



HIROSHIMA, NAGASAKI AND THE NPT

2015 brings us the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the ninth Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. How will be the dynamics between these major landmarks in the peace movement's calendar play out? The NPT which entered into force 45 years ago is one of the main international treaties governing nuclear weapons. It is designed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and promote nuclear disarmament and rests on three pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Review Conferences are held every five years to monitor and support the implementation of the treaty. All States parties, under its Article 6, are obligated to undertake in good faith negotiations for eliminating nuclear weapons. But first, the Vienna conference....



Before the NPT RevCon in New York, Mia Pepper & Judy Blyth

stood outside Minister Julie Bishop's electorate office in Subiaco pose a question to the Powers that Be! Nobel Peace Laureate Desmond Tutu said at ICAN's Civil Society Forum: *"The writing should be on the wall for the nuclear powers... A treaty banning nuclear weapons is on its way. The momentum is unstoppable."*

The 3rd International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of N-Weapons

On 8-9 Dec 2014, 158 governments (including Australia's) converged on Vienna where the agenda addressed accidental nuclear war, probabilistic risk analysis, and global climatic consequences of large-scale nuclear war. It was the last of three international conferences emphasising the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the other two being held earlier in 2014 in Oslo, Norway and Nayarit in Mexico. All were important precursors to the big **NPT Review Conference 2015**.

Prior to the Vienna conference, ICAN Australia's Dr Bill Williams wrote an Open Letter to our Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, which was endorsed by 31 health, union, Aboriginal, environmental and peace organisations (including PND). It urged the Australian Government to support the commencement of negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons, to commission research into the impact of nuclear winter on agriculture in Australia and to establish a defence posture that is no longer predicated on the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

The official intergovernmental meeting in Austria was held in the room where the Treaty of Vienna ending the Napoleonic wars was negotiated in 1815. It was preceded by an ICAN (International Campaign Against Nuclear weapons) Civil Society Forum which attracted around 900 participants. Little mainstream media coverage eventuated from this historic venue – or even from the once-in-five-years NPT RevCon in NY - so maybe this PND newsletter will be your first news of their outcomes!

The great hope from the Vienna conference was that after 44 states called for a prohibition on nuclear weapons, Austria delivered its "Austrian Pledge" at the meeting's close. The hugely appreciated Sebastian Kurt, Austria's Foreign Minister was instrumental in this. The Pledge calls on states to "cooperate with all stakeholders to achieve this goal". This is a very significant step towards a legally-binding ban on nuclear weapons. Global citizens were called upon to urge their foreign ministers to also make that commitment.

27 April – 22 May 2015 -NPT Review Conference
