

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND PEACE MUNICIPALISM

A summary of discussions of the webinar held by the
European Chapter of Mayors for Peace on 25 May 2022

In partnership with:

Mayors for Peace

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons - ICAN

Nuclear Free Local Authorities - NFLA

United Cities and Local Governments - UCLG



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This document is a summary of discussions of a webinar held by the Mayors for Peace European Chapter on 25 May 2022. This online gathering brought together local authorities and key partners of the Mayors for Peace network, advocates and experts to discuss the relevance of nuclear disarmament within the international security model, and to explore pathways for local governments to advance this vision. The Mayors for Peace European Chapter would like to thank the following partners for their active involvement in organising this webinar:

- Mayors for Peace
- International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons - ICAN
- Nuclear Free Local Authorities - NFLA
- United Cities and Local Governments - UCLG

This document has been devised as a contribution by the Mayors for Peace European Chapter (and, more broadly, by local governments and peace municipalism) to the **First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW** to be held from 21 to 23 June 2022. Accordingly, its contents are especially focused on this process. More broadly, they also **reflect key perspectives by local governments and peace advocates on nuclear disarmament.**

The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons - TPNW (2017) propelled the nuclear disarmament agenda and set the stage for bolder global action on this matter. More governments join the TPNW each year. The Treaty's impacts can already be felt in investment financing, public attitudes towards the nuclear ban and non-proliferation negotiations.

The 2022 War of Ukraine highlights the existential threat that nuclear weapons represent to all humanity. The risk of nuclear escalation is clearer than ever, showing that our international security model cannot rest on nuclear deterrence. The risk is too high: The humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons would be unbearable for humanity.

Local governments and peace municipalism are a key support of the nuclear disarmament agenda and stand ready to renew their efforts in 2022, joining its partners in government and civil society at Vienna's First Meeting of TPNW States Parties (1MSP). Local governments are mobilising to make sure the voices of local communities are well heard during the conference.

Reach info@mayorsforpeace.eu or visit <https://www.mayorsforpeace.eu/> to know more.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

« The role of local governments and peace municipalism in advancing nuclear disarmament »



The event was divided into two panels: A first roundtable focusing on the perspectives of international partners, city networks and civil society and a second one gathering the voices of local government leaders.

Both panels were facilitated by **Thomas Hajnoczi**, Executive Advisor of the Mayors for Peace network and Former Head of Disarmament at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Takashi Koizumi, Secretary General of Mayors for Peace

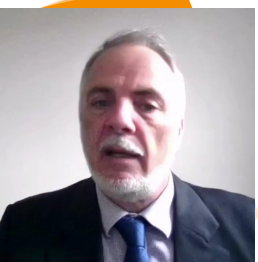


Mr. Koizumi addressed the impacts of the current geopolitical scenario over the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. In spite of the current backlash, he emphasised how **this global agenda is backed by a major part of the international community, present in the forthcoming 1MSP Meeting.**

The Mayors for Peace network, rallying over 8.000 local governments worldwide, will send a delegation to the meeting as part of its **long term strategy advocating for the categorical rejection of all nuclear weapons.**

Local governments' key role in supporting the Treaty of Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is more important than ever: The active participation of mayors and local leaders can make a difference in encouraging more countries to join the TPNW.

Know more about Mayors for Peace <http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/en/>



Alexander Kmentt, President-designate of the 1MSP and Director of the Disarmament, Arms Control and Nonproliferation Department at the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Kmentt argued how the recent geopolitical developments - where nuclear threats are now the focus of attention and the risk of escalation is palpable - turns the 1MSP into a gathering more relevant than ever.

The Vienna meeting offers a rallying point for those countries, local leaders and communities who want to see progress made with regards to disarmament. Committing to this new international norm is the way forward: The TPNW consolidates the humanitarian critique of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence.

Mr. Kmentt emphasised how we can only make real progress if we **focus the conversation on the real consequences of using nuclear weapons** - something very much related to local contexts. The 1MSP will focus upon the seriousness of the Treaty as an international norm; its emphasis on the humanitarian approach as a decisive advance from previous international norms related to non-proliferation; the **openness of the community involved**, which includes civil society and observer states; and the complementarity of the Treaty with other norms. Interested cities will be able to follow the 1MSP through an online live stream.



Beatrice Fihn, Executive Director of ICAN

Ms. Fihn celebrated how, over the last years, **mayors have become 'hopeful champions' on the world's most existential issues**. At present, they remain critical for mobilizing more support for the TPNW, especially in those countries where the national government claims to rely on nuclear weapons as a guarantee of their national security. The ICAN Cities Appeal recognizes the role of cities in this process: Far more than a symbolic exercise, it sees **cities as instrumental players**. Norway and Australia are good examples of this trend, as cities and towns managed to shape national party politics on this matter. New York is diversifying the city's public pension fund in relation to this. **ICAN will hold its Nuclear Ban Forum on the 18 and 19 June** to support this process.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has triggered fears of use of nuclear weapons and reshaped the European security scenario. Russia's **threats to use nuclear weapons highlight the disturbing flipside of nuclear deterrence**. Nuclear threats are used to coerce and intimidate, to facilitate aggression, to restrict the range of possible responses and to provide a cover for war crimes. **Countries doubling down on the nuclear deterrence doctrine will make a massive and dangerous mistake**. Many other countries are serious about the elimination of nuclear weapons and **commit to multilateralism and international law**.

Know more about ICAN <https://www.icanw.org/>



Emilia Sáiz, Secretary General of UCLG

Ms. Sáiz provided context on United Cities and Local Governments, which is a diverse and large organisation founded in 1913 and **built in connection to the peace movement**. The international movement of local governments is based on a type of city diplomacy that is not designed to address conflict but to trigger transformation. Local governments often identify peace with something you build day to day in neighbourhoods.

The UCLG peace agenda has been shaken by the current events. Many countries that used to have a non-military approach now shift their discourse. **This impacts the way local governments approach global discussions on disarmament as well**. Still, local governments have an important role to play in **mobilising communities and representing their voices in global discussions**. Mayors for Peace is critical in this sense.

Ms. Sáiz calls for an **expanded approach to city diplomacy where local governments become a new player of networked multilateralism**. UCLG municipalism is committed to recover the notion that cities are not targets and to redefine together what city diplomacy could entail: Accordingly, it will seek to support the 1MSP. **UCLG is putting in place meaningful spaces of collective thinking on peace**, including the UCLG Municipal Peace Talks and the Pact for the Future. Ms. Sáiz called for a common approach to this subject and invited local government participants to bring the outcomes of this process to the forthcoming Summit for the Future that the UN will be holding next year.

Know more about UCLG <https://www.uclg.org/>



David Blackburn, Chair of the NFLA and Councillor of Leeds (United Kingdom)

Mr. Blackburn provided context on the role of the United Kingdom as the third nuclear power in history, which developed a nuclear arsenal as part of its alliance with the United States. In parallel to this process, a strong peace movement developed among British civil society, tracing its origins back to the First World War. The **NFLA is an arm of the peace movement at the local government level**, representing British and Irish councils opposed to nuclear weapons. NFLA

local councils always advocated for a humanitarian approach in alternative to the British government policy. NFLA members refused to host nuclear exercises and made sure no public money was invested in building nuclear bunkers. Instead, they addressed the general public to raise awareness on the fact that a nuclear war is really unthinkable as it would represent an irreversible calamity for all humanity.

The NFLA remains committed to the TPNW and believes this is the only way out for the current scenario. However, it faces an implacable government, opposed to the nuclear ban treaty and currently headed for nuclear rearmament. NFLA members argue how real security can only be achieved through international cooperation on disarmament. This would avoid a waste of resources. Instead, they propose to put this public money into better use and address the real challenges ahead, such as climate change and poverty. The NFLA will continue to make plain that cities and citizens cannot be targets, knowing that public opinion is on their side, and NFLA authorities will continue to pass resolutions calling on the UK Government to sign the TPNW. They also work for the British government to provide justice and compensate the victims of nuclear tests in Australia and the Pacific; an injustice long overdue.

Know more about the NFLA <https://www.nuclearpolicy.info/>



Thomas Hermann, Deputy Mayor of Hannover (Germany)

Mr. Hermann noted how Russia's unjustified war triggered a transformation of the European security paradigm. Nuclear rearmament and deterrence are on the rise and citizens fear the nuclear threat. Hannover has been an active member of Mayors for Peace at global and European level for a long time.

The fact that cities are preferred targets of nuclear attacks makes it more relevant for mayors to prevent such disasters from happening.

Hannover is leading municipal advocacy initiatives towards the German Foreign Affairs Ministry in partnership with cities, civil society networks and the Mayors for Peace European Chapter. Hannover was among the first cities to join the ICAN Cities Appeal; a concrete step which was followed by many German local authorities. Most capital cities in Germany sent a letter to the Foreign Ministry asking for the country to join the TPNW. Hannover organised discussion events to raise local awareness. German cities also celebrate the "Flag Day" to commemorate the International Court of Justice 1996 ruling stating that the use of nuclear weapons as against international law.

German local authorities hope the 1MSP sends a strong signal for nuclear disarmament to the world, especially in view of Russia's threats. Hannover looks forward to seeing the universalization of the Treaty and seeing more countries join the Treaty in coming years. Hannover welcomes the fact that Germany will participate in the conference as an observer state - a remarkable and promising achievement.

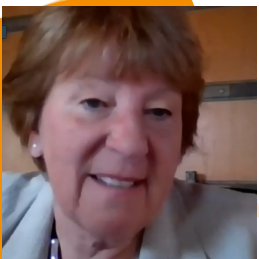


Philippe Rio, Mayor of Grigny (France), President of the AFCDRP and Co-President of the UCLG-CSIPDHR

Mr. Rio argued how local authorities have a duty and the capacity to take a more active stand on this issue. First, local authorities are especially well placed to raise awareness among citizens on the importance of nuclear disarmament. Peace is not a direct competence of cities but at the heart of their local policies. Building conviviality is essential for attaining more peaceful communities. The French Mayors for Peace association - AFCDRP - is committed to advance this vision and the memory of the Hibakusha.

France is among the nuclear powers and is currently headed for a process of nuclear rearmament. More than 30 billion euros are currently being invested in this process. French local governments took an active stand on this matter. Last September, they sent letters to the President of the Republic to demand their country to join the TPNW. Even though these efforts were unfruitful, local authorities managed to gather the interest of many MPs. They will now attend the Vienna conference and hope to raise awareness within ongoing national debates. Finally, Mr. Rio argued how cities can also find in city diplomacy and their participation in the multilateral system a concrete opportunity to promote peace.

Know more about the AFCDRP <https://afcdrp.com/>



Marianne Borgen, Mayor of Oslo (Norway)

Ms. Borgen argued how remembering recent victories achieved for the peace movement can help to find hope in these challenging times. ICAN winning the Nobel prize was encouraging, as well as the same adoption of the TPNW. The new Norwegian government declared its commitment to increase disarmament efforts. Norway was the first NATO country to confirm its participation in the 1 MSP as an observer state. This sends a signal to other NATO countries: It is possible to be a NATO ally and at the same time

work for the prohibition of nuclear weapons. The involvement of NGOs and municipalities has been crucial to foster this change in national politics.

Ms. Borgen hoped the 1MSP proves fruitful and gives new directions and a common vision to face the new geopolitical scenario. She recalled the brutality of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the apocalyptic consequences a nuclear attack on cities and the environment would have. Even though municipalities in Norway rarely take a stand on international affairs, a large majority of Norwegian municipalities, including Oslo, mobilised in favour of the ICAN Cities Appeal. She called for unity and asked more governments to sign the Treaty in respect of the rights of children and future generations.



Roberto Cammarata, President of the Municipal Council of Brescia (Italy)

Mr. Cammarata recognized the important work developed by Italian civil society and municipalities over the last years on this matter. Brescia is directly involved in this process due to the fact that the city hosts the Ghedi Air Base, where B61 nuclear weapons are stored.

Civil society and local authorities across the Province support the national campaign “Italia, ripensaci” asking the national government to join the TPNW. So far, more than 60 local authorities and thousands of local associations have joined the initiative. Brescia holds the provincial coordination body of this campaign and a peace university. Through these platforms, the city promotes a culture of peace and raises citizens' awareness.

The Brescia Peace Festival welcomed ICAN and Mayors for Peace as well as the Chair of Italy's National Assembly and the former Chair of the European Parliament, who endorsed the call for Italy to join the TPNW. Italy's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs committed to kick off a process where Italy contributes more actively to nuclear disarmament. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Italian National Assembly recently adopted a resolution calling on the national government to support the contents of the TPNW and join the 1MSP, taking into account the fact that Germany and Norway are joining as well. Mr. Cammarata is looking forward to representing the voices of his fellow citizens to the 1MSP.

Know more about the “Italia, ripensaci” campaign

<https://retepatedisarmo.org/disarmo-nucleare/italia-ripensaci/>



Álvaro Ferrer, Deputy Mayor of Granollers (Catalonia, Spain) and delegate of the Mayors for Peace European Chapter chair.

Mr. Ferrer delivered the closing remarks to the event on behalf of the Mayors for Peace European Chapter chair, the Mayor of Granollers, Ms. Alba Barnusell. He recognized the contributions made by international partners and local leaders to this discussion, linking this relevant international process with the priorities and opportunities that can be found at the territorial level. The **existing diversity of perspectives and local-global links are always the best asset of municipalism.**

Mr. Ferrer acknowledged how the nuclear ban process is a **shared effort, based on the commitment of states, but also the impetus of all kinds of actors, from civil society organizations to municipalities and their networks.** He also recognized how the nuclear ban and the elimination of nuclear weapons are more relevant than ever, and that the **international security model cannot be based on nuclear deterrence.**

Finally, he called for **empowering mayors to be able to participate in this process and continue to play a relevant role in spaces of multilateral discussion.** Mr. Ferrer concluded by emphasising how the European Chapter stands ready to support the Mayors for Peace delegation to the 1MSP and be an active international partner for nuclear disarmament.

Know more about the Catalan Mayors for Peace network <http://www.alcaldesperlapau.cat/>



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