

WAMM CAMPAIGN TO BAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Call to Action written by Marie Braun of the WAMM End War Committee

On August 6, 1945, an American B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay, took off from Tinian Island with a 12-member crew. It was carrying one of the most destructive weapons the world had ever known, an atomic bomb that, when unleashed over Hiroshima, Japan, immediately killed 60,000 – 140,000 people and injured 100,000 more. Three days later, the U.S. dropped a second bomb on Nagasaki; again the immediate aftermath was a nightmare. Thus began the nuclear arms race, and for seven decades the world community has lived under the threat of nuclear annihilation.

People the world over have campaigned vigorously to abolish nuclear weapons, but to no avail. However, on December 23, 2016, in a historic vote, 123 nations stood up to the world's superpowers at the United Nations and voted to convene a meeting in the spring of 2017 to negotiate a legally binding treaty to ban these weapons. While the nuclear nations are not among the nations who voted in favor of a conference, the hope is that a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons will strengthen the global norm against their use and possession and will establish a powerful new international legal standard, stigmatizing nuclear weapons and compelling nations to take action on disarmament.

Nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction not yet prohibited under international law, despite their imminent danger and their inhumane and indiscriminate nature. There are approximately 15,000 nuclear warheads in the world, held by nine nations—the U.S., Russia, the U.K., France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea (7,100 held by the U.S. and 7,300 by Russia). All nine nuclear weapon states report plans to upgrade and modernize their nuclear arsenals.

Yet according to studies by Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), the use of even a tiny fraction of current arsenals would cause catastrophic climate disruption and a global famine that could kill two billion people. And as climate change progresses, the danger of nuclear war will increase dramatically as nations experience limited food and water resources and try to deal with forced migrations that PSR claims will dwarf the current refugee crisis.

As citizens of this nation, the only nation that has used nuclear weapons on another nation, and the nation that spends more on its nuclear arsenals than all other nations combined, we believe we have a special responsibility to speak out and act to ensure that these weapons are never again used by our government.

The WAMM Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons grew out of this conviction. The short-term goals of the campaign (to be accomplished by August 31, 2017) include getting 5,000 signatures on a petition addressed to the Minnesota Congressional delegation demanding a ban on nuclear weapons, sending 2,000 signed postcards to Senators Klobuchar and Franken asking them to support the ban, and encouraging the mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul, who are members of Mayors for Peace, to issue a statement of support for the ban. We also plan to hold roundtable

discussions on nuclear weapons in at least six churches, and will encourage individuals to organize house parties, write letters to the editor, sign petitions and postcards, and take other creative actions.

These goals are ambitious and we are looking for people willing to get signatures on postcards and the petition, assist in hosting roundtable discussions, visit our elected officials, and participate in other actions. **NOW IS THE TIME TO TAKE ACTION! If you are interested in becoming a part of the WAMM Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons, call the WAMM office at 612-827-5764. Postcards and petitions can be picked up at the WAMM office or mailed to you.**