



# Pax Scotia

Issue 4

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A Nepalese peacekeeper with the African Union-UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) plants a tree outside UNAMID Headquarters in El Fasher, Sudan. UN. Photo/Albert Gonzalez Farran.

**International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict** – that's quite a title. But hopefully the November 6 dedication will remind us that, as the UN states, *'there can be no durable peace if the natural resources that sustain livelihoods and ecosystems are destroyed'*.

Pope Francis has said that greater respect for the earth will enable better relations between people.

The number of ratifications from the South Pacific of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was a direct reaction to the destruction of eco systems, health and livelihoods in the South Pacific in the wake of nuclear tests there by the UK, US, France, and the Soviet Union.

As we work for peace, let's remember the importance of our common home.

## A change is coming - and it cannot be held back

By Ross Ahlfeld,  
Pax Christi Scotland  
Executive Committee

It's not often that peacemakers are given reasons for hope, let alone joy, but October brought hope when Honduras became the 50th country to ratify the UN international treaty banning nuclear weapons. As such, the UN will now officially declare the production, use and stockpiling of nuclear weapons illegal from January 2021 - even though nuclear-armed states have not signed up.

For Pax Christi International, of which Pax Christi Scotland is a member organisation, this historic achievement represents the culmination of decades of activism, prayer and hard work. The cynics may tell us that this is a purely symbolic gesture that changes very little. And that's exactly what militarists told us about previous international treaties on landmines and cluster munitions.

*I'd say this is untrue*

In reality, the banning of nuclear weapons is a hugely important step towards a planet without nuclear weapons. This ban shows what many diverse and different small nations can do when they come together for all humanity and creation.

Yes, these are difficult times, as we endure a global pandemic, economic chaos threatening mass unemployment, the ongoing scourge of racism, and political unrest in the US.

But sometimes positive change can happen quickly when we least expect it; sometimes a light can appear in the darkness. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: *'We do not know His plan. We cannot see whether He is building up or pulling down. It may be that the times which by human standards are times of collapse are for Him great times of construction.'*

So please hold fast to the vision of a nuclear free world, dear brothers and sisters. One day soon we'll reach the Promised

Land - a change is coming and it cannot be held back.

*Ross Ahlfeld*

# Pax Christi Scotland's Campaigning Voice

October 24 2020 – the day  
of the 50<sup>th</sup> ratification of the  
nuclear ban

THE NUCLEAR BAN TREATY  
JUST RECEIVED ITS 50<sup>th</sup>  
RATIFICATION!



WE CONGRATULATE  
ALL INVOLVED AND  
LOOK FORWARD TO THE  
TREATY'S ENTRY INTO  
FORCE IN JANUARY 2021!



## Under the magnifying glass: The nuclear ban treaty – what next?

It was a 'Berlin Wall' moment – a moment we will remember because of its momentous impact on the whole world.

When Honduras lodged its ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), peace organisations around the world let off their metaphorical celebratory fireworks because this was the moment when nuclear weapons became illegal.

But now what? Two aspects of this treaty have universal implication; another will have specific importance for Scotland.

- 1) On 22 January 2021, this global treaty will prohibit the development, production, possession, use, and threat of use, and the stationing of another country's nuclear weapons on a state party's national territory.
- 2) The TPNW sets forth, for the first time in a nuclear treaty, obligations of assistance to victims of testing and use of nuclear weapons and of environmental remediation of areas affected by testing and use.

3) The United States and the other nuclear-armed states, including the UK, boycotted the negotiations and have been very critical of the agreement (although China tweeted on October 24 that it has 'always been advocating complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons...and will continuously make relentless efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world').

Two very welcome outcomes, but a reaction that means Westminster looks ready to maintain and renew the Trident installation on the Clyde.

Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, says 'Now that the TPNW exists, all states - whether they are opponents, supporters, sceptics, or "undecideds" on the treaty - need to learn to live with it responsibly and find creative ways to move forward together to press for progress on their common challenge: preventing nuclear conflict and eventually ridding the world of nuclear weapons.'

Pax Christi Scotland suggests the way forward for Scotland must be to continue campaigning against the presence of Trident and to work with Don't Bank On The Bomb to seek divestment from companies that manufacture nuclear weapons and their component parts. A number of local authority pension funds still invest in these companies.

Should we also campaign for compensation for all who have suffered from nuclear testing? Our partner, ICAN, points out the UK tested 45 nuclear weapons from 1952-1991. From 1952 to 1963, the UK government conducted 12 nuclear test explosions and up to 600 so-called 'minor trials' in the South Australian desert and off the Western Australian coast. Between 1957 and 1962, the UK and the US tested 33 nuclear weapons at Malden and Kiritimati islands in Kiribati. Some of the victims were Scottish servicemen, whose subsequent illnesses were never acknowledged as the result of radiation fallout.

There's work to be done – we need your help.

*Marian Pallister*, Pax Christi Scotland chair

# Reflections on Peace

## An Advent Reflection

*Our newsletter reaches out to you on All Saints Day at the start of November. At the end of the month, we move into Advent, and **Arianna Andreangeli**, Pax Christi Scotland executive committee member, looks forward to that time of hope with this reflection:*

'For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, **Prince of Peace.**' (Is 9:6)

We prepare once again to welcome Jesus, our Saviour and Redeemer, the Prince of Peace. A cynical person would probably shake his or her head in disbelief: the global pandemic we are living in, the wars we are witnessing, the precariousness of our livelihoods, a planet aflame—how can a Prince possibly choose to be born in the here and now?

The answer is the love of God, Who is ever perfect and bridges all understanding. He reveals Himself in a most vulnerable child, and shows us His greatness in the promise of peace He holds for us.

Jesus, that Baby, is our Prince of Peace. With Him, harmony is restored, and life is renewed, with one another, with creation and with God, the Father himself.

As we continue our mission as peacemakers, let us entrust ourselves to Him. Jesus comes to us in our pain and discord, in our brokenness, to remind us that He, One with God and the Holy Spirit, is with us. Even in the bleakness of these times, we can hold fast to His promise.



## A Hiroshima Survivor's reflection on the 50<sup>th</sup> ratification of the TPNW

***Setsuko Thurlow**, who was 13 years old when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, her home city, spoke at an online UN/ICAN event on October 25. This is an edited version of her moving reflection:*

'The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has entered into force! This truly marks the beginning of the end of nuclear weapons! When I learned that we reached our 50th ratification...I cried tears of joy. I have committed my life to the abolition of nuclear weapons. I have nothing but gratitude for all who have worked for the success of our treaty. I have a powerful feeling of solidarity with tens of thousands of people across the world. We have made it to this point. I found myself speaking with the spirits of hundreds of thousands of people who lost their lives in Hiroshima and Nagasaki... I was reporting to the dead, sharing this good news first with them, because they paid the ultimate price with their precious lives. Like many survivors, I made a vow that their deaths would not be in vain and to warn the world about the danger of nuclear weapons, to make sure that no one else suffers as we have suffered. I made a vow to work for nuclear disarmament until my last breath. And now we have reached a milestone in our decades' long struggle - the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons will become international law!

I have a tremendous sense of accomplishment and fulfilment, a sense of satisfaction and gratitude. I know other survivors share these emotions — whether we are survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki; or test survivors from South Pacific island nations, Kazakhstan, Australia and Algeria; or survivors from uranium mining in Canada, the United States or the Congo. All those who have been victimised by the barbaric behaviour of nine nations who continue to develop more horrendous weapons, prepared to repeat nuclear massacres far more devastating than the atomic bomb that levelled my hometown, Hiroshima. For the victims and survivors, this initial success with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is tremendously uplifting. I celebrate this moment with my brothers and sisters across the world who have been victimised, and still raise their voices, and still survive. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has opened a new door, wide. Passing through it we begin a new chapter in our struggle - with a mighty embrace of gratitude from those we have lost, and a heartfelt welcome from those who are yet to come. The beginning of the end of nuclear weapons has arrived! Let us step through the doorway now!



## Pax Christi Scotland The 2020 AGM

We will hold our AGM by **Zoom from 6pm on Tuesday, November 24**. The business part of the meeting first, then two guest speakers will join us from **7pm to 8pm**

We are delighted that two dedicated peace campaigners have accepted our invitation to join our AGM.

- ✚ **Dr Mary Cullen:** *'The Art and Architecture of Peace'*
  - Mary is editor of **Open House** magazine
- ✚ **Sr Katrina Alton CSJP:** *'There Comes A Time To Cross The Line'*
  - Sr Katrina is a peace activist based in Nottingham focusing on the arms trade and nuclear disarmament.

Here are the details of our meeting. If you click on the link below (or copy & paste into your browser), you will then receive a link to the meeting itself.

You are invited to a Zoom meeting.  
When: Nov 24, 2020 18:00 London time

**Register in advance for this meeting:**  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84451200000>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

Minutes and a financial report will be circulated ahead of the meeting. Little did we think last November at our inaugural meeting that we would be holding the next AGM by Zoom. On the bright side, it does mean that the furthest flung members can get together without harming our common home (and you can have a cuppa to hand at all times!). See you there!

## Working with partners to achieve a world of peace

Our webinar commemorating **The International Day of Non-Violence** on 2<sup>nd</sup> October was well received. We heard from Linda Pearsom, the peace activist who campaigns with Don't Bank on the Bomb, talking about divesting from pension funds and banks with financial interests in the manufacture of nuclear weapons; from Marian Pallister, Pax Christi Scotland chair and writer, who seeks to encourage nonviolent language in all spheres of our lives; and Anne Maguire, who has worked for many years in the field of domestic violence. These are partnerships we feel privileged to go on developing.

At our AGM on November 24, we will hear from two women whose activism continues to influence peace in many areas of life [see left].

In 2021 we will expand our partnerships to bring you a wide range of speakers involved in seeking a nonviolent society. We look forward to sharing online time with you all.

### Membership fees

Membership of Pax Christi Scotland is £10 per annum, £5 for unwaged.

Our year runs November 1-October 31.

Most members paid in the early part of our current year & so fees are due this month. For those who have joined August 2019, your membership will run until November 2021.

If you can pay online, (and by standing order), it makes things so much easier, especially in the current situation. Use your surname and initial as reference. If you prefer to pay by cheque, post to the address in the box below.

Bank details:

A/C name – Pax Christi Scotland

A/C number – 20416030

Sort Code – 608301

**Thank you for your support.**

### Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

<https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland> (Facebook)

[www.paxchristiscotland.org](http://www.paxchristiscotland.org) (Website – please spread the word & share the membership form)

[@PaxScotland](https://twitter.com/PaxScotland) (Twitter)

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