



UNODA

UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR DISARMAMENT AFFAIRS

Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons are the most dangerous weapons on earth. One can destroy a whole city, potentially killing millions, and jeopardizing the natural environment and lives of future generations through its long-term catastrophic effects. The dangers from such weapons arise from their very existence. Although nuclear weapons have only been used twice in warfare—in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945—about 22,000 reportedly remain in our world today and there have been over 2,000 nuclear tests conducted to date. Disarmament is the best protection against such dangers, but achieving this goal has been a tremendously difficult challenge.

The United Nations has sought to eliminate such weapons ever since its establishment. The first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1946 established a Commission to deal with problems related to the discovery of atomic energy among others. The Commission was to make proposals for, *inter alia*, the control of atomic energy to the extent necessary to ensure its use only for peaceful purposes. The resolution also decided that the Commission should make proposals for “the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.”

A number of multilateral treaties have since been established with the aim of preventing nuclear proliferation and testing, while promoting progress in nuclear disarmament. These include the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests In The Atmosphere, In Outer Space And Under Water, also known as the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT), and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was signed in 1996 but has yet to enter into force.

Related Links

[UN Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons](#)

[International Atomic Energy Agency](#)

[Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization \(CTBTO\)](#)

[Hibakusha – Atomic Bomb Survivors](#)



A number of bilateral and plurilateral treaties and arrangements seek to reduce or eliminate certain categories of nuclear weapons, to prevent the proliferation of such weapons and their delivery vehicles. These range from several treaties between the United States of America and Russian Federation as well as various other initiatives, to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the

International Day Against Nuclear Tests

Report of the Secretary General on the Follow-up to the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament

Missile Technology Control Regime, the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, and the Wassenaar Arrangement.

Weapons of Mass Destruction...

Nuclear

Biological

Chemical

Missiles

Resolution 1540

Counter-Terrorism Strategy

CBW Use Investigations

Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring WMD

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty...

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty...

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones

Repository of Information Provided by Nuclear-Weapon States

The Secretary-General's Five Point Proposal on Nuclear Disarmament

Export Controls