



West Midlands

CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Mailing

January/February 2024

ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) has reported from the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).



The participants agreed that nuclear deterrence is a significant security problem, requiring urgent attention by the international community, that more research on the impacts of nuclear weapons is needed, and that the harms caused by nuclear weapons use and testing require ongoing attention.

92 countries participated in the meeting as states parties or observers including some that currently endorse the use of nuclear weapons in their defence doctrines. After a robust and interactive debate during the week, they adopted a political declaration and a package of decisions.

One of the decisions included, for the first time ever, an agreement to work together to challenge the false narratives of nuclear deterrence. New research was presented during the meeting, including that there is much greater understanding of the cascading effects on food supplies, the financial system and energy supplies that help us better predict the likely effects of nuclear detonations. The Scientific Advisory Group also presented research showing clearly that the elimination of nuclear facilities is possible and calling for a UN study of the consequences of nuclear war given that the last studies were in the 1980s.

For more information, including the declaration and the decision package, have a look at the ICAN website:

https://www.icanw.org/tpnw_2msp_conclusion

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BITS FROM ABROAD

A new reactor at **North Korea's** Yongbyon nuclear complex appears to be operating for the first time, the U.N. nuclear watchdog and independent experts said on Thursday, which would mean an additional potential source of plutonium for nuclear weapons. North Korea has for years used spent fuel from a 5-megawatt nuclear reactor at Yongbyon to produce plutonium for its nuclear arsenal but a telltale discharge of warm water from a larger light-water reactor suggests it is coming online, too, the International Atomic Energy Agency said.

Reuters 22nd Dec 2023

<https://reut.rs/3RVKtSV>

Satellite photos reveal **China** is secretly building new nuclear test pits in a remote desert mountain range. But Beijing insists it's doing no such thing.

News.com.au 23rd Dec 2023

<https://bit.ly/3TA1vZt>

China is making an aggressive push to tie up global uranium supply amid a worldwide rush to secure nuclear fuel, warned the boss of Yellow Cake, a London-listed investment vehicle for the radioactive commodity. André Liebenberg, chief executive of the company, said the west was lagging behind in securing uranium after prices hit a 15-year high and as Chinese firms purchase supplies on the open market, sign long-term contracts and buy up mines.

FT 10th Dec 2023

<https://bit.ly/3tt7LWW>

Putin boasts **Russia** has upgraded entire nuclear arsenal as he goads West over Ukraine 'failures'.

Telegraph 19th Dec 2023

<https://bit.ly/4aoOyq2>

Radioactive substances could be smuggled out of **Ukraine** during invasion turmoil and end up being used in 'dirty bombs' on UK streets if border controls are not stepped up across NATO countries, nuclear expert warns. Dr Bahram Ghassee, a nuclear scientist, warned that the 'unprecedented' aerial attacks on Ukrainian nuclear power plants by Russian soldiers during the war have 'severely' undermined the facilities' security. *Daily Mail 12th Dec 2023*

<https://bit.ly/3TuhJ58>

FROM THE MEDIA

The world wants more nuclear energy as a means to fight climate change and supply an ever-growing demand for electricity, part of a generational shift in thinking on atomic power, the head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog said Thursday. Rafael Mariano Grossi, the director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, made the comments in an interview with The Associated Press at the COP28 climate talks. He called the inclusion of nuclear power at the summit, where he said a major nuclear agreement was likely, showed just how far the formerly "taboo" subject had come decades after the disasters at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl. However, he acknowledged the challenge still posed for his agency in monitoring nuclear programmes in countries, particularly in Iran after the collapse of its 2015 nuclear deal.

Daily Mail 1st Dec 2023.

<https://bit.ly/3tgmpbP>

Inside the UK's secret nuclear weapons site that develops warheads for Britain's nukes. The Atomic Weapons Establishment is said to be home to the research and development of the UK's biggest nuclear weapons deterrent, but information about the place is scant. Deep inside the rural village of Aldermaston, Berkshire lies a nuclear weapons development building so big that it could comfortably fit more than 440 Wembley Stadiums inside. Aldermaston, which has a population of around just 1,000 people, is home to the Atomic Weapons Establishment. The site has been there for around 70 years, and was once the centre for all research into Britain's nuclear weapons.

Daily Star 22nd Nov 2023

<https://bit.ly/485fdqz>

The grim reality of nuclear colonialism. RAE STREET highlights the dangers of uranium mining and its impact on indigenous peoples.

Morning Star 16th Nov 2023

<https://bit.ly/41BDF0k>

The SNP has urged the UK Government to stop "frittering away" money on Trident just days after it emerged that a nuclear submarine nearly sunk. The party's defence spokesperson Martin Docherty-Hughes has said that the millions which will be put towards the nuclear deterrent should be going to "conventional military or vital frontline services" instead.

Daily Record 28th Nov 2023

<https://bit.ly/41y1eqA>

TRIDENT AND RELATED NEWS

A rapidly sinking Royal Navy nuclear submarine with Trident nuclear missiles was reportedly saved moments from disaster after a group of engineers noticed a faulty reading on a depth-measuring device. An investigation has been launched into the incident after engineers managed to stop the submarine and its nuclear arsenal plunging further and into the so-called "danger zone" where the vessel could have imploded.

i-news 20th Nov 2023

<https://bit.ly/41vH6FH>

Spiralling nuclear costs make the MOD's equipment plan unsustainable. The Ministry of Defence's plan for equipment acquisition over the next decade has once again been branded unaffordable, with overspending on its nuclear programme now clearly responsible for the overall insolvency of the plan. After two years where the plan was predicting a modest surplus, due to the greatest increase in UK military spending since the Korean war, the apparently inexorable rising costs of the government's nuclear weapon upgrades have created the largest deficit since the government started publishing these plans in 2012.

NIS 20th Dec 2023

<https://bit.ly/476iswl>

The Nuclear Information Service has issued a briefing giving an overview of the Devonport Royal Dockyard and its role in servicing the UK's submarine fleet.

<https://bit.ly/485LKN5>

French nuclear submarine Suffren visited Faslane naval base near Glasgow this week. The visit isn't the first time a French nuclear submarine has visited Scotland, not by a long shot, as the increasing number of visits by the French and U.S. Navy in recent years reflects the enhanced security posture in the North Atlantic.

UK Defence Journal 16th Dec 2023

<https://bit.ly/483iaaW>

Read the latest CND Campaign magazine here:

<https://cnduk.org/resources/campaign-magazine-december-2023/>

NUCLEAR POWER

More than 20 nations called for a tripling of nuclear energy to drive down emissions as world leaders assembled for a second day at UN climate talks in Dubai. ...The use of nuclear power as a cleaner alternative to fossil fuels is highly controversial as environmental groups are concerned about safety and the disposal of nuclear waste. But more than 20 nations ranging from the US to Ghana, Japan and several European countries said that it plays a "key role" in the global goal of achieving carbon neutrality by mid-century. They called for the tripling of nuclear energy capacity by 2050 from 2020 levels.

France24 2nd Dec 2023

<https://bit.ly/4aqJ7al>

SNP would be 'criminally negligent' to block nuclear power investment in Scotland. The Scottish Government has been firm in its opposition to new nuclear plants being built in Scotland, but UK Government minister Andrew Bowie is turning up the heat, forcing them to publicly denounce big investment in the country. The nationalists are also going against public opinion in the country, with the majority of Scots in favour of introducing more of this energy source if it helps on the road to net zero.

Scottish Daily Express 29th Nov 2023

<https://bit.ly/3Rvcgsd>

The Together Against Sizewell C group says it will keep fighting for the 'soul of Suffolk' despite losing the latest round of a legal battle. Campaigners said they were "dismayed" by the appeal decision and called on the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Environment Agency to "flex their regulatory muscles".

Evening Standard 20th Dec 2023

<https://bit.ly/3tz5I3C>

The UK is on the brink of a major new deal with the US that would see nuclear reactors installed across northeast England. Ben Houchen, the mayor of Tees Valley, is reportedly nearing an agreement with Westinghouse, a US-based nuclear firm, to install small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs). The deal - which Lord Houchen has touted as "completely privately funded" - would see the four mini reactors installed near the mouth of the River Tees.

Express 2nd Dec 2023

<https://bit.ly/3GSOJfJ>

What's On

January/February 2024

The next **Mailing** is due to be sent out at the beginning of March.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 16th January, 19.30 online. Please e-mail wmcndl@gmail.com for the zoom link.

Hereford Peace Council – Meetings at 11 – 12.30 on the second Monday of the months of January, April, June and September, at Friends Meeting House, King Street, Hereford.

Malvern Churches Justice and Peace group Prayers for Peace, 12 noon on 2nd and 4th Monday of the month (except Bank Holidays), Lyttleton Well Prayer Room, Church Street, Great Malvern.

Saturday 6th January – Local demonstration for a ceasefire in Gaza, check WMCND website for details (see web address below).

Saturday 13th January – National demonstration for a ceasefire in Gaza, see details at www.cnduk.org

Rethinking European Security

BASIC's Risk Reduction Programme is launching 'Rethinking European Security' a newsletter that provides news and updates about the work and activities of the BASIC-Rethink Security project 'Turning Point: Realising a Sustainable Security Architecture for Europe'.

Read more here:

<https://basicint.org/portfolio/risk-reduction>

Follow us on twitter
@westmidlandsnd

Our website: <https://wmcnd.org.uk/>

Noticeboard

Peace posters: Hereford Peace Council produces monthly posters on peace topics, to be displayed as widely as possible. The posters are not dated.

The current posters are:

We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children.

Jimmy Carter

True justice is the harvest reaped by peacemakers from seeds sown in a spirit of peace. St James

Please contact jennywmcnd@gn.apc.org if you would like to use these posters.

US Bombs at Lakenheath

US deputy defence secretary Kathleen Hicks toured "infrastructure improvements" at RAF Lakenheath at the end of November, another major indication that the Suffolk airbase is being primed for the return of US nuclear weapons. Hicks is expected to hold meetings with British counterparts.

Among the "infrastructure improvements" at Lakenheath are plans to build a 144-bed "surety dormitory" for US Air Force personnel. In US military terminology, the word "surety" is used to refer to the handling of nuclear weapons.



Read here:

A summary of correspondence sent and replies received in connection with NFLA concerns over the relocation of US nuclear weapons to 'RAF' (actually USAF) Lakenheath.

NFLA 21st Nov 2023

<https://bit.ly/48rOiVE>

NFLA Policy
Briefing No. 281

Nuclear Free Local Authorities

Councils working for a renewable, safe and peaceful future



Date: 21 November 2023
Subject: Latest on RAF Lakenheath