

# **The Elimination of Nuclear Weapons**

**by Jon Atkins**

Four important events aimed at achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons will be held between September and December 2014.

## **(1) International Day for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

On 26 September 2013, the United Nations General Assembly, for the first time ever, held a High Level Meeting dedicated to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Then on 4 November 2013, the UN General Assembly adopted a follow-up action resolution. This resolution (Resolution L.6), introduced by the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), called for the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a nuclear weapons convention.

In addition, Resolution L.6 committed the UN to (a) holding a High Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament in 2018 to review and advance the process and (b) establish 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.<sup>1</sup>

Voting on Resolution L.6 was: Yes-129; No-28; Abstain-19. States voting against the resolution included the US and a number of nuclear armed nations. Shamefully Australia also voted against this resolution.<sup>2</sup>

In a letter dated 6 September 2014, the Marrickville Peace Group wrote to Anthony Albanese MP (Federal Member for Grayndler) informing him about International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons and asking if he supported the aims of the international campaign to ban nuclear weapons. To date, we have not received a reply from him.<sup>3</sup>

## **(2) Global Parliamentary Appeal for a Nuclear Weapons Ban<sup>4</sup>**

A worldwide appeal for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons is currently being sponsored by Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).<sup>5</sup>

This appeal recognises that parliamentarians have an important role to play in advancing peace and security by eliminating nuclear weapons. The appeal notes that parliamentarians have a duty to “promote the safety and well-being” of the people they represent and that a “global ban on nuclear weapons is a humanitarian imperative of the highest order” which is “necessary, feasible and increasingly urgent”.<sup>6</sup>

As of August this year, a total of 547 parliamentarians in 28 different countries around the world, including Australia, have endorsed the PNND appeal. In Australia the appeal has been endorsed by 57 Federal parliamentarians and 45 State and Territory parliamentarians.<sup>7</sup>

The Marrickville Peace Group has urged Anthony Albanese MP to either sign this appeal or publicly indicate his support for its objectives. To date we are not aware that he has given either his endorsement or support for the appeal.

## **(3) Parliamentary Appeal Week – 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

Linked to the Global Parliamentary Appeal for a Nuclear Weapons Ban is ICAN’s promotion of Parliamentary Appeal Week which will run from 10 to 14 November. ICAN is encouraging people, during this five day period especially, to approach their members of parliament and ask them to support a ban on nuclear weapons by signing the Global Parliamentary Appeal.<sup>8</sup>

## **(4) Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons – 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014, Vienna, Austria**

In the last few years, the growing movement around the world to ban nuclear weapons has focussed on the humanitarian consequences and risks associated with nuclear weapons. Two international conferences have specifically addressed this issue. The first was held in Oslo, Norway, in March 2013 and

the second was held in Nayarit, Mexico, in February 2014. The third international conference on this issue will take place at the Hofburg Palace in Vienna, Austria, 8-9 December 2014.

On the occasion of the World Conference Against Atomic & Hydrogen Bombs that was held in Japan in August this year, Dr Heinz Fischer (Federal President of the Republic of Austria) said “Nuclear disasters are a concern to all of us around the globe. It is a shared responsibility of all states to work towards a nuclear weapon free world. The anachronistic discourse of nuclear deterrence should no longer have a place in international security debates. It is the humanitarian dimension that must again be firmly anchored in our thinking and guide international disarmament.”<sup>9</sup>

The Marrickville Peace Group urges the Australian Government to put the security of humanity first by taking a leading role on the international stage to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Date	Event
26 Sep 2014	International Day for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons - <a href="http://www.un.org/en/events/nuclearweaponelimination/">http://www.un.org/en/events/nuclearweaponelimination/</a>
During 2014 and beyond	Global Parliamentary Appeal for a Nuclear Weapons Ban - A worldwide appeal for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons is currently being sponsored by Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND) and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).
10-14 Nov 2014	Parliamentary Appeal Week – Australia wide - Signing up our parliamentary representatives to support a ban on nuclear weapons - <a href="http://www.icanw.org/au/">http://www.icanw.org/au/</a> and <a href="http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ICAN-Parliamentary-Appeal-General.pdf">http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ICAN-Parliamentary-Appeal-General.pdf</a>
8-9 Dec 2014	Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Vienna, Austria - <a href="http://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/european-foreign-policy/disarmament/weapons-of-mass-destruction/nuclear-weapons-and-nuclear-terrorism/vienna-conference-on-the-humanitarian-impact-of-nuclear-weapons/">http://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/european-foreign-policy/disarmament/weapons-of-mass-destruction/nuclear-weapons-and-nuclear-terrorism/vienna-conference-on-the-humanitarian-impact-of-nuclear-weapons/</a>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Basel Peace Office, ‘United Nations General Assembly takes new action for nuclear disarmament!’: <http://www.baselpeaceoffice.org/article/united-nations-general-assembly-takes-new-action-nuclear-disarmament>.

<sup>2</sup> Record of votes relating to Resolution L.6, Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, 11 April 2013: <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com13/votes/L6.pdf>. Nine nations currently possess nuclear arsenals: US, Russia, UK, France, China, Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea. Refer to ICAN for details: <http://www.icanw.org/the-facts/nuclear-arsenals/>

<sup>3</sup> Marrickville Peace Group, Letter to Anthony Albanese MP, 6 September 2014: <https://marrickvillepeacegroup.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/20140906-letter-to-albanese-intdaypeace.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> In March 2014, the Inter Parliamentary Union (comprising 164 member parliaments), adopted a resolution that, among other things, calls on parliaments and parliamentarians to commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Refer to the resolution entitled ‘Towards a Nuclear Weapon Free World: The Contribution of Parliaments’: <http://www.ipu.org/conf-e/130/Res-1.htm>. For additional information on this campaign, refer to Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND): <http://www.pnnd.org/article/world-body-parliaments-calls-negotiations-abolish-nuclear-weapons>.

<sup>5</sup> Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND): <https://www.facebook.com/pnndglobal> and International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN): <http://www.icanw.org/projects/appeal/>. Refer to ICAN, *Catastrophic Humanitarian Harm*, a paper on the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons on our health, societies and the environment: <http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/catastrophicharm2012.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Global Parliamentary Appeal for a Nuclear Weapons Ban form: <http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ICAN-Parliamentary-Appeal-General.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> The names of Australian politicians who have endorsed this appeal can be found at <http://www.icanw.org/projects/appeal/>.

<sup>8</sup> Details of ICAN’s Parliamentary Appeal Week, 10-14 November, around Australia can be found at [www.icanw.org.au](http://www.icanw.org.au)

<sup>9</sup> Message by Dr Heinz Fischer, Federal President of the Republic of Austria, on the occasion of the World Conference Against Atomic & Hydrogen Bombs held in Japan, 2-9 August 2014: [http://www.antiatom.org/english/world\\_conference/pdf/2014/Gov\\_message/Austria-Fischer.pdf](http://www.antiatom.org/english/world_conference/pdf/2014/Gov_message/Austria-Fischer.pdf).

25<sup>th</sup> September 2014