

VITAL SIGNS

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL PHYSICIANS FOR THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR (IPPNW)

Nuclear Ban Treaty enters into force!

A new era in disarmament diplomacy

IPPNW was founded 40 years ago to alert humanity to the existential threat of nuclear war with an abiding faith that what humanity creates, humanity can control. New evidence of that faith in action came towards the end of last year when the 50th nation ratified the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), triggering the Ban Treaty's entry into force on January 22, 2021.

We now have a legally binding international agreement that categorically prohibits nuclear weapons and lays out a path to eliminate them.

While our 40-year struggle to abolish nuclear weapons is far from over, this historic breakthrough has ushered in a new era in disarmament diplomacy. Power has shifted to the anti-nuclear majority: citizens groups

such as IPPNW and ICAN, working closely with nations that have rejected nuclear weapons because of their catastrophic humanitarian impacts. In this new era of moral, scientific, and political leadership, we are determined to put an end to nuclear weapons before they end humankind.

Countless acts of faith produced this important shift. First organized to introduce "a new province of preventive medicine" to confront the "final epidemic" during the Cold War, IPPNW played a major role in averting a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union. We helped President Reagan conclude that "nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought."

President Gorbachev explicitly credited IPPNW with shaping his thinking. "It is impossible to ignore what these people are saying," he wrote in *Perestroika* in 1987. "What they are doing commands great respect. For what they say and what they do is prompted by accurate knowledge and a passionate desire to warn humanity about the danger looming over it. In the light of their arguments and the strictly scientific data which they possess, there seems no room left for politicking. And no serious politician has the right to disregard their conclusions."

When the Cold War ended, public concern about nuclear war all but vanished. The anti-nuclear movement, and the funding that supported

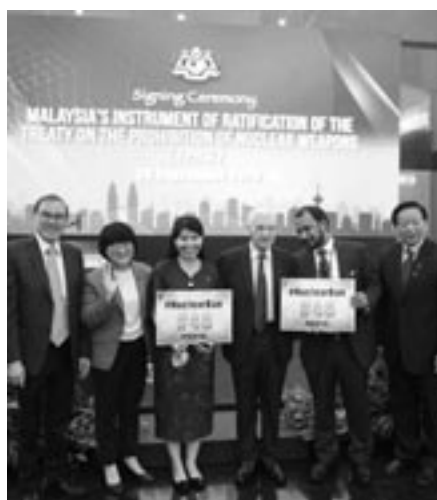
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IPPNW mourns Dr. Lown's passing, honors his legacy

We honor our founding co-president, Dr. Bernard Lown, who passed away at age 99, shortly after the TPNW took effect. An original member of the study team that published seminal research about the health effects of nuclear war in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1962, Dr. Lown was a founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), and a co-founder of IPPNW in 1980. His unsurpassed legacy as a physician diplomat and peace advocate rivaled

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Former IPPNW co-president and ICAN "godfather" Dr. Ron McCoy (3rd from right) joins the Malaysian delegation as his country ratifies the Ban Treaty on 21 September.

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NUCLEAR ABOLITION NEWS AND UPDATES

For more information, please contact Chuck Johnson (cjohnson@ippnw.org)

From Scotland to the Philippines: IPPNW affiliates urge countries to join the Ban Treaty



Honduras takes TPNW over the top

On 24 October, 2020, Honduras became the 50th nation to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, triggering entry into force on 22 January, 2021. Dr. Carlos Umaña, newly elected IPPNW co-president and leader in IPPNW-Costa Rica, was vital in pushing the Treaty forward.



"We physicians protest the outrage of holding the entire world hostage....
We demand deeds which will lead to the abolition of all nuclear weaponry."

Dr. Bernard Lown, Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, 1985

Remembering Dr. Lown

(continued from page 1)

his reputation as an internationally renowned innovator in his chosen field of cardiology.

It is fitting that his final public statement was a letter about the nuclear threat, dated 21 January, 2021, to the *New England Journal of Medicine* that he co-signed with colleagues Drs. Jon Rohde and Richard Cash. Endorsing the nuclear ban treaty, Dr. Lown threw his support behind the "Back from the Brink" campaign, initiated by PSR in the US, and urged readers that "[n]ow is the time for physicians to again advocate that only the prohibition of nuclear arms can address this threat to society and human existence." Your contribution will never be forgotten, Dr. Lown.

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Dr. Lown at the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize press conference in Oslo.



Medact urges Scottish banks to divest from nuclear weapons

Medact Scotland, part of the Don't Bank on the Bomb Scotland coalition, is pressuring NatWest Bank, with 19 million customers, and its subsidiaries Royal Bank of Scotland and Ulster Bank, to end their support for nuclear weapons related companies. The campaign kick-off was a letter on March 30, co-signed by IPPNW, ICAN, CND, the Church of Scotland, and 38 others urging that NatWest divest now.

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Download the original *New England Journal of Medicine* articles by the PSR Study Group at <https://tinyurl.com/2468xm3f>

New era for disarmament

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it, dried up as well. IPPNW persevered as one of a few organizations that never lost sight of the tens of thousands of nuclear weapons that remained in global stockpiles. At the same time, IPPNW began to document the enormous health and environmental harm caused by decades of nuclear weapons testing and production.

Over the years, IPPNW invested heavily in trying to press the nuclear-armed states to take steps toward fulfilling their legal commitments to nuclear disarmament as required under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). They refused. In the

network of more than 500 partner organizations in 106 countries.

With IPPNW serving as the lead medical partner, ICAN served as the civil society coordinator for three major UN conferences focusing on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons (Oslo, 2013; Nayarit, 2014; Vienna 2014) which led to 127 nations joining the Humanitarian Pledge to “stigmatize, prohibit, and eliminate nuclear weapons” during the Vienna meeting. The medical and public health realities of any use of nuclear weapons were now, for the first time, the driving force behind diplomatic efforts for nuclear disarmament. These efforts, working our way through complex UN processes, culminated in the successful negotiation and adoption of the TPNW on July 7, 2017. The work garnered ICAN the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.

In the ensuing years, ICAN and IPPNW have worked tirelessly to ensure the early Entry into Force of the ban treaty by securing the signature and ratification of a minimum of 50 nations. We crossed that threshold on October 24, 2020 when Honduras submitted its ratification papers to the UN. Dr. Carlos Umaña, who leads our Costa Rican affiliate, and who was just elected IPPNW Co-President [see story pg xx], was instrumental in moving the document forward. As we go to press, a total of 54 nations have ratified the treaty – a remarkable 18 since the pandemic started – and another 34 have signed.

IPPNW marked the treaty coming into force by gathering the world's top global health organizations for a virtual discussion of the role of health professionals in advancing the eradication of nuclear weapons through evidence-based policy-making. More than 2,000 people worldwide joined online to hear from leaders of IPPNW, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the World Medical Association, the


World Federation of Public Health Associations, the International Council of Nurses, and the International Federation of Medical Student Associations.

Our next focus is the first Meeting of States Parties (MSP1), scheduled for the week of January 10, 2022 in Vienna. This will be the first opportunity to discuss and take decisions about the implementation of the treaty. IPPNW is working closely with the Austrian Foreign Ministry to ensure that the catastrophic health and environmental impacts of nuclear weapons remain the center of concern.

“You have been in the lead in reframing the discourse on nuclear weapons, emphasizing the humanitarian arguments.”

—Ambassador Alexander Kmentt. Austria

Ambassador Alexander Kmentt, a key figure in the TPNW's development who will serve as President of MSP1, acknowledged IPPNW's role in his opening remarks to a recent meeting of our International Council: “You understand the value of the TPNW more than most. You have been in the lead in reframing the discourse on nuclear weapons, emphasizing the humanitarian arguments. The 2014 Nayarit Conference in which Dr. Ira Helfand [then IPPNW co-president] presented the study on nuclear famine had a major impact, leading to the Humanitarian Pledge and in a direct line to the negotiation of the TPNW.”

In the coming months and years, we will continue to press more nations to join the ban treaty. Special efforts are underway in the nuclear-armed and allied states. Our goal is universalization—convincing all nations to join the treaty. We will continue to make our case that humankind and nuclear weapons cannot coexist. 



wake of yet another failed NPT Review Conference in 2005, IPPNW Co-President Dr. Ron McCoy of Malaysia proposed a bold new civil society campaign. ICAN—the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons—was modeled on the successful effort that banned anti-personnel landmines. The campaign was a bold new approach to unite the world's non-nuclear governments and citizens and to bypass the intransigence of the nuclear-armed states and their allies.

IPPNW's Australian affiliate, Medical Association for the Prevention of War (see pg. 5), provided ICAN's initial leadership and organized IPPNW's formal launch of the campaign at the 2007 NPT PrepCom in Vienna. What began as a handful of partners has grown into a diverse

PSR calls world “back from the brink”

Conceived by Physicians for Social Responsibility (US) and the Union of Concerned Scientists in the fall of 2017, **Back from the Brink: The Call to Prevent Nuclear War** is a collaborative effort to build understanding in the US that nuclear weapons do not offer increased security to anyone, but instead pose an existential threat to all humanity.

The national, grassroots campaign, which seeks to fundamentally change US nuclear weapons policy, offers a comprehensive plan that embraces the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** and calls on the US to enter into negotiations with the other nuclear-armed states for a verifiable, enforceable, time-bound agreement to eliminate their remaining nuclear weapons.

On March 4, BftB and ICAN co-hosted an online event called “**Ending**



Nuclear Weapons Before They End Us” to mark the entry into force of the TPNW and the inauguration of US President Joe Biden. The event brought 600 participants from more than 30 countries together for an expert panel and interactive workshop.

The campaign has garnered endorsements from more than 350 organizations, 51 municipalities, and six state legislative bodies. Organizations that have endorsed the campaign include the Sierra Club, the Federation of American Scientists, 350.org, Soka Gakkai International/USA, the Hip Hop Caucus, and many faith communities.



ONLINE: preventnuclearwar.org

The Association of Physicians and Medical Workers for Social Responsibility has been a leading health voice in Kenya advocating to improve the quality of life by tackling the primary causes of suffering. Organized in 1992, APMS in its formative years focused on human rights abuses and regional refugee crises. Since then, APMS leaders and members have forwarded IPPNW's nuclear abolition and Aiming for Prevention goals on the African continent.

APMS developed the innovative **One Bullet Story** series that document the human consequences of gun violence. APMS helped organize a **Medical Peace Work** training in Nairobi with more than

50 medical students, as well as the “**K Project for Peace**” climb up Mount Kilimanjaro, calling for an Africa free of uranium mining and a world free of nuclear weapons. Kenyan medical students have also conducted educational and peace activities such as the “**Amani Voices for Peace.**”

African regional Vice President Dr. Sally Ndung'u says, “In securing a better future for our children, it is important that simple people in the simplest ways keep fighting for matters that sometimes seem unimportant and often appear unachievable; matters such as social justice, health equity, violence prevention, and climate justice, among others.”



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Working
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The first in a continuous
profiles highlighting
our affiliates worldwide

Achieving the
unachievable in Kenya



Peace work is hallmark of IPPNW-Germany

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IPPNW-Germany, founded in 1982, has grown to be one of IPPNW's largest and most active affiliates. With nearly 6,000 members, it has been a leader in organizing against nuclear weapons in Europe, in researching and publicizing the dangers of nuclear power, uranium mining and nuclear waste, and in promoting a just and peaceful world.

Peace has been a central issue for the affiliate for nearly 40 years, and members are committed to banning all war, to non-violent forms of conflict resolution, and to social and environmental justice. IPPNW-Germany sponsors numerous **Medical Peace Work** activities and organizes an international medical student exchange entitled "**Practise & Engage**" to help foster social responsibility within the health community worldwide. Regional and medical student groups throughout the country focus on medical care of refugees, global and health policy issues, and nuclear

weapons abolition. "**Bridges of Understanding**," run by the group in Würzburg, organizes an exchange with medical students in Balkan countries that were affected by the wars in former Yugoslavia.

IPPNW-Germany offers, in collaboration with the Charité Institute for Social Medicine, an annual weeklong "**Global Health Summer School**" that addresses major worldwide challenges including climate change, the effects of war on global health, and the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

The affiliate also conducts an "IPPNW Peace Academy" every year, and hosted the IPPNW World Congress in Cologne in 1986, the 2013 "Human Target" congress on the social and health effects of the global arms trade, and, most recently, the virtual conference "10 Years of Living with Fukushima."



ONLINE: ippnw.de

Peace pioneers in Australia

Since its founding in 1981, the Medical Association to Prevent War (MAPW) has been a pioneer in the peace and disarmament community. MAPW's primary focus has been the elimination of nuclear weapons, but the organization has also campaigned strongly—through research, education and advocacy—on the need to prevent armed conflicts.

"In recent years, Australian government policies have helped entrench the normalization of warfare and everything that feeds into it, including the arms trade and the way we commemorate wars," said MAPW President Dr. Sue Wareham. "Most recently, MAPW has examined the influence of weapons companies in our schools and in the Australian War Memorial." During COVID, "**Healthcare Not Warfare**" has encompassed much of MAPW's advocacy for cooperation rather than confrontation.



Among MAPW's key accomplishments is the founding in 2007 of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the 2017 Nobel Laureate. While the Australian government remains firmly opposed to the ban treaty that ICAN was instrumental in creating, it has to contend with growing public pressure for action on this as well as the other grave threats to human survival.



ONLINE: mapw.org.au



ONLINE: Read the MAPW document "ICAN's Origins" tinyurl.com/n3v6ppf9





NUCLEAR ABOLITION NEWS AND UPDATES

For more information, please contact Chuck Johnson (cjohnson@ippnw.org)

IPPNW affiliates make Ban Treaty ratifications top priority for 2021

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Indian doctors say all nuclear-armed states, including India, should join TPNW

Indian Doctors for Peace and Development (IDPD) held a seminar, "Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons—A landmark event to abolish nuclear weapons," on 20 February, 2021. The event featured high-level speakers, including co-president Dr. Arun Mitra who called on all nuclear-weapon states to join the TPNW.

In an article published widely in the Indian press, Dr. Mitra said, "This is a great step forward in human history and a real opportunity to eliminate nuclear weapons and save mankind from extinction. This is all the more important as several parts of the world are now under low level conflicts and...any escalation could trigger the use of nuclear weapons."



Linking the TPNW with a WMD-free zone in the Middle East

This past August, more than 100 health professionals and activists attended an IPPNW-Middle East Treaty Organization webinar, featuring Iranian Emad Kiyaei and Israeli Sharon Dolev, on negotiations for a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone and regional adoption of the nuclear Ban Treaty. IPPNW co-president, Dr. Ira Helfand (right) spoke about the potential impact of a nuclear war within the region.



IPPNW spurs Treaty action in Philippine Senate

The Medical Action Group (IPPNW-Philippines), coordinated by Edeliza Hernandez, RN, was a key part of the successful ICAN lobbying effort of the Philippine Senate to complete TPNW ratification. The Philippines joined the Ban Treaty as member state 54 on 18 February, 2021.

"The catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons cannot be adequately addressed, transcend national borders, pose grave implications for human survival, the environment, socio-economic development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations..."
—TPNW preamble

IPPNW doctors lead Nigeria's ratification effort

Dr. David Onazi of the Society of Nigerian Doctors for the Welfare of Mankind (SNDWM) led efforts to move ratification of the TPNW through the Nigerian government. Nigeria became the 41st country to join the Ban Treaty on August 6, 2020.

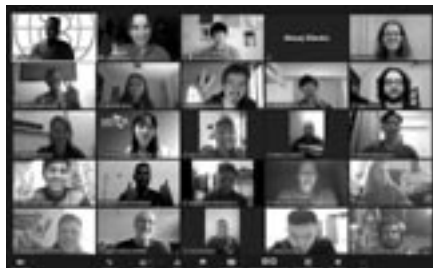
2021 Virtual Student Congress

IPPNW's World Congresses have always been an opportunity for health professionals and students to meet the people who form our international federation in person, share ideas, and collaborate on future projects.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the IPPNW Medical Student Movement re-imaged the student Congress to meet the needs of the moment. On 30 January and 13 February, more than 60 students from 20 countries, including Brazil, Mongolia, Australia, and Nigeria, gathered to discuss nuclear disarmament, medical student activism, and how the country chapters can support one another.

During the first session, student representatives shared regional songs, triumphs, and challenges to medical

student organizing, and plans following the entry into force of the TPNW. Outgoing International Student Representatives (ISRs) Franca Bruggen and Kelvin Kibet shared the highlights of their three-year term.




IPPNW students from 20 countries met online for their first virtual international Congress earlier this year.

Franca and Kelvin reviewed the progress of programs they started such as the United University Project, the promotion of the Medical Peace Work Courses, and their work

to strengthen external partnerships, most notably the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFMSA).

The second session of the Congress featured the election for the incoming ISRs (see related article) and galvanizing remarks from IPPNW Regional Vice President, Dr. Carlos Umaña. Dr. Umaña highlighted the key role medical and health professionals continue to play in global nuclear disarmament and what students can do in their various regions as we enter the new phase of the Treaty.

Stay up to date with IPPNW's International Medical Student Movement and follow us on Facebook and Instagram: @IPPNWStudents. 



IPPNW has a new website!

For our 40th anniversary, IPPNW has launched a colorful new website packed with valuable information on nuclear weapons abolition and the prevention of armed violence. We've also documented the four decades of history that illustrate IPPNW's medical leadership on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and on the public health dimensions of armed violence. Some new features include:


- Youth Engagement—Youth

Empowerment to Prevent Extinction (YEPE) is a collaboration between IPPNW and the PEAC Institute (Peace, Education, Art, Communication) to educate and mobilize students of health and science to respond to the twin threats of nuclear war and the climate crisis.

- Medical Students—Working with IPPNW affiliates throughout the world, medical students are changing how social responsibility is imagined, developed, and deployed.

They work on projects to promote peace, disarmament, and human rights. We have incorporated the Medical Student website to highlight their programs and activities.

- Affiliate events—To highlight the range of research, education, and policy activities undertaken each day by our affiliates worldwide. Send us your postings!

Check it out and tell us what you think! 

Meet the Incoming International Student Representatives



*Victor Chelashow, Kenya,
4th year medical student*



*Ulfat Pardesi, India,
4th year medical student*



*Dominic Yusuf, Nigeria,
4th year medical student*

We continue to count on you, our loyal supporters, to achieve our mission. IPPNW's endurance and our progress toward banning and eliminating nuclear weapons are shared triumphs. Thank you for the faith and trust you have placed in us. Together we have made a difference. Together we can and must succeed.



Join the IPPNW Associate Program and become a NUCLEAR WAR PREVENTER

As an **IPPNW NUCLEAR WAR PREVENTER** you will:

- Be able to participate in the worldwide peace and health actions of IPPNW and our affiliate networks;
- Be invited to special events, both digital and at international meetings;
- Receive special appreciation and acknowledgement on our website and in our publications;
- Receive a personalized, beautiful certificate signed by IPPNW leaders and an "IPPNW War Preventer" pin.

Your contribution to become an IPPNW Associate will help us expand our activist and donor base to keep IPPNW growing, vibrant and effective and strengthen our critical work to abolish nuclear weapons and advocate for peace.

The **Associate Program** is open to physicians, nurses, medical students, all other health workers, and people who want to support our cause.

Requested Contributions (minimum):

- Physicians or other doctoral level:
 - High income: \$120/year or \$500 for 5-year advance payment
 - Low income: \$80/year or \$350 for 5-year advance payment
- Other health workers:
 - \$80/year or \$350 for 5-year-advance payment
- Students and young doctors or other young health workers (first two years): \$40/year

To join, please contact Michael Christ (mchrist@ippnw.org)

IPPNW is a non-partisan federation of national medical organizations in 62 countries dedicated to safeguarding health by working to ban nuclear weapons and to address the impact of militarism and war on human health.

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