



Women in Black  
London

# The world is over-armed. Choose peace and disarmament

## UN Disarmament Week - 24<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October

The 24 October marks the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Disarmament Week seeks to promote better understanding of disarmament issues, a reminder that the disarmament of nuclear and conventional weapons is the only authentic way to bring security and peace to the world. Today, the urgency to ban nuclear weapons from our world is greater than ever with Russia threatening to use tactical nuclear weapons in its war with Ukraine, North Korea carrying out ballistic missile testing and the war between Israel, Gaza and the Iranian backed Hezbollah. Nuclear weapons increase the risks of nuclear war – whether by miscalculation, mad politicians or military mistakes. The doomsday clock, an indicator of the likelihood of nuclear catastrophe, is now set at 90 seconds to midnight. When established in 1947 it was 7 minutes.

### The British Government's Nuclear Weapon Programme

The government is working to replace its current nuclear weapons system, Trident, to the tune of £205 billion. The system is made up of four nuclear submarines which can each hold up to eight missiles each of which can carry up to five nuclear warheads - around eight times as destructive as the bomb which destroyed Hiroshima in 1945.

Plans are underway for the United States, as part of a NATO agreement, to site some of its nuclear arsenal in the UK at RAF Lakenheath. US nuclear weapons were removed from this base in 2008

### Lost opportunity for disarmament

In 2017 the UN adopted the long-awaited **Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**. The Treaty bans the use, development, testing, deployment, possession and transfer of nuclear weapons. It requires countries that currently possess or host nuclear weapons to end those policies and programmes safely and securely. To date, 94 states have signed the Treaty.

To Britain's shame the UK Government has refused to join the TPNW and since 2018 consistently voted against the annual UN General Assembly resolution in support of the TPNW.

By signing the TPNW the UK would greatly increase national and global security. Taking this step would also enhance Britain's role and influence for peace and security, and create much needed jobs in disarmament and verification. It would also free up resources to tackle urgent security threats such as climate destruction, violence against women and girls, and the deadly arms trade.

**Today Women in Black invite you to tell the Prime Minister that Britain needs to disarm**

**To The Prime Minister, 10 Downing Street, London SW1.**

As governments and citizens around the world mark the UN Disarmament Week, I urge you to:

- Sign the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on behalf of the UK, and implement this and all of Britain's international disarmament obligations, including the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty.
- Refuse to cooperate with plans to site UN nuclear weapons at RAF Lakenheath or at any other site in the UK.
- Redirect the £205 billion allocated to Trident towards our real security needs: health, education, poverty reduction and tackling climate change and environmental destruction.

Signed .....Date.....

Address ..... Postcode .....



**Women in Black** hold vigils every Wednesday between 6-7 pm at the Edith Cavell Statue, opposite the National Portrait Gallery, St. Martin's Place, London, WC2. Our vigils are silent, women-only and if possible we wear black. We welcome all women who support our call for an end to militarism and war.

Contact us: *Twitter @WIB\_London* *FB @womeninblack.london*

<http://london.womeninblack.org/>

**Donations for leaflets most welcome**

*(October 2024)*