

# Eliminate Nuclear Weapons

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*The Seventh International  
Summit of Nobel Peace  
Laureates, which met in  
Rome in November 2006 on  
the initiative of Mikhail  
Gorbachev, issued this  
declaration.*

We, Nobel Peace Laureates and Laureate Organisations, gathered in Rome, Italy, have for years been deeply disturbed by the lack of public attention and political will at the highest levels of state paid to the need to eliminate nuclear weapons. There are over 27,000 of these devices threatening civilisation, with over 95 per cent in the hands of Russia and the United States. This danger threatens everyone and thus every person must work to eliminate this risk before it eliminates us.

We oppose the proliferation of nuclear weapons to any state. We are faced each day with a new crisis in proliferation exemplified by concerns regarding North Korea and Iran. However, our focus must be on the weapons themselves, for the only sustainable resolution to gain security is the universal elimination of the weapons.

The failure to address the nuclear threat and to strengthen existing treaty obligations to work for nuclear weapons abolition shreds the fabric of cooperative security. A world with nuclear haves and have-nots is fragmented and unstable, a fact underscored by the current threats of proliferation.

In such an environment cooperation fails. Thus, nations are unable to address effectively the real threats of poverty, environmental degradation and nuclear catastrophe. Nuclear weapons are more of a problem than any problem they seek to solve. In the hands of anyone, the weapons themselves remain an unacceptable, morally reprehensible, impractical and dangerous risk. The use of a nuclear weapon against a state without nuclear weapons is patently immoral. Use against a state with nuclear weapons is also suicidal. These weapons have no value against terrorists or criminals. Progress towards a safer future is not thwarted from a lack of practical, threat-reducing policy options. The problem is a lack of political will.

As Nobel Peace Prize Laureates we commit

to work collectively to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons, which we believe are unworthy of civilisation. We have heard the impassioned warning from the Mayor of Hiroshima and survivors of the atomic bombs and join him and the over 1,500 cities around the world, including Rome, in their call to all nations, including those with nuclear weapons arsenals – the United States, Russia, France, China, United Kingdom, Israel, India, and Pakistan – to immediately commence negotiations to obtain the universal, legally verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons. In past years we have set forth practical steps to bring us to such a better world, and we reiterate the need for such policies as an entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, de-alerting of the hair trigger launch on warning arsenals of thousands of hazardous weapons deployed now by Russia and the US, obtaining stricter International Atomic Energy Authority controls over nuclear materials, and pledges never to use a nuclear weapon first. Such efforts will help to ensure that nuclear capabilities are denied to terrorists.

We issue a serious warning that without such efforts the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) could corrode, opening the way for dozens of states to become nuclear-armed, a frightening prospect. The NPT is a bargain in which non-proliferation is obtained, based on a promise by nuclear weapons states to negotiate nuclear weapons elimination and offer peaceful uses of nuclear technology. There is a fundamental dilemma which must end. Nuclear weapons states want to keep their weapons indefinitely and at the same time condemn others who would attempt to acquire them. Such flaunting of disarmament obligations is not sustainable.

The current situation is more dangerous than during the Cold War. We are gravely concerned regarding several current developments such as Non-Proliferation Treaty stakeholders enabling rather than constraining proliferation, modernisation of nuclear weapons systems, the aspiration to weaponise space, thus making arms control and disarmament on earth all the more difficult, and the declared policy of terrorist organisations to obtain nuclear weapons.

Given the critical nature of the situation, we pledge to challenge, persuade and inspire Heads of State to fulfil the moral and legal obligation they share with every citizen to free us from this threat.

We declare our intention to participate fully in a world summit of leaders of culture, arts, sciences, business, and politics, called The World Summit For a Secure Sustainable Future.

As Nobel Peace Laureates, conscience requires us to raise our voices, inspire humankind, and to demand change in state policies. We call upon the citizens of the world to join us in this work.