



ICAN 2017
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The Hon. Anthony Albanese, MP
Prime Minister of Australia

1 May 2023

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: G7 Summit in Hiroshima and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

We are pleased to write to you ahead of the upcoming historic G7 Summit in Hiroshima, Japan. As you well know, a single nuclear weapon destroyed the entire city, killing an [estimated](#) 140,000 by the end of 1945. Many more succumbed in the years since, with Red Cross hospitals still treating victims and descendants today. Setsuko Thurlow, Hiroshima survivor and co-acceptor of ICAN's Nobel Peace Prize in 2017 [spoke of her survival](#);

As I crawled out, the ruins were on fire. Most of my classmates in that building were burned to death alive. I saw all around me utter, unimaginable devastation. Processions of ghostly figures shuffled by. Grotesquely wounded people, they were bleeding, burnt, blackened and swollen. Parts of their bodies were missing. Flesh and skin hung from their bones. Some with their eyeballs hanging in their hands. Some with their bellies burst open, their intestines hanging out. The foul stench of burnt human flesh filled the air.

It is the hope of the hibakusha that the summit will pave the way for progress on nuclear disarmament, a call that will be affirmed when hibakusha representatives meet with G7 leaders later this month.

Unfortunately, the joint G7 Foreign Minister's communiqué released on 18 April fails to live up to the responsibility of their nations to reduce nuclear dangers through action. It instead legitimises the threat of nuclear weapons as "deterrents".

Australia, as a non-nuclear nation and a proud signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone, has a responsibility to lead efforts on the stigmatisation, prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, including where the nuclear-armed and nuclear-hosting states fail.

At the 2018 National Labor Conference, you showed what strong leadership on this issue looks like. The ALP has a proud history of advancing nuclear disarmament and a clear commitment to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). You now have the unique responsibility to show the world once again what leadership on this critical issue looks like.

Under your government, Australia has taken positive steps to engage with the TPNW, for which we commend you. We were pleased that Foreign Minister Penny Wong recently acknowledged the treaty's "substantial normative value". However, we have yet to learn of concrete steps to sign and then ratify the treaty. We urge you to take the opportunity to advance Australia's position on this treaty when you visit Hiroshima.

On 27 April the delegates of the Hiroshima G7 Youth Summit, including delegates from Australia, released a [statement](#). It declares:

... our future security cannot be dependent on distrust among countries or the threat of devastating humanitarian and environmental consequences. Given the conflicts and crises we face today, we believe that the time for action against nuclear weapons is now. As young people, we champion the TPNW as the most effective path to eliminating nuclear weapons.

Parliamentarians from Japan, Germany, Italy, France, Canada and the United Kingdom met for the G7 Parliamentary Forum for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 29 April. Their [statement](#) affirms:

As representatives of their peoples, parliamentarians have a vital role to play in building support for disarmament and ensuring that our governments prioritise the elimination of nuclear weapons... We will intensify our political efforts to encourage our countries to sign and ratify the TPNW, with the goal of achieving its universalization at the earliest possible time.

Australia's acquisition of nuclear-propelled submarines under AUKUS sharpens the need for a binding and permanent commitment that Australia will not possess, host or assist with the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons now or in the future. The best mechanism to make such a commitment is by joining the nuclear weapon ban treaty. We urge you to signal Australia's intention to become a state party by signing the treaty in this term of government. Returning to the words of Hiroshima survivor Setsuko Thurlow:

All responsible leaders will sign this treaty. And history will judge harshly those who reject it. No longer shall their abstract theories mask the genocidal reality of their practices. No longer shall "deterrence" be viewed as anything but a deterrent to disarmament. No longer shall we live under a mushroom cloud of fear.

We look forward to continuing to work together to address the pressing dangers posed by nuclear weapons.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Margaret Beavis
Co-Chair
ICAN Australia



Associate Prof Marianne Hanson
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