent feasible according to their specific capacities, mandate, and circumstances, including their specific societal and political contexts and considering the auxiliary role of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) to public authorities in the humanitarian field.

1. In States that were involved in the TPNW negotiations¹

- a) Ensure that these States, if they have not already done so, sign the TPNW as soon as possible, and promote, through contact with government officials and parliamentarians and through public communications, these States' rapid ratification of or accession to the TPNW
- b) Promote the early adoption of national legislation, policies and other measures to ensure full implementation of the TPNW, notably the obligation to provide assistance to victims, remediate contaminated environments and impose penal sanctions to prevent and suppress any activity prohibited to a State Party under the TPNW
- c) Urge these States to encourage States not party to sign and ratify or accede to the TPNW, and to encourage States associated with nuclear weapons to adopt measures to reduce the risk of nuclear-weapon use with intent or by miscalculation or accident
- d) Support these States' preparations for and participation in the meetings of States party to the TPNW

2. In States that were not involved in the TPNW negotiations²

- a) Encourage these States to become party to the TPNW, and, until they do, urge them to adopt planning, policy and military practices that will not undermine the TPNW and to attend the meetings of the TPNW as observers
- b) Urge States associated with nuclear weapons to adopt all necessary 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 as applicable, the 3 January 2022 Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races
- c) Urge these States to adopt policies, military doctrines, diplomatic efforts and legal regulations that duly consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that any use of nuclear weapons would have, and the deep concern about the continued risk for humanity posed by the possibility that nuclear weapons could be used
- d) 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
- e) 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

¹ See <https://www.un.org/disarmament/tpnw/participants.html> for a list of the States that were involved in the TPNW negotiations.

² All other States. See previous footnote.

- f) Without prejudice to efforts aimed at reducing the risk of accidents, urge States to cease any efforts at modernizing their nuclear arsenals, including efforts to develop novel nuclear weapons with seemingly more utilizable capabilities
- g) Encourage States possessing nuclear weapons and States associated with nuclear weapons to deepen their dialogue with States involved in the TPNW negotiations to promote greater common understanding and synergies to help progress towards achieving the shared goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons

3. In all States

- a) Support and participate in the Movement's global humanitarian advocacy efforts on nuclear weapons and cooperate with the ICRC, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and other National Societies in this effort
- b) Further increase the role and visibility of National Societies in communicating about the current risks and opportunities regarding nuclear weapons
- c) 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
- d) 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, with international support as provided for in section B of this action plan
- e) Consider how to integrate the Movement's objectives on nuclear weapons into global Red Cross and Red Crescent youth conferences and other events, with the support of the bodies and networks of Movement components concerned with youth issues and youth-related activities, to raise the awareness of new generations of the risks of nuclear weapons and of the need for their prohibition and elimination
- f) Continue to integrate the voices of nuclear-bomb survivors (*hibakusha*) and those affected by nuclear testing into outreach activities
- g) Brief national committees on IHL, and similar entities involved in advising national authorities on and assisting them with implementing, developing and spreading knowledge about IHL, on the entry into force of the TPNW and on how the principles and rules of IHL applicable to all means and methods of warfare apply to nuclear weapons as well
- h) Write to or request meetings 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
- i) Continue to communicate publicly 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 – including through opinion pieces, interviews and letters to the editor
- j) 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

- k) Host public seminars and events on nuclear weapons for specific groups, such as parliamentarians, health professionals, the scientific community, emergency responders and academics
- l) 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
- m) Continue to include lectures on the humanitarian consequences and legal aspects of nuclear-weapon use during training in IHL and other dissemination activities for policymakers, the armed forces and civil society
- n) Raise awareness among financial institutions and companies involved in producing or selling nuclear weapons or components about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the relevant principles and rules of IHL
- o) Intensify efforts to promote this action plan through regional Movement structures, share information with other National Societies and, where possible, consider joint or coordinated approaches to governments on a regional basis
- p) Pursuant to Article 8(5) of the TPNW, and as members of the IFRC, endeavour to attend the TPNW meeting of States Parties and the review conferences as observers, to the extent possible and appropriate

B. Global coordination and support

- a) 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.
- b) 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 October 2022.
- c) At the global level, the ICRC, with the assistance of the Movement Support Group, will lead the promotion of adherence to and full implementation of the TPNW, as well as other international agreements with similar objectives, such as the NPT, including by participating in and reporting on multilateral forums and other relevant global, regional and national events, and supporting National Societies, as needed.
- d) The ICRC will provide interactive briefings on the content of the TPNW and the NPT, as needed, and formulate key messages for and with National Societies in specific regions and contexts, to promote and facilitate, as appropriate, timely national action among authorities and the public.
- e) 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 as appropriate and according to their mandate, capacities and circumstances.
- f) The ICRC, the IFRC and National Societies will give the assistance provided for in the TPNW, pursuant to its Article 7(5) (International cooperation and assistance), whenever so requested by States, to the extent feasible and according to their respective mandates and capacities.

- g) In recognition of the role provided for in Article 8(5) of the TPNW (Meeting of States Parties), the IFRC will coordinate with National Societies to facilitate the representation of its members and support their collective advocacy efforts, to the extent possible and appropriate.

C. Implementation

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