**OPEN LETTER to the President of the French Republic**

**For a referendum on France’s participation**

**in the abolition of nuclear weapons**

From the undersigned to

François Hollande, President of the French Republic,

Palais de l’Elysée, 75008 Paris

Monsieur le Président,

You have been elected as head of the French Republic to carry out, with your government, changes in the direction of liberty, equality and fraternity. Allow us therefore to draw your attention to one change which is sorely needed - one which was not debated during the presidential election campaign, but on which the opinion of all French people needs to be sought, in our view.

For over fifty years France has possessed nuclear weapons. Today there are 300 bombs, each of which is 7 to 22 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb, which caused over 200 000 deaths. This destructive power, of itself and on the decision of one person, could annihilate millions of human beings. And a nuclear war could make the Earth uninhabitable.

This situation seems to us intolerable inasmuch as it flouts human life and Human Rights, International Law, the French Constitution, good sense, and democracy.

**It flouts human life and Human Rights,** because a single atomic bomb would cause “hundreds of thousands of deaths, women, children, old people burned up in a split second, hundreds of thousands more dying in the following years after atrocious suffering. Isn’t that what is called a crime against humanity?” (as Alain Peyrefitte said to President de Gaulle on 4 May 1962).

**It flouts International Law,** which obliges those nuclear-armed states that have signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty, including France, to “pursue in good faith and the bring to conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control,” as the International Court of Justice at the Hague confirmed in its Advisory Opinion of 8 July 1996.

**It flouts the French Constitution,** which gives top priority to Human Rights and imposes a duty of respecting them, and also respecting treaties.

**It defies good sense,** because it is illogical to defend the values of the French Republic (including fraternity) while threatening to commit crimes against humanity; it is illogical to link France’s “vital interests” with the use of fatally suicidal weapons against any country that also possesses them; it is illogical to claim to guarantee our nation’s security with these weapons while forbidding others to obtain them; it is illogical thus to encourage proliferation while claiming to be combatting it; and it is illogical to want to save money while wasting billions on unusable instruments of death.

**It is undemocratic,** because the French people have never been consulted about the creation, maintenance and permanent modernisation of this strike force, which has already cost 300 billion euros. And yet we know now from convergent opinion-polls that at least 80% of French citizens favour the abolition of nuclear weapons, including those of France.

For the above reasons we politely request you to consult the French people without delay, by means of a referendum that would put the following question, the one required by the international agenda of 2012 and 2013: “Do you agree that France should participate with the other states concerned in the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, under mutual international control that is strict and effective?”

Please, Monsieur le Président, offer to France and thereby to all other peoples and states the historic opportunity to abolish nuclear weapons. When we do, we will all emerge greater, in a world that is more free, more just, more fraternal, more peaceful and more secure - a livable world.

Respectfully yours.

-  First name and SURNAME:   
-  Profession and/or position:   
-  NGO (eventually):   
-  Email address:   
-  Postal address:   
-  Code, City, Country:   
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Signature:

Please fill and return a copy to:   
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