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**At two minutes to Doomsday,
the French parliament is
seized with a Bill proposing a
referendum to abolish nuclear
and radioactive weapons**

Publication date: Friday 19 April 2019

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Reedition. First edition on 25 January 2019.

On 23 January 2019 in Chicago, the atomic scientists in charge of the "Doomsday Clock" decided to keep the minute hand of this big symbolic clock in the same place as they put it in January 2018: at two minutes away from the nuclear catastrophe that threatens to annihilate humanity - as close as it ever was since 1953 and the Korean War.

On the same day in Paris, at the National Assembly, the MP Jean-Paul Lecoq and Jean-Marie Matagne, the president of Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire (ACDN), together presented a press conference on a new Bill to set up a referendum drafted under article 11, clause 3, of the Constitution, on France's participation in the abolition of nuclear and radioactive weapons.



Photo: Simon Desmarest

The "shared initiative" referendum, created by the constitutional reform of 2008, requires initiative by parliamentarians and by citizens. First there must be the signatures of 20% of the Parliament (185 MPs and senators out of 925), and then the support of 10% of registered voters (about 4.5 million).



Photo : Simon Desmarest

This path was never attempted until January 2016, when 12 MPs, on the instigation of ACDN, called on their

colleagues to sign a referendum bill about France's participation in a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear weapons. That negotiation, which we were hoping to see after the UN, in October 2015, created a special Open Ended Working Group (open to NGOs), was effectively decided by the General Assembly on [27 October 2016](#).

In April 2017, 126 French parliamentarians - two-thirds of the required number - had signed that bill, when the legislative elections profoundly changed the makeup of Parliament and put the counter back to zero. Once again, ACDN approached all parliamentarians to sign, irrespective of political affiliation.

The 30 parliamentarians (21 MPs, 9 senators) who have signed the new Bill are calling on their colleagues to sign too. They include members of the Democratic and Republican Left, the Senate's communist and ecologist group, the Freedoms and Territories group, the République en Marche, the Socialists and Republicans, the France Insoumise, the UDI, the European Democratic and Social group, and the non-affiliated. Although these groups are not equally represented, the list testifies to the political diversity of the signatories - and we hope this will broaden further in the weeks and months to come.



Photo : Simon Desmarest

Ever since its foundation in ACDN has been calling for a referendum that would lead France to negotiate the abolition of these massacre and extermination weapons - as France was required to do under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which she signed in 1992. It is truly unacceptable that the nation's citizens, without ever being consulted, are financing a nuclear arms policy that has already cost them over 300 billion Euros, and will cost 14.5 million per day from 2019 to 2025 (37 billion in all) merely for "modernisation" - a policy that makes them both accomplices in the preparation of crimes against humanity and the potential victims of an atomic apocalypse.

The referendum is to ask this question: "Are you in favour of France participating in the abolition of nuclear and radioactive weapons and engaging with all the other states concerned in negotiations aimed at drawing up, ratifying and implementing a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear and radioactive weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective."

85% of French citizens would answer this question with a YES, according to poll data from IFOP. It is a matter for all human beings - our conscience, reason, and our humanity. As Albert Camus wrote on 8 August 1945: "In view of the terrifying perspectives that open now before humankind, we see even better that peace is the only struggle worth waging. This is not a prayer but an order that needs to rise up from peoples to governments, ordering them to choose definitively between hell and reason."

We want a world dedicated to solving the numerous challenges which humanity faces, in a spirit of liberty, equality and fraternity, without having to tremble permanently under a Sword of Damocles.

This objective motivates the Call for a French Referendum (below) which all citizens and NGOs of the world are now invited to support by signing and returning it to ACDN. This support is very important for us, because it demonstrates that people all around the world are expecting France to change her nuclear military policies.

Thanks in advance.

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CALL to a French referendum

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