

Statement by the Parliamentary Friends of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Sunday 22 January 2022

Two years ago today the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) entered into force, and was permanently enshrined in international law. This treaty signifies the hope and ambition of the global majority of nations to outlaw and eliminate nuclear weapons.

History shows that prohibition treaties on weapons of mass destruction are essential to facilitate progress towards their elimination. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was carefully crafted to strengthen global disarmament efforts and the existing legal architecture by establishing a new norm on the illegitimacy of these weapons. Under the TPNW, nuclear weapons are stigmatised and rejected in their entirety, and a clear pathway is laid out for their eventual elimination.

On this second anniversary, we celebrate the progress and growth of the TPNW, which has now been signed by ninety-two countries and ratified by sixty-eight, including the clear majority of our regional neighbours with whom we share a common goal of peace, cooperation, and security.

We also acknowledge the escalating nuclear threats and provocations from nuclear-armed states. At a time when the risk of nuclear conflict has significantly increased, and the existing disarmament and non-proliferation architecture has also been under pressure, the TPNW presents a vital opportunity for new and serious progress in moving towards a world without nuclear weapons.

As UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said at the first meeting of state parties to the TPNW in Vienna in 2022: "In a world rife with geopolitical tensions and mistrust, this is a recipe for annihilation. We cannot allow the nuclear weapons wielded by a handful of States to jeopardize all life on our planet. We must stop knocking at doomsday's door."

We welcome Australia's commitment to redouble its efforts to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. As co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we have no doubt that Australia's timely signature and ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons would be a meaningful contribution to such efforts and in keeping with Australia's history of making such contributions. We must all work towards this achievement and bring an end to the nuclear arms race. All parliamentarians have a role in ensuring this occurs.

Nuclear weapons fundamentally undermine our peace and humanity. The members of this cross-party group are ready to work constructively with the Albanese government to ensure Australia becomes a state party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Signed by the co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons group in the 47th Parliament of Australia:

Josh Wilson MP – Labor member for Fremantle, WA

Russell Broadbent MP – Liberal member for Monash, VIC

Senator Jordon Steele-John – Greens Senator for Western Australia