

## **Prohibition on Nuclear Weapons**

The director of programs and operations at the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, Rick Wayman, spoke on the negotiations that took place last year under the jurisdiction of the United Nations. This treaty is a historic monument for the future of the world as a whole to develop. The treaty is a war on war per se, by 122 countries out of the 195 countries recognized by the United Nations. Though this is an astounding number and majority, there is still work to be done in order for this to be an 100% global endeavor. From the past, nuclear weapons have had catastrophic consequences in the developing world, and their sheer existence is a threat to the future of humanity. From the 18,000 total nuclear weapons present in the world; it would only take a fraction of those bombs to produce catastrophic environmental impacts to the extent of inhabitability and a nuclear holocaust. The environmental impacts are not an easy fix, since the 1986 Chernobyl explosion, the habitability is estimated to take another 20,000 years. The case of Chernobyl is microscopic compared to the threat that nuclear arsenals pose on the entirety of the modern world.

The disarming of the nuclear bombs is another problem, that once produced it will have to eventually impact the environment. The cost and time that it takes to get rid of nuclear weapons exceeds the amount that is needed to produce them. The plutonium and/or uranium cannot simply be thrown into a garbage field. The waste products for nuclear materials can be stored, but can easily contaminate the surrounding environment. For example; along the banks of the Columbia river in Hanover, New Jersey. 25 million cubic feet of radioactive waste has contaminated 200 square miles of groundwater. Hanover is now recognized at the nation's largest environmental cleanup. Working backwards is the only way to ensure that the world would not experience hardships due to the hazardous effects nuclear weapons and waste have on

fundamentally everything. The work of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation striving for peace and a world free of nuclear weapons is the kind of peace and justice advocacy that the developing world needs.

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