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Opposing the official French policy

101 French MPs and Senators want a referendum for France participating in the abolition of nuclear weapons

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The UN General Assembly should convene in 2017 an international conference for the banning and elimination of nuclear weapons. France is against this and is modernising her arsenal. But in opposition to French policy, a hundred parliamentarians have launched an appeal for a referendum on nuclear weapons abolition and France participating in a Ban Treaty. According to an IFOP/ACDN poll last year, 3 out of 4 French would answer Yes to that question.

As at 27 October, 101 parliamentarians have signed this appeal, that is 82 MPs and 19 senators. The complete list is printed below. This appeal came at a time when the UN's Disarmament Commission, meeting in New York, was examining a proposal which many nations wanted to submit in a month's time to the General Assembly: a proposal for an international conference aimed at creating in 2017 a treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons.

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The UN-Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) in plenary session, Geneva,19 August 2016.



Historic vote of OEWG in Geneva, 19 August 2016, recommending a conference for a Ban Treaty in 2017. (Photos ©Jean-Marie Matagne/ACDN)

A REFERENDUM FOR FRANCE PARTICIPATING IN THE ABOLITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS!

Humankind is today threatened in its dignity and its very existence, and ought to be allowed to enjoy a fundamental right: the right to survival, along with its corollary: **the right of peoples to determine their own survival.**

This right implies the abolition of nuclear weapons. They are weapons of mass destruction, massacre weapons, arms for crimes against humanity. They are totally useless for throttling terrorism, yet they borrow the same contempt for human life and multiply it many times. They threaten to annihilate millions of people, entire populations, and humankind itself since a nuclear war would make the Earth uninhabitable.

This power to annihilate is concentrated in the hands of less than a dozen heads of state, who can choose to exercise it at any moment, without trial or appeal, and carry out the sentence themselves within a quarter-hour of their decision. Yet never have the citizens of the nuclear states been consulted (or those of the non-nuclear states) even though they have to finance them and thereby jeopardise their own survival - and the survival of other peoples.

France has possessed these weapons since 1960. She has spent over 300 billion euros on them and continues to develop them. France's 300 bombs could kill about one billion people.

This situation flouts basic Human Rights, since, as Alain Peyrefitte said to President de Gaulle on 4 May 1962, 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?"

It flouts International Law, which obliges those nuclear-armed states that have signed the NPT, including France, "to pursue in good faith and to bring to conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control," (Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, 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, since it is illogical

- to defend the values of the French Republic (including fraternity) while threatening to commit crimes against humanity;
- to link France's "vital interests" with the use of fatally suicidal weapons against any country that also possesses them;
- to claim to guarantee any nation's security with these weapons while forbidding others from obtaining them;
- thus to encourage proliferation while claiming to be combatting it;
- and to impose budgetary restraints while wasting billions on instruments of death which are unusable against other nuclear powers, incapable of deterring terrorists, and would be fearsome in terrorists' hands if they obtain some.

It is undemocratic, since the French people have never been consulted about it, yet we know from a recent poll that around 75% of French citizens would answer YES to this question :

"Do you want France to negotiate and ratify with all the other states concerned a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective?"

Similarly, three quarters of citizens want to be consulted by referendum on this question and are ready to support a bill originating in parliament to organise the referendum.

Thus the French people can open the path to a world without nuclear weapons. We call on all French parliamentarians to give them the opportunity to do so, and we call on all French voters to support this initiative at the appropriate time by electronic means.

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Deliverance from the atomic « sword of Damocles » hanging over us will bring reinforcement both to our security and to our freedom, in full respect of Human Rights and of the French Republic's motto : liberty, equality, fraternity.

Parliamentarian signatories as of 27 October 2016:
101 Parliamentarians, including 82 MPs and 19 Senators

Laurence ABEILLE (94), Patrick ABATE (S.57)*, Brigitte ALLAIN (24), Sylviane ALAUX (64), Pouria AMIRSHAHI (HhdF9°C)**, Isabelle ATTARD (14), Danielle AUROI (63), Pierre AYLAGAS (65), Serge BARDY (49), Huguette BELLO (974), Esther BENBASSA (S.94), Michel BILLOUT (S.77), Marie-Christine BLANDIN (S.59), Michèle BONNETON (38), Corinne BOUCHOUX (S.49), Christophe BOUILLON (76), Kheïra BOUZIANE-LAROUSSI (21), Jean-Pierre BOSINO (S.60), Sylviane BULTEAU (85), Sabine BUIS (07), Jean-Jacques CANDELIER (59), Fanélie CARREY-CONTE (75), Patrice CARVALHO (60), Nathalie CHABANNE (64), Gaby CHARROUX (13), André CHASSAIGNE (63), Jean-Michel CLEMENT (86), Laurence COHEN (S.94), Sergio CORONADO (HhdF3°C)**, Jean-Jacques COTTEL (62), Pascale CROZON (69), Cécile CUKIERMAN (S.42), Yves DANIEL (44), Marc DOLEZ (59), Ronan DANTEC (S.44), Annie DAVID (S.38), Florence DELAUNAY (40), Michelle DEMESSINE (S.59), Jean DESESSARD (S.75), Evelyne DIDIER (S.54), Fanny DOMBRE COSTE (34), Françoise DUBOIS (72), Cécile DUFLOT (75), William DUMAS (30), Jean-Louis DUMONT (55), Marie-Hélène FABRE (11), Martine FAURE (33), Hervé FERON (54), Thierry FOUCAUD (S.76), Hugues FOURAGE (85), Jacqueline FRAYSSE (92), Geneviève GAILLARD (79), André GATTOLIN (S.92), Renaud GAUQUELIN (69), Jean-Patrick GILLE (37), Joël GIRAUD (05), Brigitte GONTHIER-MAURIN (S.92), Linda GOURJADE (81), Jean GRELLIER (79), Edith GUEUGNEAU (71), Chantal GUITTET (29), Chaynesse KHIROUNI (54), Jacques KRABAL (02), Bernadette LACLAIS (73), Conchita LACUEY (33), François-Michel LAMBERT (13), Jérôme LAMBERT (16), Pierre LAURENT (S.75), Anne-Yvonne LE DAIN (34), Annick LE LOCH (29), Marie-Thérèse LE ROY (29), Michel LE SCOUARNEC (S.56), Bernard LESTERLIN (03), Serge LETCHIMY (972), Noël MAMERE (33), Jacqueline MAQUET (62), Marie-Lou MARCEL (12), Jean-René MARSAC (35), Véronique MASSONNEAU (86), Kléber MESQUIDA (34), Paul MOLAC (56), Philippe NOGUES (56), Dominique ORLIAC (46), Hervé PELLOIS (56), Philippe PLISSON (33), Elisabeth POCHON (93), Christophe PREMAT (FhdF2°C)**, Christine PRUNAUD (S.22), Catherine QUERE (17), Marie-Line REYNAUD (16), Marcel ROGEMONT (35), Barbara ROMAGNAN (25), Jean-Louis ROUMEGAS (34), Maina SAGE (987), Nicolas SANSU (18), Eva SAS (91), Gabriel SERVILLE (973), Jonas TAHUAITAI (987), Suzanne TALLARD (17), Catherine TROALLIC (76), Cécile UNTERMAIER (71).

* S = Senator
** Fla = French living abroad

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INTERNATIONAL SUPPORTERS of this Appeal

Noam Chomsky, retired professor, MIT
Bill Kidd, Glasgow's MP at the Scottish Parliament, Copresident of PNND
Yehuda Ataï & Gideon Spiro, Cofounders, Israeli Committee for a Middle East wtihout Weapons of Mass Destruction
David Krieger, Founder President, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation
Alice Slater, Cofounder, Abolition 2000 Network
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Tim Wright, ICAN Australia
Aaron Tovish, Vision 2020 campaigner, Mayors for Peace
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Richard Lennane, Wildfire Inflammatory Officer, Wildfire Organisation
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Kathy Wan Povi Sanchez, Tewa Women United, NM USA
Steven Starr, Senior Scientist, Physicians for Social Responsibility
Mikael Böök, Editor, Finland
Junko Abe, Ikata People Against Mox (Japon)
Daniel Gingras, Pierre Jasmin, Les Artistes pour la Paix (Canada)
Selma van Costard, Programme Officer Humanitarian Disarmament, PAX

Support to this Appeal is welcome from abroad

To give your support, please fulfill the form below, copy it and send it to contact@acdn.net
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First Name:
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I sign and support publicly this Appeal. I send it to ACDN-France at: contact@acdn.net

Date:
Place:
Signature :

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The Bill

A referendum, if it is proposed by 20% of parliamentarians and then gathers by electronic means the support of 10% of registered voters, will be organised expeditiously, over the whole of French territory, on the following question: "Do you want France to negotiate and ratify with all the other states concerned a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective?"

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The Referendum "by shared initiative" and the Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons

France's constitutional reform of 2008 opened the possibility of organizing a referendum on the initiative of 20% of parliamentarians provided that this initiative, once validated by the Constitutional Council, receives the support of 10% of registered voters. The gathering of citizens' support is done by electronic means on the site of the Ministry of the Interior, and each voter can give it directly by providing a few simple and verifiable proofs of identity, or else through the civic officials specially empowered to receive such indications of support. This process begins when the bill is published in the Journal Officiel, and it can take 9 months.

However, this gathering of support cannot take place in the 6 months before general elections such as the presidential and legislative elections of 2017. It could begin on 1 August 2017, if the bill receives the signatures of 185 MPs and senators out of 925 before the end of the current term. Voters wishing to support it must therefore, as of now, invite MPs and senators to sign it as soon as possible. The new Parliament after June 2017 will have to examine it once the second precondition has been fulfilled. If it fails to do so within 6 months, the President of the Republic will be obliged to organize the referendum.

This initiative, originating with Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire (ACDN), is brought forward by the group Parlementaires pour l'Abolition des Armes Nucléaires. It forms part of a worldwide movement of governments and civil society for the abolition of nuclear weapons - a movement which is on the point of persuading the UN General Assembly to convene an international conference in 2017 tasked with creating a Treaty to Ban Nuclear Weapons. That matter has been proposed in Resolution L41 which is being debated this week in New York within the Disarmament Committee of the UN General Assembly. France has already made it known that she doesn't want to take part in such a conference and will continue to modernize her nuclear weapons, despite her commitment, in the NPT (which she ratified in 1992) to negotiate their elimination. This stance of the French government explains the need for this referendum.

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