

Prevent Nuclear Use Halt Nuclear Escalation Remember All Victims of War

81 years ago 2 Nuclear Bombs killed 250,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki

On 16 July 1945 US scientist Robert Oppenheimer led Los Alamos scientists to detonate the first ever atomic bomb in New Mexico, causing serious contamination to Navajo land and people. The scientists cheered after the blinding flash, huge blast and massive mushroom cloud. President Truman was informed. He boasted to Soviet leader Stalin and British Prime Minister Churchill about America's 'successful' test of the most powerful weapon on Earth.

On August 6 and 9, two months after victory over Nazi Germany in Europe, US planes dropped two more atomic bombs in quick succession on Japan. Hiroshima was flattened by a uranium bomb and Nagasaki's Catholic Cathedral and its surrounding 'Urakami' area were turned to rubble by a plutonium bomb. Very soon political leaders and military establishments in the US, Soviet Union and UK were rushing to produce and test bombs of their own – not just the 'small' atomic bombs but even more powerful thermonuclear (hydrogen) weapons. As the world plunged into a nuclear-armed 'Cold War', France and China – and then Israel, South Africa, India, Pakistan and North Korea – joined Britain, Russia and USA in proliferating nuclear weapons.

South Africa changed course in 1991 by abolishing its racist apartheid system and getting rid of its nuclear arsenal. It joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty and worked politically and diplomatically for multilateral disarmament, peace and justice. Going from pariah to world leader, South Africa now plays decisive roles in many treaties and verification, including the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Our security today requires reducing and abolishing nuclear weapons. The last five years of murderous wars are a wake up call. Nuclear-armed leaders such as Trump, Putin, Xi, Netanyahu, Modi, Zardari, Macron, and Kim threaten all of us with their hubris, greed and warmongering miscalculations. They hide behind 'their' nuclear weapons as they heavily bomb and kill thousands of women, children and other non-combatants in Ukraine, Palestine, Iran... **Nuclear threats are increasingly issued – but nuclear and other WMD don't deter and cannot be used to win a war.** Nukes cannot be possessed or used without threatening all out nuclear war.

BRITAIN HAS A LAST DITCH CHANCE TO SHOW LEADERSHIP AND VISION FOR GLOBAL SECURITY

Nuclear submarines armed with Trident are useless but they cost British people billions each year. Keir Starmer flunked real security tests with his government's 2025 Strategic Defence Review, which was based on discredited nuclear deterrence theories that fuel proliferation. **If the PM wants to strengthen UK security and defence he needs to prioritise all aspects of societal resilience.** That means more funding and training for sustainable jobs in health, education, care, tackling poverty, clean water, sustainable tech and climate. Now is the time for Andy Burnham and his Cabinet to show courage, vision and leadership. **Now is the time to cut support for greedy arms producers and put Britain's human and environmental security first for a change.**

To Andy Burnham and Cabinet, 10 Downing Street, London SW1

YOU HAVE A VITAL OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW REAL LEADERSHIP AND VISION – We call on you to:

- **Sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)** – Multilaterally negotiated and adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2017 this is now part of International Law. With 100 UN states from Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America already on board, the UK should stop colluding with dangerous countries that are trying to ignore it. The TPNW bans possession, deployment, proliferation and use of nuclear weapons, and outlaws nuclear attacks and threats. **The UK should start by participating in the TPNW Review Conference at the UN in November, chaired by South Africa.** We have the nuclear expertise and skills to become leaders in implementing the verifiable and irreversible elimination of all nuclear arsenals, as mandated in the Treaty.

- **Stop proliferating and escalating nuclear weapons** – Create better jobs by investing in nuclear disarmament and halting the production, deployment and delivery of nuclear bombs.

- **Redirect the billions** that denuclearising UK defence would free up – **Support our real security needs**, including sustainable energy, poverty reduction, improved health, care and education services. Put jobs and priorities into climate action that builds cooperative, just and peaceful relations with people throughout the world.



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

Name:

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/> August 2026

Donations for leaflets most welcome