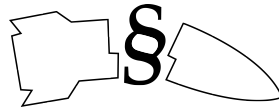


Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy Welcomes Entry into Force of Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons



22 January 2021

Lawyers Committee on Nuclear Policy (LCNP) welcomes the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) today, January 22, 2021. The TPNW joins and robustly affirms an existing body of international law that condemns and prohibits the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

The TPNW's entry into force comes 25 years after the International Court of Justice found that use of nuclear weapons is generally contrary to international humanitarian law (IHL) and declared that states have an obligation to negotiate in good faith and achieve complete nuclear disarmament.

It is now widely recognized that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons would contravene IHL, notably the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution as well as the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks. The devastating, indiscriminate, and long-lasting effects of radiological explosions on human victims and the environment cannot be justified under the law. The TPNW invokes the dire humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons in its preamble, and—in addition to prohibiting the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons—explicitly bans states parties from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, or deploying these weapons of catastrophic destruction.

Importantly, the TPNW also establishes much-needed obligations of assistance to victims of nuclear weapons testing and use and also requires environmental remediation of affected areas. LCNP welcomes in particular the treaty's acknowledgment of the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapons on Indigenous communities and women and girls. The use and threatened use of nuclear weapons violates human rights law, including the right to life; the TPNW rightly invokes, in addition to IHL, the applicability of international human rights law to nuclear weapons.

The TPNW is a powerful product of decades-long work and advocacy surrounding the existential risks that nuclear weapons pose. Its first meeting of states parties will take place before the end of this year and offers an excellent, additional opportunity to advance and strengthen the implementation of international humanitarian law, human rights law, and general and complete disarmament.

Today, we celebrate the TPNW's entry into force and call on states that have not yet ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to sign and ratify with urgency.
