



West Midlands

CAMPAIGN FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Mailing

November/December 2023

Russia and the Test Ban Treaty

The lower house of Russia's parliament voted in October to approve **a bill revoking the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty**, a move Moscow described as putting it on par with the United States.



ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) has provided a straightforward guide to the situation.

Russia is NOT leaving the treaty. Although this is a step backwards, Russia remains a signatory to the CTBT, thus retaining the responsibility not to engage in any behaviour that would defeat the Treaty's object and purpose. Russia also retains its cooperation with the Treaty's verification system.

President Putin said that this move was intended to "mirror" the US position on the CTBT. However, as the Treaty has not yet entered into force, states are already on an equal footing whether they are signatories or have ratified. ICAN believes that this move might be intended to create uncertainty about Moscow's intentions.

187 states have signed the CTBT and 178 have ratified it. But it can only enter into force once it has been ratified by all nine nuclear-armed states, and all 35 others in possession of nuclear power and research reactors. The countries holding up the process have hitherto been China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the USA. Now Russia is added to this list. This change in Russia's position is an escalatory step increasing the risk that these weapons will one day be used.

ICAN is calling on us to write to our MPs asking them to condemn this move by Moscow and to share the message on social media. Read more at <https://bit.ly/3Q41dpb>.

WMCND, 54, Allison Street, Digbeth, Birmingham, B5 5TH

e-mail: wmcndall@gmail.com; website: www.wmcnd.org.uk

Follow us on Twitter: @westmidlandsCND

BITS FROM ABROAD

Saudi Arabia said on Monday it has decided to end light-touch oversight of its nuclear activities by the U.N. atomic watchdog and switch to full-blown safeguards, a change the agency has been demanding for years. Saudi Arabia has a nascent nuclear programme that it wants to expand to eventually include activities like proliferation-sensitive uranium enrichment. It is unclear where its ambitions end, since Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has said for years it will develop nuclear weapons if regional rival Iran does.

Reuters 25th Sept 2023

<https://bit.ly/45eVYZ6>

In Canada: A dozen nuclear energy experts are calling for a formal risk assessment of emerging nuclear technologies and warning Prime Minister Justin Trudeau if a company in New Brunswick were to be successful, its product could be used by other countries to make nuclear bombs. The open letter sent to the Prime Minister's Office is dated Sept. 22, and spells out concerns that Saint John-based nuclear startup Moltex is embarking on a risky path.

National Observer 27th Sept 2023

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

There are fears **Iran** is arming itself with nuclear weapons and now it has banned UN inspectors from monitoring the country's atomic programme which it insists is entirely peaceful.

Mirror 17th Sept 2023

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

China appears to be accelerating the expansion of its nuclear arsenal and may be exploring the development of non-nuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of striking the US, according to a new Pentagon report.

FT 19th Oct 2023

<https://www.ft.com/content/b6f4fa27-fdbd-415e-81d6-a325eff52adf>

Could nuclear weapons testing resume as global tensions rise? Only North Korea has detonated nuclear weapons during the 21st century, but recent indications suggest Russia, the US and China are preparing to resume tests.

New Scientist 17th Oct 2023

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

FROM THE MEDIA

North Korea's bogged nuclear-missile submarine will be very dangerous - to its crew.

It doesn't just have an Achilles' heel. It's more like an Achilles' leg. The news that North Korea has modified an ageing Russian diesel submarine to fire nuclear weapons has been met with some mirth amongst the underwater community. The boat's hull form now resembles a child's drawing of a submarine, and it "will handle like a pig, dived or surfaced" according to my submariner friends. So is this just a PR stunt by the North Korean regime or a viable platform for carrying nuclear weapons?

Telegraph 11th Sept 2023

<https://bit.ly/48v09mJ>

The UK/Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities is backing the recent call of an Oldham Councillor for the preservation of the town's nuclear bunker in the name of peace. In January 2016, at a time when North Korea was testing nuclear weapons, the Mirror newspaper posed a question of its readership: 'Where are the best places in the UK to survive nuclear war?' with the surprising number one answer being the northern town of Oldham. Why? Because when the new municipal Civic Centre was built, designers Cecil Howitt and Partners built a bunker of reinforced concrete and brick beneath it.

NFLA 12th Sept 2023

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

Russia's nuclear weapons "saved" the country, Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, said [recently]. "Were it not for the work of [Soviet atomic bomb creator Igor] Kurchatov and his colleagues, it is difficult to say if our country would still exist," Patriarch Kirill said. His comments came as he presented a Church honour to physicist Radiy Ilkaev, who heads the Kurchatov-founded Russian Federal Nuclear Centre in Sarov.

Moscow Times 18th Oct 2023

<https://bit.ly/3Fy3bZO>

TRIDENT AND RELATED NEWS

“A combination of tremendous heroism, good fortune and the will of God” – will this be the future of safety at a nuclear-armed Lakenheath?

With evidence mounting that the United States Air Force intends to return nuclear weapons to RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk, the Nuclear Free Local Authorities have written to emergency planners in the county, and on their recommendation now to the Ministry of Defence, to question their preparedness for any future accident involving the destruction of a military aircraft carrying nuclear weapons, either at Lakenheath or in transit to or from the airbase.

NFLA 14th Sept 2023

<https://bit.ly/3PZnB43>

Scottish independence would end the UK's nuclear delusion.

The National 29th Sept 2023

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

The U.S. Navy's Strategic Systems Programs recently oversaw a missile test flight of an unarmed life-extended Trident II (D5LE) missile from the USS Louisiana (SSBN-743), an Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine.

UK Defence Journal, 1st Oct 2023

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

Sailors returning from a patrol that formed part of the longest sustained military operation undertaken by the UK have been greeted by the Deputy Prime Minister. The Vanguard-class ballistic submarine completed their silent mission beneath the waves, carrying the Trident missile system. It came in the 55th year of Operation Relentless, under which a British submarine carrying the nation's ultimate weapon has patrolled the world's oceans unseen, undetected and ready to strike since 1969.

The Herald 14th Sept 2023

<https://bit.ly/3ry4wfY>

Read the latest CND Campaign magazine here:
<https://bit.ly/3QtG9da>

NUCLEAR POWER

To help the UK reach clean energy targets, small modular reactors (SMRs) must be built in Britain as part of a just transition to net zero, Unite, the UK's leading union, has warned today. Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: “The government has put the contracts to build SMRs out to international tender. This is despite the fact that UK-based Rolls-Royce SMR and its workforce are the world leaders in the technology. “Not awarding this contract to Rolls-Royce SMR as quickly as possible would be a complete betrayal of UK manufacturing and the exact opposite of a just transition. Not only would it endanger the potential to create thousands of decent skilled UK jobs, but it would also be a colossal act of economic self-harm.

Unite 25th Sept 2023

<https://bit.ly/3F1jzSo>

Rotherham MP Sarah Champion has called for a “laser sharp” focus on getting young people into the nuclear sector in order to fill the gap of 150,000 workers needed to reach the UK's targets for energy production. Earlier this year, MPs on the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee warned that the UK will need to more than double its nuclear workforce to meet its target of 24GW of nuclear energy capacity by 2050. In terms of people, this means that between 75,000 and 150,000 new recruits will be needed.

Yorkshire Post 15th Oct 2023

<https://bit.ly/45Hrnnp>

An incoming Labour government would not renege on any Sizewell C financing deal agreed by the government before the next general election, a member of the shadow energy ministerial team has said. *Utility Week 16th Oct 2023*

<https://bit.ly/3s1SETE>

LORD Lieutenant of Somerset Mohammed Saddiq visited the Hinkley Point C nuclear power station site on 13th October to meet the project's chaplaincy team and workers from both Christian and Muslim communities. Mr Saddiq and Deputy Lieutenant Jane Sedgman spoke with chaplaincy members about the spiritual and pastoral support available for the 10,000 people working to build the new power station.

West Somerset Free Press 13th Oct 2023

<https://bit.ly/472TQFs>

What's On

November/December 2023

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

At the WMCND AGM on 26th October, Eric Harley was re-elected as chair and Gill Cox was re-elected as treasurer.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 5th December, 19.30 by zoom

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), Lytton Well Prayer Room, Church Street, Great Malvern.

The US-based Council on Strategic Risks has produced a report on ending tactical nuclear weapons. Read it here:

<https://bit.ly/48v17zn>



Read **Bellona's nuclear digest** monitoring events in **Russia and Ukraine**.

<https://bit.ly/3ry5dWy>

Follow us on twitter
@westmidlandscnnds

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 poster is:

Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal. Martin Luther King Jr



Buy CND Christmas cards at
<https://bit.ly/46u7p08>

As part of CND's National Day of Action in September, a Citizens' Weapons Inspection team went to RAF Lakenheath in Suffolk to search the base for nuclear weapons. Watch here to see what happened: <https://bit.ly/4040Hfr>

And in Albania, to mark the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 26th September, activists projected this message on to their parliament.

