

Nordic Peace Alliance 11th August 2024 Strandnäs skola, Åland

Workshop

Joint Actions on Nuclear Arms in the Nordic Countries

Moderator Liss Schanke: In her talk yesterday Bitte Vatvedt asked about follow-up actions. Today we will suggest some.

What can we do?

1. Information campaigns
2. Political actions: Making our governments support and sign the Treaty for Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, TPNW.
Work for ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons)
Make Cities join ICAN Cities Appeal to make the municipalities demand the governments sign TPNW –
If not possible, promote joining Mayors for Peace
Promote Nordic Nuclear free zone
3. Financial actions

We will have a discussion on these things.

1. Information campaign

First: Palle Bendsen and Allan Mygind Vokstrup Denmark on why we are afraid of Nuclear weapons/nuclear war and the consequences of the use of nuclear arms and the consequences of nuclear winter.

Palle: We should be afraid of nuclear weapons and prohibit them

Allan: Why is it so difficult to make use of the media to inform? It is part of the military industrial complex, MIC. We must not forget that. They are very bias. We hear for instance that Ukraine will win against Russia. This in spite of the fact that nuclear weapons could come to use. Also, public service do not inform about the consequences of use of nuclear weapons. In these days there is war propaganda by media in Denmark.

Palle: Obviously, we should be afraid, and I will talk about the consequences. From the authorities we get the pamphlet "If the War Comes". There is no writing of the consequences of nuclear war. The knowledge and thinking of it is lacking.

In US in the -80-ies there was a campaign "Duck and Cover" with a completely unrealistic idea of seeking shelter behind tables and such. This despite the fact that the use of the bomb on Hiroshima on the 6th of August 1945 was small (15 kiloton trotyl explosion power, less than the tactical bombs to-day) 70 000 humans were killed immediately in Hiroshima. In that city and Nagasaki 200 000 were killed within the year. One bomb detonating over a large city would kill 100 000 to 1 million people. There would be a strong wind resulting in fire blast and radioactivity spread with the wind. Everything would be vaporized and buildings flattened to the ground. You cannot breathe and if you survive you get hearing impaired.

There would be people who did not die but would get fractures and burns. Imagine the need for hospitals when also these are destroyed, as well as physicians and nurses – and roads, infrastructure everything! In emergency shelters underground there would be lack of oxygen. In the eighties physicians against nuclear weapons informed about nuclear winter which means that in case of nuclear exchange over large cities fire storms would result in soot in such a large quantity that it would rise to 15 kilometers' altitude and in a few weeks spread across the globe and cover the sunlight which would result in no growth and famine. Some years ago there were simulations made which showed that even a regional nuclear exchange between India and Pakistan would result in the death of up to two billion people starving to death within two years. People today are not aware of this. In the eighties there were information about nuclear winter, but today the respect of nuclear weapons seems gone. Knowledge must be spread.

Daniel Ellsberg, a former nuclear war planner and later whistleblower, writes in “The Doomsday Machine” that he was shocked when he realized that 600 million people would die immediately.

Today we hear that we will “be protected by the nuclear umbrella”. It is madness. There are missiles on alert. The strategy is “launch on warning”. When the missile is still in the air the warning comes from a satellite, and the strike will occur within minutes. The response has to be decided: Does the sign in the computer screen mean a real attack, or is it a mistake? Mistakes and accidents with nuclear bombs have happened several times. The decision whether retaliate or not has to be taken within minutes. This makes it very dangerous. It can be followed in the film “Dr Strangelove”. Physicists against nuclear weapons have made maps of simulations of bombs being detonated on different cities to show how far the effects reach.

<https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ican/pages/2544/attachments/original/1644334250/NoPlacetoHide-ICAN-Report-Feb2022-web.pdf?1644334250>

<https://www.legermotatomvapen.no/media/files/norskelegermotatomvapeningenhjelpafatrykkfil230810compressed.pdf>

We cannot protect us against nuclear weapons in other ways than eliminating them. Disarmament. There is now a chance of that. In 2017 the UN voted on a convention to prohibit nuclear weapons: The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, TPNW. 122 countries voted in favour of it, and in January 2021 it was in force. None of the nuclear states voted and no one of the Nato states. Now what we have to do is to make our governments sign the treaty and deliver it to the parliaments for ratification.

Allan: *Strategy of deterrence* is behind the nuclear umbrella which is asserted to protect us, which in reality makes us a target. In the war in Ukraine red lines are crossed daily. In Denmark there is complete silence regarding the threat of nuclear weapons. **What can we do?** The answer is to work for prohibition and disarmament.

Laura: I remember the fright among the children in the eighties. Some thought that they would not be growing old because of nuclear war. Then the fear faded away. Strong fear

without hope leads to passivity. There is a balance so we have to inform to give hope and action as well as information. Karin: In those days (as well) I was a member of physicians against nuclear weapons. We informed about nuclear weapons and discussed and paid attention to children's fear. Since many people worked for peace and against nuclear weapons showing this to the children we thought and hoped that they would feel less scared. I do think it helped. There was evidence of that

Elviira: I want the maps of simulation over cities.

Films mentioned: Stanley Kubrick's "Dr Strangelove", Peter Anthony's "The Man who Saved the World" about Stanislav Petrov. A film which made a great impression was "The Day After". Another one is "the War Game" by Peter Watkins for the BBC in 1966. It caused panic and was withdrawn (read Wikipedia). About the treaty TPNW and the ICAN work: www.icanw.org. See also www.slmk.org (Sweden), <https://www.icannorway.no/> (Norway), www.atomvaabenforbud.nu (Denmark)

Bitte: The situation is totally different from the eighties since the media is part of MIC and does not inform in an impartial way. Stoltenberg says that Nato countries are not allowed to sign and ratify TPNW (!).

Karin: US made Sweden not sign although having voted for the treaty in 2017. The Swedish foreign minister Margot Wallström eventually resigned, and the treaty is not signed. The coming application to Nato was there in the background already in those years. The Swedish government listened to US – and followed.

Gunilla: Artistic work opens up feelings. We need to address young people. Don't bomb people with facts.

Einar: I think it is a dangerous idea to say that media is part of the military complex. We have freedom of press, and there is a variety of media sources. The right wing is very good at spreading ideas, because they are on social media like TikTok. We have to fight both in the media and use alternative media sources. We must spread information, scary information, but combine it with the hope that we can prevent this. There are sensible people all over the world who supports the TPNW.

Liss: The environmental movement has managed to combine showing the problems and the solutions, we should learn from them.

Karin: The Swedish physicians against nuclear weapons: slmk.org have educational material <https://slmk.org/om-karnvapen/lar-om-karnvapen/> See their material especially for work in schools:

https://slmk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ICANUtbildningsmaterial_komprimerad.pdf

2. Political Actions

Liss: Now our task is to make our governments sign the TPNW. Of course it is not illegal to sign it. It is a UN convention. Norwegian lawyers have made a report saying there is no legal grounds not to sign it.

https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/icannorway/pages/149/attachments/original/1578701759/The_TPNW_and_its_implications_for_Norway_2018.pdf?1578701759. We can press the political parties. Ask parliamentarians: “What have you been doing?” and “What could be done?” There have been state party meetings twice and the third one will be in 2025. These meetings are among the countries that have signed the treaty. Sweden was observer the first year and Norway this year.

Karin: These meetings lead up to activities among the states that have signed also making it easier to the nuclear states to disarm and join the treaty before that is done. This is something to keep track on. ICAN send out letters of information continually. You may join: www.icanw.org.

Liss: There is an organization *Parliamentarians for TPNW* <https://pledge.icanw.org/> From the website: “**Parliamentarians** Legislators are in key position to promote the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in every country, pushing for its signature and ratification or promoting it abroad. Over 1 600 officials all around the world have committed to do so through the ICAN. Has your elected official taken the pledge?” Since 2022 parliamentarians from 14 countries have joined. Most of them are from countries that have not signed. We can inform about this organization to our parliamentarians.

Next level we can work on is the municipality level *Cities Appeal* within ICAN icanw.org/cities. In Norway there are 87 municipalities out of 347 having joined to write to the government to sign TPNW and put to parliaments to ratify it. All the bigger cities, Oslo, Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim, Kristiansand, Tromsø... have joined. It means that more than half the population is covered.

Sweden has a problem in that the constitution gives exclusive right regarding security and foreign politics to the state. Karin: Several municipalities in Sweden have tried to make the cities join, or people are working for it. In Gothenburg the municipal council voted for Cities Appeal, but the decision has been overruled.

To work through Mayors for Peace www.mayorsforpeace.org may be seen as a Plan B. The mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have major roles in the organization. According to their homesite there are 8 410 member cities in 166 counties and regions.

Last year at Nordic Peace Alliance meeting in Helsingør there was consensus on an **appeal for a nuclear-weapon-free Nordic region** (attachment) and copies were sent to the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Discussion

Allan: TPNW is a political choice and we can work for the politicians to sign (government) and ratify (parliament). It is a UN treaty. United Nations Association in Denmark is working for the Danish government to sign. In Sweden that is not so. Some of the associations have tried to influence the FN-förbundet (the national UN association) to make the government change their no-position.

Bitte: We have to remember that Mayors for peace do not represent the board or the community. This is a difference from ICAN Cities appeal. The bases that are shared between our countries and US in bilateral agreements (DCA) will be targets for aggression. This needs to be pointed out. They make us vulnerable – not safer as our governments (and media) proclaim.

Karin: In Sweden we have a section within former Campaign for a referendum on DCA (now changing names to For peace – tear up the DCA or something like that. Decision will be made on the 18th of August). The section is about actions and national cooperation regarding the DCA-bases. (Attachment Call for action on DCA bases).

Kristina: How to be more effective in following up what we wrote to the Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers in 2023?

Laura: We have not so far been successful regarding security. The governments within Nato claim that TPNW is a threat to NPT, the non-proliferation treaty, which is not at all true. It is a complement. Support Cities appeal and TPNW, and when we have not succeeded we try from a new angle, at a lower level. We try a backdoor. We in the Finnish Peace Institute (www.peace.ax) work on a white book on security. The nuclear arms are banned in international law.

There are ICAN zoom meetings during one hour every Sunday. It is possible to register to attend these.

Einar: “Ban the Bomb” (see below) is a good slogan campaign to young people. We need mass campaigns directed to young people, like musical festivals. We can reach out to youth organizations, including those of political parties, and raise the issue in elections, try to make parties support the ban not support any government that will not sign the treaty.

Aslak: We could make a collective signature campaign for Nordic countries as a nuclear weapons free zone, like the Stockholm Appeal.

Eva: In pages 5-6 in the booklet *No to Nato and nuclear weapons on Swedish soil* (attachment, Swedish language) I wrote about the Stockholm appeal which in 1950 led to the decision no nuclear weapons in Sweden. The appeal collected more than 500 million signatures globally: “We demand unconditional prohibition against nuclear weapons...”. In Sweden there were 330 000 signatures, Japan 6,4 million, Italy 17 million, France 14, US 3, and Finland almost 1 million!

4. Financial actions

Allan gives a speech on this telling a lot of numbers. Here are some: Last year the global total expenditure on nuclear weapons was 91,4 billion US dollars, equivalent to \$2,898 a second. There is an increase every year according to ICAN [report on global nuclear weapons spending](#). The 9 nuclear-armed states spent *more* than 10 million dollars on nuclear arms in 2023 compared to the year before.

Don't bank on the bomb is an action within the network ICAN and there is a new report 2023, www.dontbankonthebomb.com. You can go to www.icanw.org and regularly get updates how to stop the madness by working for divestment. “Untenable Investments” - the

latest report in the Don't Bank on the Bomb series - provides an overview of investments in 24 companies in 2023 heavily involved in the production of nuclear weapons.

(https://www.dontbankonthebomb.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/PAX_Rapport_DBotB_Untenable-Investments_HERDRUK_JUN24_FINAL_digi_spread.pdf.) Pension funds invest in nuclear weapons, and you can make them stop. Ask your bank about their policies regarding investments in nuclear weapons. The same applies to insurance companies and other financial institutions. In Norway the oil fund invests in nuclear weapons. Join or start a working group and contact companies. A lot of work has been done successfully by ICAN-members to stop investment in nuclear weapons by several investors. There is dual use in products used for nuclear arms and other things. Still, it has to be stopped.

91,4 billion a year could pay for wind power for more than twelve million homes to help combat climate change, or cover 27% of the funding gap to fight climate change, protect biodiversity and cut pollution. ICAN is calling for a global week of action from September 16 to 22, 2024.

Liss summed the workshop up and we got **two working groups:**

One on nuclear weapons: Palle, Elviira, Einar and Liss. From Sweden Eva or Karin.

Another one on the bases: Karin and Bitte who decided to keep in contact by mail and try to involve Tove Jensen from Denmark and someone from Finland. More people are needed.

There is already a working group on Nato.

Attachments: 1. Appeal nuclear-weapon-free Nordic region. 2. Upprop 17 basområden. Call network bases Sweden. 3. Temanummer om kärnvapen. No to Nato Sweden. 4. Myter om kärnvapen

Karin Utas Carlsson och Aslak Storaker