

Ayuba Wabba

President
Président
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Mr Jens Stoltenberg

**Secretary General
North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

By e-mail

Sharan Burrow

General Secretary
Secrétaire générale
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HTUR

22/01/2021

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Dear Mr Stoltenberg,

In a unique consortium of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the International Peace Bureau (IPB) and Willy Claes, one of your predecessors in the position of NATO Secretary General, we write to you on the occasion of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and in anticipation of the postponed 2020 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference later this year, with the urgent request to reconsider your organisation's opposition to the TPNW, as expressed in your recent statement on the matter on 15 December 2020.

We agree with your statement that the upcoming NPT Review Conference presents a major opportunity for the international community to achieve full implementation of the NPT. We differ, however, over your assertion that the TPNW would undermine that objective. The TPNW is a complementary treaty to the NPT, which gives further effect to Art. VI of the NPT.

Moreover, the TPNW provides an opportunity to further fulfil NATO's mandate to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression. You stated that 'as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance'. It is exactly that stalemate of armed peace and nuclear deterrence that has to be broken. We must go beyond non-proliferation towards full abolition in order to attain a more stable peace for the benefit of all.

While we recognise that NATO has reduced the number of nuclear weapons stationed in Europe since 1995, we deplore the fact that between 150 and 200 US nuclear weapons remain present in central Europe, addition to the French and British nuclear arsenals. They are a concrete challenge to your claim that NATO has caused a reduction in nuclear arms since the end of the Cold War.

We agree that the engagement of nuclear possessing states is crucial to a successful ban of nuclear weapons. It is for this very reason that NATO's support or neutrality vis-à-vis the TPNW is of significant importance.

Mr Stoltenberg, as advocates for peace representing workers and peace activists in all NATO Member States, we are extremely concerned about the prospects of a deep recession and economic slowdown and the tensions it will generate in and between nations. In such a volatile security context, the risk of the use of nuclear weapons becomes all the more imminent. Nuclear weapons need to be banned urgently.

But common security requires more than military defence. Lasting peace can only be built on social justice and democracy. As well as the COVID-19 pandemic, we face glaring inequalities and a climate

emergency. Against that backdrop we are also concerned about a new nuclear and conventional arms race at a time when the world is in dire need of investment in green and decent jobs, social protection, education, care and other social infrastructure.

At the same time, we are sensitive to the fact that while a majority of people in many NATO Member States are in favour of their country joining the TPNW, billions are being contracted out by Member States to a handful of companies without public scrutiny in order to live up to NATO defence investment guidelines.

The world requires a new social contract to deliver real and common security.

We are calling on your leadership to direct NATO strategy towards common security based on multilateralism and the international rule of law, including support for the TPNW. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how we can support you in this endeavour at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,

ITUC



Sharan Burrow
General Secretary

ICAN



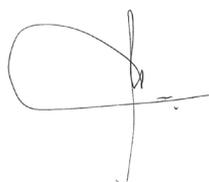
Beatrice Fihn
Executive Director

IPB



Reiner Braun
Executive Director

NATO



Willy Claes
Former Secretary General