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# **Manifesto for a Referendum On France's Participation in the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons**

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## 20 reasoned statements and 1 concluding call for a referendum.

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1. Nuclear energy, whether in the form of arms or of power-generating reactors, is unacceptable on account of the intrinsic and unmeasurable dangers that both these forms represent, in terms of brutal destruction or lethal and mutation-inducing radiation - dangers for current and future generations, for humanity, for the planet, for life.

2. It is unacceptable also because it sets up the principle of domination without limit as a prototype for relations between States, societies, social categories and individuals, and relationships between humankind and nature, its ultimate horizon being the annihilation of the Other, State, people, nation, society and nature.

3. It is unacceptable finally because it diverts and devours the material, intellectual, human and financial means that could and should be used to confront the huge challenges we face - environmental, energy, economic, food, demographic, educational, cultural and social challenges - to which nuclear energy brings no solution and which humanity needs to face urgently by uniting all our efforts, efforts whose results could at any moment be reduced to nothing by nuclear weapons.

4. Consequently, for the survival of humanity and of each human being, the planet must be freed from nuclear energy in both forms as soon as possible - the Earth must be made nuclear-free.

5. Historically, military objectives lay at the origin of nuclear energy, including nuclear power-generation. Politically, the retention or acquisition of nuclear weapons has remained the primary motivation, usually camouflaged, for retaining or developing civilian nuclear energy.

6. The responsibility for this state of affairs lies with the modern States that possess nuclear weapons - arms which are instruments of crimes against humanity, as the UN General Assembly proclaimed in Resolution 1653 XVI on 24 November 1961. These states refuse to condemn these weapons on the same grounds as biological, chemical and other massacre weapons (so-called « weapons of mass destruction ») because they view them chiefly as weapons of prestige and political domination.

7. To end this state of affairs, the nuclear-armed states must be deprived of their nuclear weapons and the non-nuclear states must be forced to renounce them definitively. These weapons must be forbidden totally under mutual and international control that is strict and effective.

8. This double objective can be obtained only by a universal treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons completely, an abolition treaty.

9. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) cannot achieve these objectives because

- a. Since its entry into force in 1970, its Article VI obliging the nuclear states to eliminate their existing nuclear arsenals has remained a dead letter;
- b. The « right to nuclear energy » recognised for non-nuclear states has enabled several countries, within and outside the NPT, to use this technology for military purposes and to build A- bombs or H-bombs ;
- c. The possibility of moving from civilian use to military use is intrinsic in the very nature of nuclear technology and materials;
- d. Civilian use is a permanent source of catastrophes, in and for itself, as was proved by Three Mile Island,

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Chernobyl and Fukushima - and such catastrophes need to be ended as soon as possible by closing all nuclear power-plants.

**10.** The experience of recent decades proves that the nuclear states within the NPT (USA, Russia, UK, France and Chine) will not spontaneously renounce their nuclear weapons ; they must be forced to.

**11.** The nuclear states outside the NPT (Israel, India, Pakistan) or no longer in the NPT (North Korea) will not renounce them either, not if the other five fail to do so.

**12.** On the other hand, the vast majority of the non-nuclear states, have since 2015 wanted a Ban Treaty. But without a vast mobilisation of people around the world they will not be able to impose it on the nuclear states, just as they could not force them to negotiate the elimination of their weapons under the NPT regime.

**13.** Of all the five nuclear-armed States inside the NPT, France is the most fiercely attached to her nuclear weapons - which presidents have called « the nation's life-insurance » - and is the only state to have never declared, even orally, the will or desire to renounce them. France is at once the brake preventing the other nuclear states from disarming, and their alibi.

**14.** Thus, to induce France to willingly negotiate the elimination of her nuclear weapons in a ban treaty, and to express this willingness, would be

- **a.** To open the path to universal nuclear disarmament and point us towards a world free from nuclear weapons; and

- **b.** To suppress the chief motivation for the further development of the civilian nuclear industry, dry up the state financing without which it will not be able to survive long, and point us towards a world free from nuclear power-plants.

**15.** On this central political decision depends the renunciation of final products (weapons systems and power-generating reactors) of the policies that France has followed until now, even though the problems and exorbitant cost of the products in question can help us to take that decision.

**16.** We cannot count on a President of the Republic, current or future, to take that decision, not so long as he is the supporter, or emanation or hostage of the nuclear and military-industrial lobbies.

**17.** Only the French people, being sovereign in the first and last instance, can impose this change of direction. They are disposed to do so, as several polls have indicated since 2008. According to the latest one, carried out by IFOP in October 2015, despite the old whiff of the cold war, three out of four French citizens want to abolish nuclear weapons, three out of four want to be consulted on this matter by referendum, and three out of four are ready to support a referendum bill (27 % « certainly », 47 % « probably »). This result shows the huge gulf separating the French population from the policies conducted in their name by their leaders, and the democratic deficit which is rotting public life and which must be remedied, in this domain as in others.

**18.** The constitution of the Fifth Republic offers to French citizens the possibility of a « shared initiative referendum » introduced in 2008 but not yet attempted. To achieve this would require 20% of parliamentarians (185 MPs or senators out of 925) to formulate a bill, and then for 10% of the electoral body (about 4.6 million enrolled voters) to give their support within 9 months by electronic means.

**19.** Although a poll does not actually guarantee anything, it is reasonable to think that this objective, though difficult,

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is obtainable, provided that the antinuclear activists and the Human Rights activists join forces and organise effectively to mobilise the requisite number of parliamentarians and votes.

**20.** Convinced that a nation's people must not be made accomplices in the preparation for a crime against humanity without ever being consulted about a so-called defense policy (in reality a policy that is both criminal and suicidal, since the only effective way to protect ourselves against nuclear weapons is to eliminate them), some parliamentarians have already stated that they are in favour a bill to organise a referendum on the question formulated below.

### **Conclusion : Call for a Referendum**

We call on parliamentarians and all French citizens who care about Human Rights, who desire to live in a livable world and who are attached to democratic values, to unite their efforts as from January 2016 to obtain the holding of a referendum as soon as possible on the following question :

*« Do you want France to negotiate and ratify - with all the States concerned - a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective? »*

During the campaign for the presidential and legislative elections of 2017, we will invite voters to ask every candidate to answer this question clearly, and urge them not to vote for those who fail to register clear support in their electoral programmes for France participating in the abolition of nuclear weapons.

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