

# Setsuko Thurlow

SURVIVOR OF HIROSHIMA

1



NUCLEAR WEAPONS #NeverAgain!

“At 8 a.m. on 6 August 1945, the day the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, I was 13 years old, I had just arrived at work, and we were meeting to plan the day. It was wartime. Suddenly there was a strange light and I lost consciousness.

After a while, I woke up in the dark. Silence pervaded everything. I thought I was dying, but then I heard the voices of friends calling for help. Sometimes I still hear them. I also heard some people pulling beams from above me and telling me that they would get me out of there. I couldn't see them because I was completely covered by the rubble. When I came out, I saw that everything was on fire and that many of my female friends had been burned to death.

The soldiers removing the rubble ordered me to leave, and with two friends we joined the line of people who walked slowly and si-

lently towards the mountain. There we found many dead people and many others about to die asking for water. Since we had nothing, we went to the river to wet our clothes and then moistened the lips of the dying. What little we did was not much use, but at least it was a drop of relief before death.

At night, we saw the city of Hiroshima in flames. It looked like a ball of fire. It was heartbreaking.

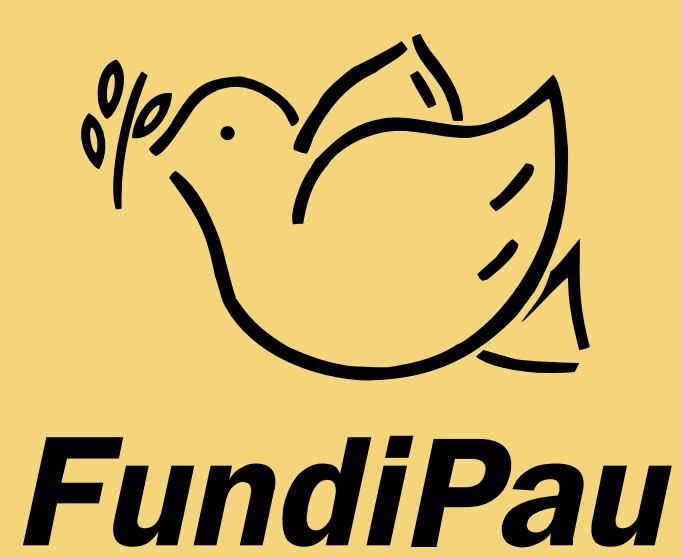
I have devoted my whole life to fighting so that no human being should ever again have to suffer the consequences of a nuclear weapon.

”



PHOTO: Michael Barker / thepeacebuilders.ca

DESIGN: Joan Moret  
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# The devastation



NUCLEAR  
WEAPONS #NeverAgain!

First Hiroshima (6 August) and then Nagasaki (9 August) suddenly revealed the brutality and destructive force of nuclear weapons.

It was 1945, at the end of World War II, and the United States, faced with Japan's refusal to surrender, decided to use a weapon it had just created: the nuclear bomb. In fact, the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs were the first nuclear weapons dropped in a war.

The impact on human lives was terrifying: among those killed directly by the impact of the explosion and those who died in the weeks and months that followed due to radiation, some 214,000 people had lost their lives by the end of 1945.

In the following decades, the number of cancers, chronic diseases, malformations in newborns, etc. increased among the survivors of the nuclear explosions.

The two cities had been substantially destroyed.

## Estimated number of people killed by the end of 1945:

HIROSHIMA

140.000

NAGASAKI

74.000



PHOTO: The aftermath of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. 1945



# What is a nuclear weapon?

3

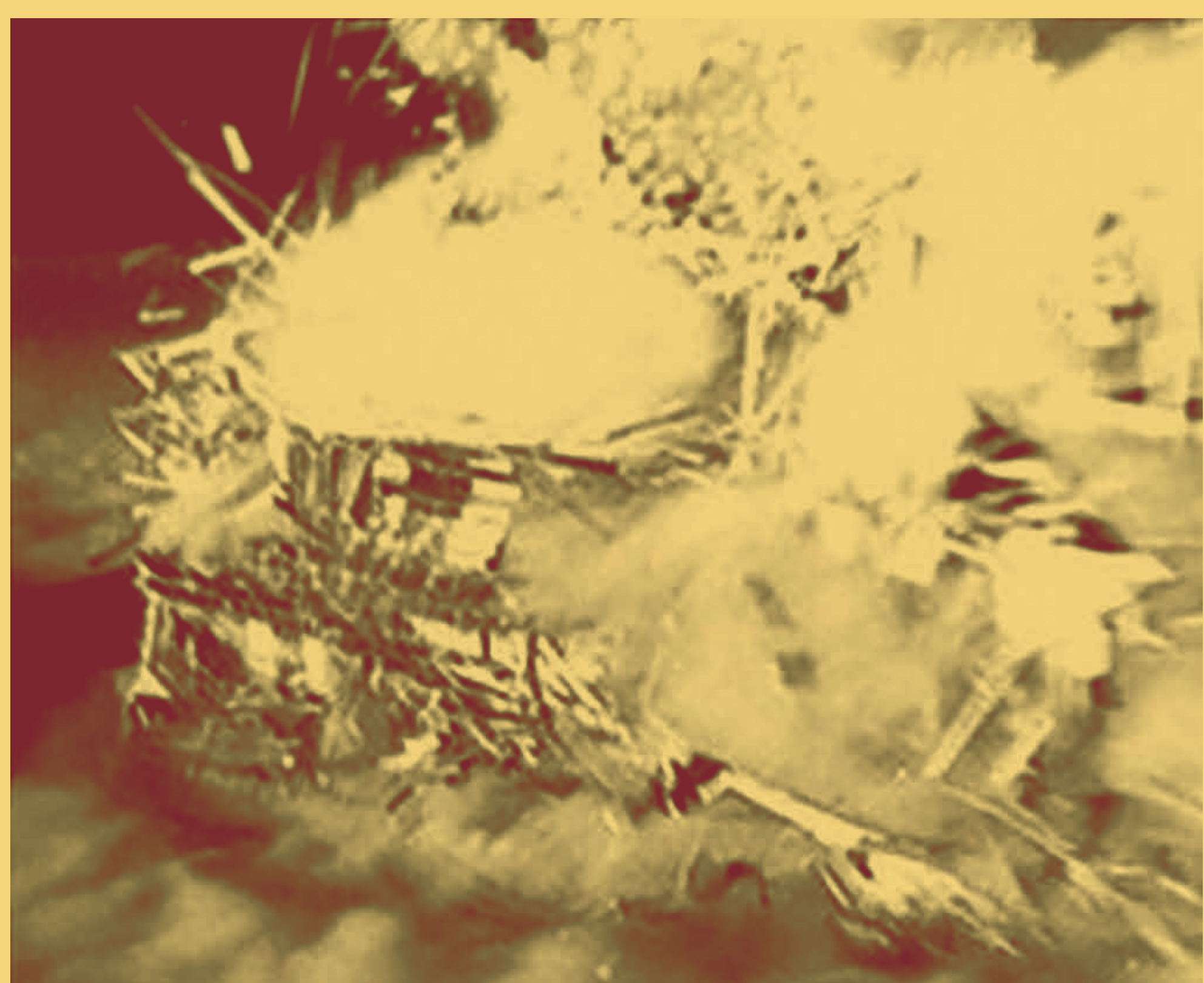
A nuclear weapon produces a large explosion from a nuclear fission or fusion reaction.

Nuclear weapons cause numerous casualties and damage due to the blast wave, the heat and the radiation caused by the explosion. In addition to the immediate effects, we must also consider the impacts that are spread over time and space, as the contamination is transferred to the soil, water and air, causing genetic damage to the survivors and affecting crops, livestock, nature reserves, etc.

Along with chemical and biological weapons, they are known as weapons of mass destruction. In fact, nuclear weapons are the most destructive and indiscriminate weapons ever used.

Nuclear weapons come in many forms, ranging from a small device to bombs dropped from aircraft or missiles fired from points very distant from the target.

Today, a single warhead can release more explosive energy in a fraction of a second than all the weapons used during World War II combined, including the Hiroshima and Nagasaki tests and bombs.



Nuclear test in Nevada in 1953. The time-lapse from the first image to the last is two seconds.

PHOTO: US Government





PHOTO: US nuclear test at Bikini Atoll in Micronesia on 25 July 1946.

Testing and more testing

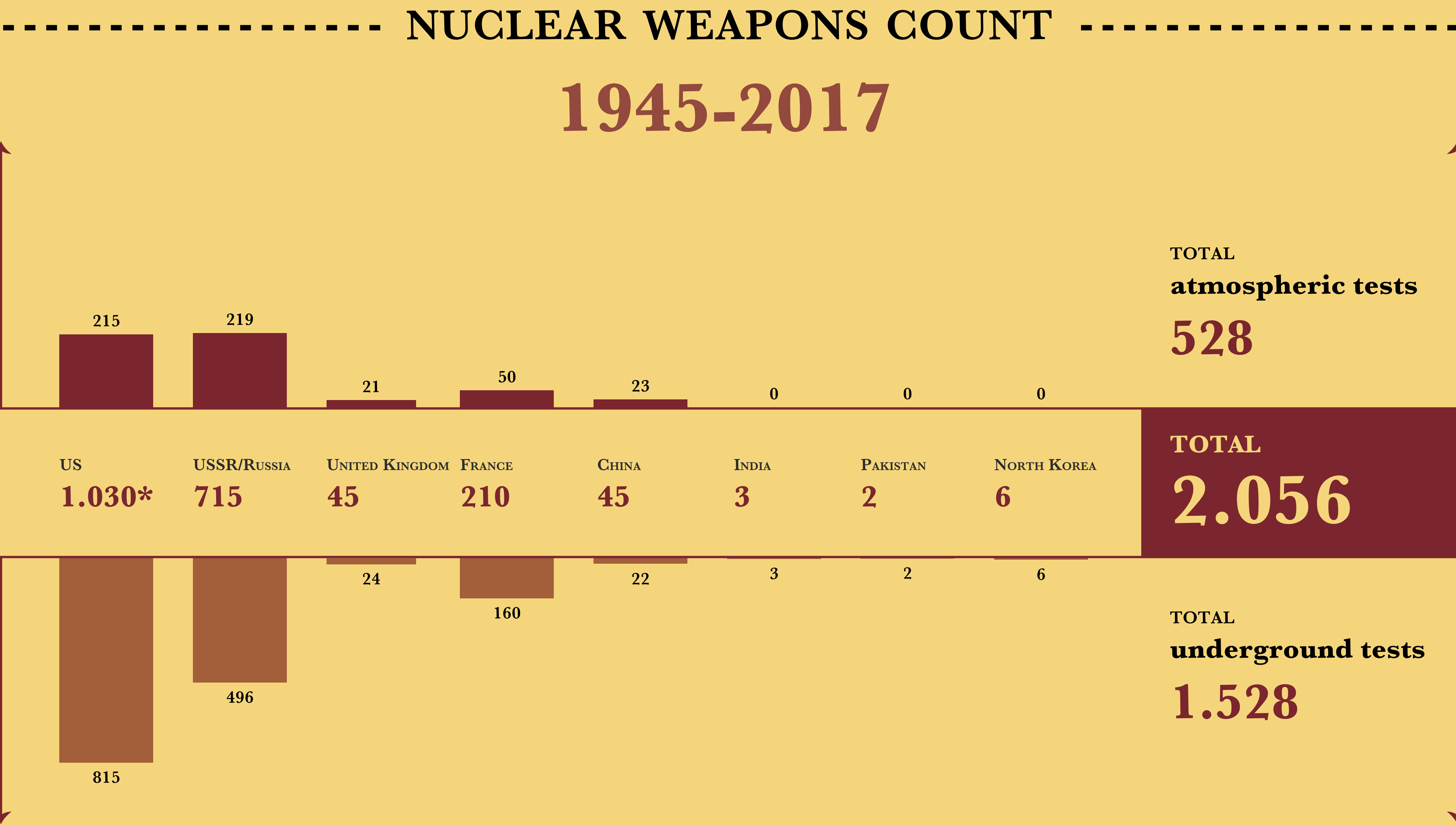
But we know the impact of nuclear weapons, not only from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We also know it from the multitude of nuclear weapons tests that have been carried out around the world over the past seventy years.

The various nuclear powers have carried out all kinds of tests: exploding bombs in a desert, underground, on an island, under the sea, in the air, and so on. These tests have had serious environmental, social and human impacts.

In the Marshall Islands archipelago in the Pacific, the

United States detonated some seventy nuclear bombs between 1946 and 1958. As a result, some islands disappeared, some people died, and the number of cancers skyrocketed. Several studies have found that radiation levels in the Marshall Islands were higher than those in Chernobyl or Fukushima.

The IPPNW (International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War) estimated that 2.4 million people would die from cancers related to atmospheric testing between 1945 and 1980.



\*US total does not include Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs.

----- Source: Arms Control Association -----



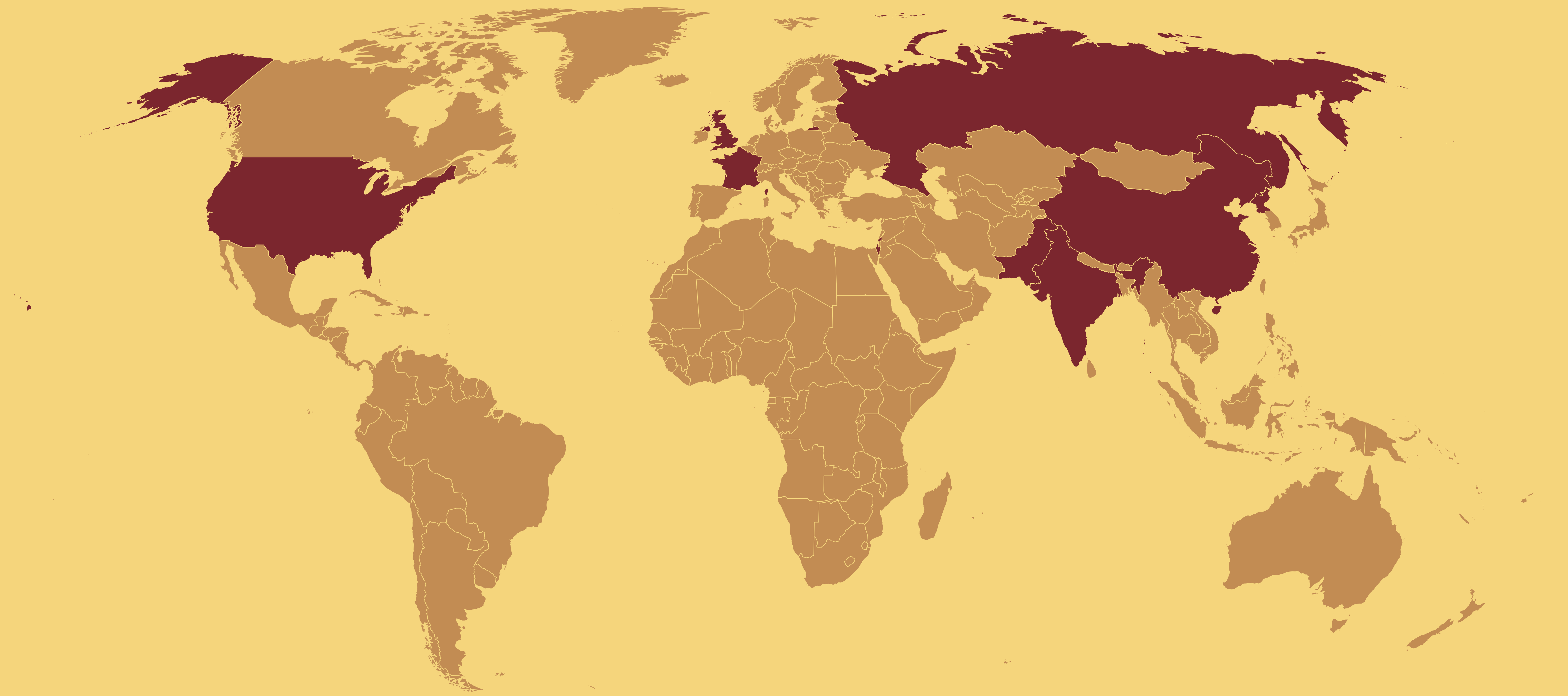


When we talk about nuclear weapons, many people think we are referring to the past, to a sad chapter in the history of the 20th century. But this is not the case.

Despite the various disarmament agreements signed since the end of the Cold War between the United States and Russia, we are still cohabiting with many nuclear weapons. Exactly 12,512.

In addition to the five official nuclear power states recognised in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), there are four countries that have been granted access to nuclear weapons possession.

However, what is most worrying is that most of the nuclear power states have programmes to modernise, redesign and upgrade their weapons. They are not investing in disarmament processes, but in rearmament.



US  
5.244

INDIA  
164

RUSSIA  
5.889

PAKISTAN  
170

UNITED KINGDOM  
225

ISRAEL  
90

FRANCE  
290

NORTH KOREA  
30

CHINA  
410

Source: SIPRI Yearbook 2023





# Unacceptable harm



We have already seen the immense damage that nuclear weapons can cause.

But any medium-sized nuclear weapon today is far more powerful than those of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their destructive power is therefore enormous.

A simple accident (more than thirty have been recorded in recent years) or the temptation to use them by a leader of a nuclear power state, the deflagration of a single nuclear weapon would cause a real disaster in humanitarian, environmental and public health terms.

As the Red Cross has warned, we would not have the capacity to cope—in terms of medical emergency and humanitarian aid—with the brutal impacts of a nuclear weapon detonation.

On the other hand, a limited nuclear war would release



Sumiteru Taniguchi, a victim of the Nagasaki bombing, looks at a photo of himself from 1945.  
PHOTO: Yuriko Nakao

enough ash and dust into the atmosphere to block out sunlight, lower the global temperature of the planet by more than one degree and severely affect crops and pastures.

The effects would last for decades.



In a place hit by a nuclear weapon, it takes decades for nature to begin to recover.  
PHOTO: iStock





PHOTO: Ari Beser / ICAN

# Civil society takes action



Faced with the devastating effects of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, and the danger that more and more countries could become nuclear-armed, the movement for the abolition of nuclear weapons was vigorously launched in the 1960s. Since then, thousands of individuals and groups around the world have joined this effort.

Given the persistence of the threat, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was born in 2007.

In view of the inoperability of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the ICAN (which brings together NGOs from around 100 countries) works to abolish nuclear weapons through a banning treaty. By means of its awareness-raising and mobilisation activities, as well as with the help of the Red Cross and some governments, it has succeeded in involving individuals and groups all over the world —scientists, parliamentarians, mayors, religious leaders, actors— thus consolidating a groundswell of public opposition to nuclear weapons.

And finally, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is now a reality!

## NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 2017



The ICAN was recognised “for its efforts to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its groundbreaking efforts to achieve a ban treaty on these weapons”.

The campaign is currently working to get all countries to join the Treaty.



PHOTO: Jo Straube / ICAN



On 7 July 2017, the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons** (TPNW) was adopted at the United Nations on a historic day. After the necessary fifty ratifications, it entered into force in January 2021.

Until now, nuclear weapons were the only weapons of

mass destruction that had not yet been banned. Their effects cross borders and threaten the survival of humanity and the entire planet. They are immoral, illegitimate and now, finally, illegal.

## ----- What does the TPNW ban? -----

Developing, testing, producing, transferring, possessing, stockpiling, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons.

Having nuclear weapons deployed in the territory.

Assisting or encouraging other countries to engage in any of these activities.

## ----- What does the TPNW commit to? -----

**For nuclear-weapon states:** to destroy their nuclear weapon stockpiles in accordance with a legally binding plan and a set schedule.

**For countries hosting nuclear weapons of an allied country on their territory:** to eliminate them within a specified timeframe.

To provide assistance to people who have been affected by nuclear weapons use and testing around the world.

To take action to remediate contaminated environments.



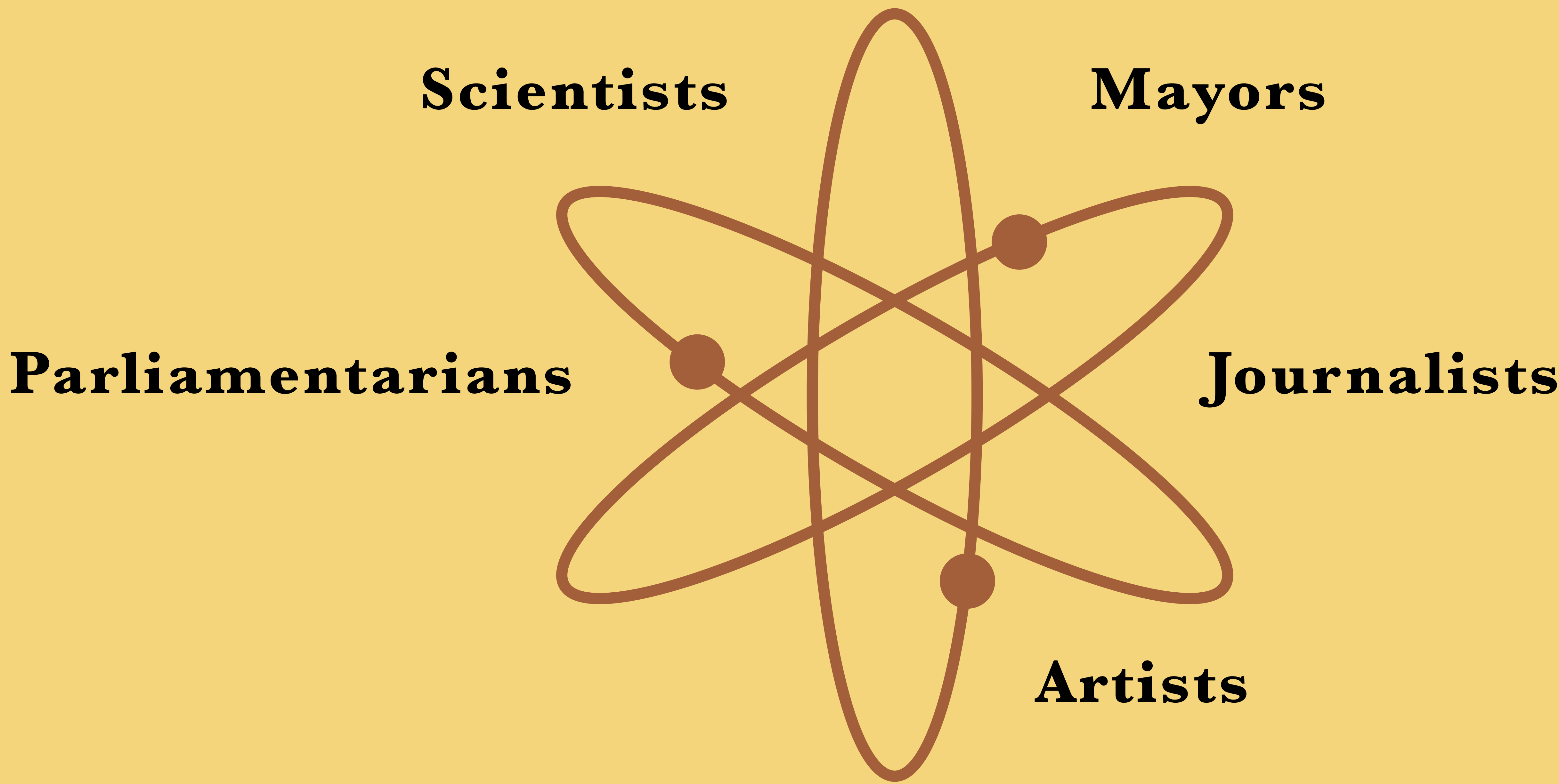




PHOTO: Maria Carme Bernat / FundiPau

**You are the only one missing!**

For the Treaty to be particularly effective, as many countries as possible need to join it, including Spain. Many people, groups and institutions have already got involved:



The more people know about the dangers of nuclear weapons, the more pressure we will be able to exert for their total abolition.

Find out more and spread the message. Enter the websites:  
**icanw.org**  
**desarmenuclear.org**  
**fundipau.org/projectes/armes-nuclears**

Get organised and ask your local council to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons:  
**cities.icanw.org**

Organise an event or write an article about the nuclear issue.

Take part in the actions and support the NGOs working for disarmament.

Share this exhibition on your social networks.



**NUCLEAR WEAPONS**  
**#NeverAgain!**