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January 16. 2023

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr National Holiday

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's values still apply to civil rights, and we must apply them to abolish nuclear weapons as well. Perhaps his opposition to nuclear weapons is the least known for which he advocated.

"These two issues," King said in 1968, "[are tied together in many, many ways](#). It is a wonderful thing to work to integrate lunch counters, public accommodations, and schools. But it would be rather absurd to work to get schools and lunch counters integrated and not be concerned with the survival of a world in which to integrate.

In 1957, Dr. King said: "I definitely feel that the development and use of nuclear weapons of war should be banned. It cannot be disputed that a full-scale nuclear war would be utterly catastrophic.

“Hundreds and millions of people would be killed outright by the blast and heat, and by the ionizing radiation produced at the instant of the explosion.”

In 1958, Dr. King was contacted by [SANE, the National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy](#). Dr. King signed the organization’s petition to halt nuclear bomb tests.

In 1959, Dr. King spoke of the dangers of nuclear weapons at the War Resisters League’s 36th annual dinner.”

This brings us to January 2023. If Dr. King were alive today we can be assured he would be celebrating January 22, 2023, the second anniversary of the entry into force of the **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**. “The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) includes a comprehensive set of prohibitions on participating in any nuclear weapon activities. These include undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons. The Treaty also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory and the provision of assistance to any State in the conduct of prohibited activities.” (Quote from the UN)

The treaty’s provisions are binding on all countries that have ratified the treaty, 68 nations to date with about 30 other countries moving through their ratification processes. Unfortunately, the United States has not ratified the treaty.

United Nations: Achieving global nuclear disarmament is one of the oldest goals of the United Nations. It was the subject of the General Assembly’s first resolution in 1946, which established the Atomic Energy Commission (dissolved in 1952), with a mandate to make specific proposals for the control of nuclear energy and the elimination of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. The United Nations has been at the forefront of many major diplomatic efforts to advance nuclear disarmament since. In 1959, the General Assembly endorsed the objective of general and complete disarmament. In 1978, the first Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament further recognized that nuclear disarmament should be the priority objective in the field of disarmament. Every United Nations Secretary-General has actively promoted this goal.

What can we, you, me do to continue the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.?

Support nuclear arms control.

- Please sign on the link below to advocate for nuclear arms control..
[Urge your members of Congress to support nuclear arms control and urge the Biden administration to take action toward a world free from nuclear weapons.](#)
- Continue to fast and pray alone and in community for nuclear abolition;
- Purchase, read and study Archbishop John Wester's pastoral letter, [Living in the Light of Christ's Peace](#) (available through Pax Christi USA [here](#));
- Become active in **[Back from the Brink \(BftB\)](#)**, an initiative of Prevent Nuclear War; Pax Christi USA is a coalition member.
- Continue to write, call or visit your federal representatives in Congress using them to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.



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