

On Hiroshima-Nagasaki anniversary, new treaty to ban nuclear weapons kindles hope



Participants of the memorial ceremony in Nagasaki, Japan. Photo: Paul Jeffrey /WCC

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On the 72nd anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world can find hope in a new treaty, the text of which has been negotiated and agreed by a large majority of the world's governments, to outlaw nuclear weapons.

In comments reflecting on the anniversary, World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit said, “for the survivors of the atomic bombings in 1945, and for all who seek the complete elimination of nuclear weapons on humanitarian, ethical and moral grounds, the new draft Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons agreed at the United Nations on 7 July 2017 is cause for thanksgiving and a catalyst for renewed resolve.”

“This new development in international law is best understood against the mass destruction of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August 1945 and the suffering and abiding sorrow that ensued,” he said.

On this anniversary the WCC joins survivors of the bombings and the victims of nuclear weapon testing in other parts of the world in welcoming the new treaty, Tveit continued. “We are grateful for every member church united in public witness for nuclear disarmament over many decades, and for all those ecumenical, civil society and UN partners who have contributed to this recent achievement,” he said.

The treaty cites religious leaders among those who raise public conscience for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

“By putting humanity first, the draft treaty is a fitting tribute on the anniversary of a human tragedy unleashed 72 years ago,” said Tveit. “It stands in stark contrast to the nuclear deterrence doctrines and war plans which a handful of powerful governments still follow. As the daily news currently reminds us, those who seek power and security through nuclear weapons are endangering our whole world to this day.”

[WCC news release \(8 July 2017\): Banning nuclear weapons, 122 governments take leadership where nuclear powers have failed](#)

[WCC general secretary visits the Pacific region](#)

[The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons \(ICAN\)](#)