

UN Treaty ‘beginning of the end for nuclear weapons,’ say Nobel Peace Prize winners

9 October 2017 – Speaking to journalists at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York, the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize winners – International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) – urged countries around the globe to eliminate nuclear weapons.

The award represents a special recognition for the efforts of the “new generation” of campaigners – “people who grew up after the Cold War and don’t understand why we still have the [nuclear] weapons,” said Beatrice Fihn, the Executive Director of ICAN.

In particular, she highlighted that it is also a huge recognition of the efforts of the *Hibakusha* (the Japanese word for the surviving victims of the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) in realizing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Adopted on 7 July at a UN conference in New York, the Treaty is the first multilateral legally-binding instrument for nuclear disarmament in two decades.

Quoting Setsuko Thurlow, a survivor of the Hiroshima atomic bomb, Ms. Fihn added: “7th of July marks the beginning of the end for nuclear weapons.”

Also at the press conference, Ray Acheson of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, an ICAN member organization, said diplomacy for dialogue and cooperation is all the more necessary right now given rising tensions in many parts of the world.

“I think it’s more important than ever for us to be emphasizing the importance and the utility and the practicality of working together,” she said, recalling the partnership between the civil society, governments and the UN in the realizing the Treaty.

At the press conference, the speakers outlined the dangers of by nuclear weapons as well as the rising tensions, including due to the nuclear weapons development programme of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the discussions over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) [concerning](#) Iran’s nuclear programme.

Expressing that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons offered an alternative to a world – one without nuclear weapons – Tim Wright, the Asia-Pacific Director of ICAN, hoped that the Nobel Peace Prize will help ICAN to get countries to sign and ratify the Treaty.

“We’ll be working over coming weeks and months to persuade governments to do just that,” he added.