

Forum: 1st Committee – Nuclear

Issue: Rules and regulations regarding testing of nuclear weapon

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Description of issue:

From 1945 to 2017, more than two thousand nuclear test explosions were conducted around the world, resulting in epidemics of cancers and other chronic illnesses. Large swathes of land remain radioactive and unsafe for habitation, even decades after test sites were closed.

In the New Mexico desert just three weeks before the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the United States conducted the world's first nuclear test explosion, code-named "Trinity". Its giant fireball turned the sands into glass, illuminated the surrounding mountains, and sent a mushroom cloud of radioactive debris 12 kilometers into the sky.

9 countries possess nuclear weapons, these countries are; China, North Korea, France, India, Israel, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The United States and Russia alone possess roughly 90% of all nuclear weapons in the world. Even though there already are rules in place, these need to be updated, and the consequences of breaking them need to be made clear.

Background information:

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), or the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons.

For those nations that are party to it, the treaty prohibits the development, testing, production, stockpiling, stationing, transfer, use, and the threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as assistance and encouragement to the prohibited activities. For nuclear-armed states joining the treaty, it provides for a time-bound framework for negotiations leading to the verified and irreversible elimination of their nuclear weapons program.

A mandate adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 23 December 2016 scheduled two sessions for negotiations: 27 to 31 March and 15 June to 7 July 2017. The treaty passed on schedule on 7 July with 122 in favor, 1 against (Netherlands), and 1 official abstention (Singapore). Sixty-nine nations did not vote, among them all of the nuclear weapon states and all NATO members except the Netherlands.

A total of 197 states may become parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, including all 193 United Nations member states, the Cook Islands, the Holy See, the State of Palestine and Niue. As of 22 September 2022, 68 states have ratified or acceded to the treaty, most recently the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Dominican Republic.

Definition of key terms:

Nuclear weapon: A conventional explosive device rapidly burns up a chemical to cause a blast. A nuclear weapon, meanwhile, such as a bomb or warhead, splits atoms to release millions of times more energy than chemical reactions. Yet the term "*nuclear weapon*" can also refer to a vehicle that's able to deliver a nuclear attack, such as missiles, fighter jets, stealth bombers, and truck-like mobile launchers.

Complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization (CVID): CVID is the strategy that was pursued in disarming Libya of its nuclear weapons. The Trump administration pursued it in initial talks with Kim Jong Un and North Korea. The approach allows inspectors into a country to count weapons, witness their destruction, disable nuclear reactors, prevent the development of missiles, and perform other watchdog work.

Main countries involved:

- The Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- The United States of America
- The Russian Federation
- The People's Republic of China
- The French Republic
- The Republic of India
- The State of Israel
- The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- The Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Questions for delegates:

- Where does your country stand on this issue?
- Has your country ever had nuclear weapon?