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NUCLEAR WEAPONS **BAN** MONITOR 2026

TRACKING PROGRESS TOWARDS A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

ABOUT THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN MONITOR

The Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor is a research project managed by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) with contributions from a broad range of external experts and institutions, including the Federation of American Scientists and the Norwegian Academy of International Law. It tracks progress towards a world without nuclear weapons and highlights activities that stand between the international community and the fulfilment of the long-standing goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. In measuring this progress, the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor uses the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as the primary yardstick, because this treaty codifies norms and actions that are needed to create and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. The TPNW is the only legally binding global treaty that outlaws nuclear weapons. It was adopted on 7 July 2017 and entered into force on 22 January 2021. The impact of the TPNW will be built gradually and will depend on how it is welcomed and used by each and every State.

The Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor records progress in universalizing the TPNW while also tracking gaps in adherence to other key global treaties in the existing legal architecture for disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. This concerns, specifically: the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Biological Weapons Convention, and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor also evaluates the nuclear-weapons-related policies and practices of each of the 197 States that can become party to the above-mentioned treaties. These are the 193 UN Member States, the two UN Observer States (the Holy See and the State of Palestine), and the two 'other' States (the Cook Islands and Niue). Finally, the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor sets out clear interpretations of each of the prohibitions and positive obligations of the TPNW and evaluates the extent to which the 197 States act in accordance with the Treaty. States Parties and signatories are categorized as either 'compliant' or 'non-compliant' with the TPNW, whereas non-Parties are categorized as either 'compatible' or 'non-compatible'. States where worrying developments warrant close attention are assessed to be 'of concern'.

Profiles for each of the 197 States are on the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor website at: www.banmonitor.org

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Cover photo: An unarmed United States (US) Minuteman III Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) launches during an operational test on 21 May 2025, at Vandenberg Space Force Base in California. US Space Force stated that 'ICBM test launches demonstrate that the U.S. ICBM fleet is ready, reliable and effective in leveraging dominance in an era of strategic competition.' Photograph © Senior Airman Kadielle Shaw, US Space Force

NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN MONITOR 2026

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KEY FINDINGS



- As of early 2026, the risk of the use of nuclear weapons remains real and immediate. The danger of the escalation of conflicts involving nuclear-armed States is a significant, and growing, concern.
- Yet a minority of 42 States (the nine nuclear-armed States and 33 so-called nuclear ‘umbrella’ States) are placing increasing value on nuclear weapons as a national security asset, placing the entire world in great danger.



- The steady growth in support for the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), however, signals a growing global rejection of nuclear weapons as a collective security liability and a renewed determination to advance nuclear disarmament.
- One State—Ghana—became party to the TPNW in 2025 while Kyrgyzstan signed the treaty.
- At the close of 2025, 99 States—just over half of the world’s 197 States—had joined the TPNW as either parties or as signatories that had not yet ratified the treaty (74 and 25 respectively).
- With ratification processes advancing in several signatory States, further progress in expansion of the treaty membership appears likely in 2026.
- No nuclear-armed State has yet adhered to the TPNW, but every non-nuclear-armed State that joins strengthens political pressure for nuclear disarmament.



- Beyond its Parties and signatories, a further 41 States are currently classified by the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor as ‘other supporters’ of the TPNW, based on their voting in the UN General Assembly.
- Including these, total support for the TPNW reached 140 States in 2025 – 71% of the global total (up from 138 a year earlier).
- Several States in the ‘other supporters’ category have initiated domestic processes to sign or accede to the treaty. This reflects broad and growing global backing for the TPNW.



- Support for the TPNW is strong across all regions of the world except Europe.
- In Africa, all States supported the TPNW in 2025 – as States Parties, signatories, or other supporters.
- The Americas is the region with the highest share of States Parties, with over 74% of States already parties to the treaty.



- The total number of States opposed to the TPNW currently remains at 44.
- Three-quarters of this opposition is concentrated in Europe, where 33 of the region’s 47 States voted against the Treaty in the UN General Assembly in 2025. Europe has only five States Parties—Austria, the Holy See, Ireland, Malta, and San Marino—and one signatory, Liechtenstein.
- As a result, Europe stands out as a major obstacle to further progress toward universalization of the TPNW.



- A total of 152 States—representing 77% of the global total—already act in accordance with the comprehensive set of prohibitions established by the TPNW.
- However, a significant minority of 43 States (nearly 22%) engaged in activities in 2025 that conflicted, in various ways, with these prohibitions. All are non-party States. For the international community to achieve the United Nations' long-standing goal of eliminating nuclear weapons, these States would need to make varying degrees of changes to their policies and practices.



- Progress toward nuclear disarmament will depend heavily on policy shifts in Europe. Of a total of 43 States identified as having policies or practices in 2025 that were incompatible with the TPNW, 32 (over 74%) are European.
- This reflects the region's disproportionate share of nuclear umbrella States: 29 of the world's 33 umbrella States (88%) are European. The only four umbrella States outside Europe are Australia, Canada, Japan, and South Korea.
- Of the 33 umbrella States, one (Belarus) is aligned with Russia, while 32 are aligned with the United States.



- All nine nuclear-armed States continued in 2025 to engage in conduct that was incompatible with the TPNW's prohibition on developing or acquiring nuclear weapons.
- Iran and Saudi Arabia also remained on the list of States of concern.
- At the same time, discussion of the possibility of pursuing nuclear weapons intensified in 2025 and early 2026 in several non-party States—notably Germany, Japan, Poland, and South Korea—despite their unequivocal obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The non-proliferation norm is under increasing pressure.



- At the beginning of 2026, the nine nuclear-armed States were estimated to possess a combined total of 12,187 nuclear warheads, which is clearly incompatible with the TPNW's prohibition on possession and stockpiling.
- This represents a decrease of just 144 warheads from the estimated 12,331 a year earlier.
- The reduction was driven solely by the dismantlement in 2025 of a small number of previously retired warheads by Russia and the United States.



- The number of warheads available for military use increased in 2025 for the ninth consecutive year, reaching an estimated 9,745, with a combined explosive yield equivalent to more than 135,000 Hiroshima bombs.
- This marks an increase of 141 warheads available for use since the beginning of 2025 and 473 since 2017, when the global total reached a low of 9,272. The number of warheads available for use has risen steadily since 2017 and is expected to continue to grow.
- China, India, North Korea, Pakistan, and Russia all expanded their nuclear arsenals in 2025. In March 2026, France too announced that it would increase the number of its nuclear warheads for the first time in decades.

KEY FINDINGS



- Of the global total of warheads available for use in early 2026, an estimated 4,012 (over 40%) were deployed on siloed or mobile missiles, on nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), and at bomber bases.
- This represents an increase of 108 deployed warheads compared with a year earlier.
- The continued annual rise in deployed warheads is a concerning development, increasing the risks of rapid escalation, miscalculation, and accidental use.
- France, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and to a smaller extent now also China and India are believed to deploy nuclear warheads on launchers or at bomber bases. Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea are thought to keep all of their warheads in central storage.



- Seven States engaged in conduct in 2025—as in the previous year—that was incompatible with the TPNW’s prohibition on the stationing, installation, or deployment of foreign nuclear weapons: Belarus, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom.
- At the same time, debate intensified in 2025 and early 2026 in several other States over the potential hosting of foreign nuclear weapons.



- The TPNW’s prohibition on assistance, encouragement, or inducement of prohibited activities was again the most widely contravened norm in 2025. A total of 38 States—including all 33 umbrella States—were involved in such activities.
- This highlights the central role of umbrella States in sustaining the development and possession of nuclear weapons.
- Since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, many umbrella States have further expanded the ways in which they aid and abet nuclear armament, including through greater involvement in nuclear strike exercises and conventional support for nuclear operations.



- No State engaged in conduct in 2025 that was incompatible with the TPNW’s prohibition on explosive testing of nuclear weapons.
- However, this prohibition, already cemented in the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, remained under pressure, with continued risks of renewed nuclear test detonations in China, North Korea, Russia, and the United States.



- The Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor found that no State acted in contravention of the TPNW’s prohibition on threatening to use nuclear weapons in 2025.
- Aggressive rhetoric regarding nuclear weapons use did indeed occur in some nuclear-armed States in 2025, but no examples were identified that amounted to a threat to use under the treaty.



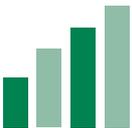
- Developments in 2025 once again demonstrated that the conduct of all nine nuclear-armed States is incompatible with the TPNW's obligation to eliminate nuclear weapons.
- While all nuclear-armed States have expressed support for nuclear disarmament, none is pursuing this goal in practice.
- No disarmament initiatives are currently under consideration, and the existing arms control architecture designed to constrain nuclear arsenals is under considerable strain.



- While concrete progress on the ground remains limited, States Parties and civil society again met frequently in 2025 to advance implementation of the obligations in Article 6 of the TPNW to provide assistance to individuals affected by nuclear-weapons use and testing and to remediate contaminated environments.
- The Third Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, held in March 2025, reaffirmed Kazakhstan and Kiribati as co-chairs of an informal working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation, and international cooperation and assistance.



- Through their words and actions, States Parties continued to demonstrate in 2025 a strong commitment to the goal of universalizing the TPNW.
- They undertook a range of actions to implement their obligation under Article 12 of the Treaty to encourage States to sign, ratify, or accede to the treaty, including through statements, meetings, diplomatic *démarches*, and outreach visits.



- A central objective should be universal adherence to all five treaties in the legal architecture for weapons of mass destruction (WMD): The TPNW, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).
- A total of 73 States have now adhered to all five WMD treaties, setting an example for others, while 102 States are party to four of the five.
- In 2025, the BWC gained two additional States Parties—Comoros and Kiribati. By the year's end, the number of non-parties stood at four for the CWC, five for the NPT, fourteen for the BWC, and nineteen for the CTBT.
- As the newest treaty, the TPNW still lags behind the others in membership, but its trajectory broadly mirrors that of the BWC and the NPT, underscoring that such treaties require time to achieve widespread acceptance and authority.



The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan, Zheenbek Kulubaev, signed the TPNW at the UN in New York on 26 September 2025, bringing the total number of States Parties and signatories to the Treaty to 99 and across the halfway mark. 'This step represents a natural continuation of our principled commitment to a nuclear-weapon-free world, as well as a reaffirmation of the choice we made when, together with our neighbours, we established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia', said Minister Kulubaev. In announcing its decision to join the TPNW earlier in the year, Kyrgyzstan said that it is 'committed to ensuring that future generations live without the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction'. Photograph © ICAN

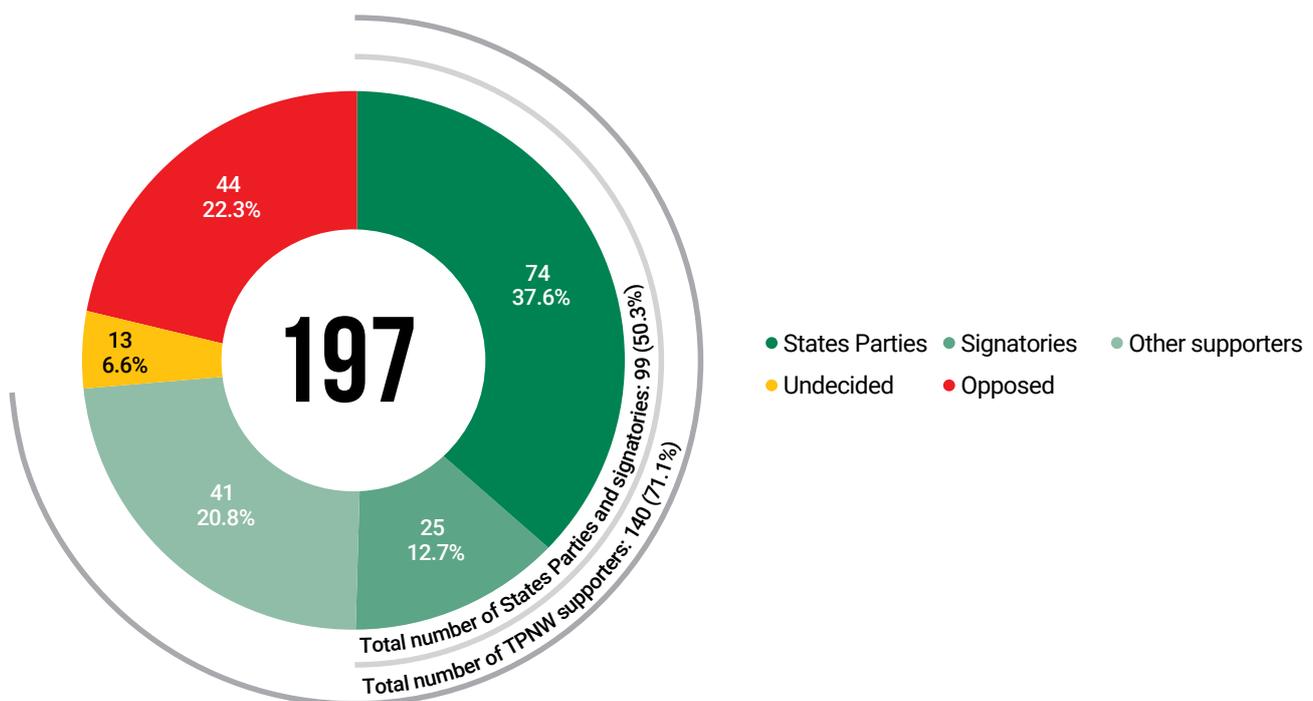
THE STATUS OF THE TPNW AT THE BEGINNING OF 2026

The world is now simultaneously moving toward and away from the objective of eliminating nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has reached majority adherence, signalling growing global rejection of nuclear weapons as a collective security liability and a determination to advance nuclear disarmament. A minority of 42 States, however, are placing increasing emphasis on the perceived value of nuclear weapons as a national security asset.

At the close of 2025, 99 States—just over half of the world’s total of 197—were either States Parties or signatories to the TPNW. As illustrated in Figure 1 below, the overall number of States supportive of the TPNW had reached 140 (71%).

Having crossed the halfway mark, the TPNW is emerging as a mainstream global instrument. Yet this normative momentum stands in sharp contrast to the policies of the nine nuclear-armed States, which are investing heavily in the modernization and expansion of nuclear arsenals, and the world’s 33 so-called ‘umbrella’ States, many of which are assuming more direct roles in nuclear-weapons related activities. The core driver of these trends is geopolitical, specifically the shifting relationships between the world’s major powers, most of which are nuclear-armed. Three developments stand out: the changes in alliance relationships between the United States and its traditional security partners; Russia’s continuing war against Ukraine and hybrid warfare against European States; and uncertainty about the direction of China’s foreign policy as its material power continues to grow.

FIGURE 1. Global distribution of support for the TPNW, as of 31.12.2025¹



¹ Some treaties allow only UN Member States to become Parties (the obvious example being the UN Charter), but most treaties—including all of the multilateral treaties in the legal architecture for disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction—use the ‘all States’ formula for adherence. This currently allows a total of 197 States to adhere: the 193 UN Member States, the two UN Observer States (Holy See and the State of Palestine), as well as the two ‘other’ States (Cook Islands and Niue).

The growing emphasis on nuclear weapons is also unfolding amid intensifying armed conflicts and the erosion of the long-standing disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control regime, as well as the significant weakening of the international rules-based order as a whole. This is more than a 'new nuclear arms race', it is a reversal of hard-won constraints developed through eight decades of precarious experience with nuclear weapons and the shadow of nuclear violence.

The deepening contestation over whether nuclear weapons are a collective security liability or a national security asset makes the decisions taken by political leaders in 2026 critical. Those decisions should be informed by the ever-present yet widely under-acknowledged potential for disastrous loss of control inherent in nuclear deterrence,² as well as by the substantial body of evidence on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that any use of nuclear weapons would entail.

No nuclear-armed State has yet adhered to the TPNW. But every non-nuclear-armed State that joins the treaty, or even ends their active opposition to it, strengthens the political pressure for nuclear disarmament. By signing and ratifying or by acceding to the TPNW, a State guarantees it will never develop nuclear weapons or embrace extended nuclear deterrence (and thereby appropriate the security case for nuclear weapons made so consistently by the nuclear-armed States and their umbrella States). In doing so, adhering States provide leadership and take action to create safety and stability, and reduce tension in a world where the danger of escalation of conflicts involving nuclear-armed States is a significant—and growing—concern. At the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the TPNW in March 2025, they declared that they 'will continue to champion the unequivocal rejection of nuclear weapons and work relentlessly for their abolition.'³

STATES PARTIES AND SIGNATORIES

Adherence to the TPNW among the 197 States that can become party to the treaty continued to grow in 2025, even if the growth was slower than in preceding years, with only one new ratification (Ghana) and one new signatory (Kyrgyzstan). As Figure 1 above shows, the number of States Parties to the TPNW had grown to 74 as of 31 December 2025,⁴ while 25 other States had signed but not yet ratified. Several signatory States were reportedly close to ratifying, including Colombia, Djibouti, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe.

OTHER SUPPORTERS

Based on of their most recent vote on the TPNW in the UN General Assembly, the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor categorized 41 additional States as 'other supporters' of the Treaty at the end of 2025 (up from 40 in 2024 after South Sudan's yes vote on the annual UN General Assembly resolution on the TPNW in 2025). Together with the States Parties and signatories, the other supporters brought the total number of States supportive of the TPNW to 140 (71%) by the end of 2025 (up from 138 a year earlier).

While they have not yet signed or adhered to the Treaty, these 'other supporters' have all expressed their support to the TPNW by voting in favour (and in some cases also co-sponsoring) the annual UN General Assembly resolution on the TPNW. First introduced in 2018, the resolution calls upon all States that have not yet done so to sign, ratify, or accede to the treaty 'at the earliest possible date'.⁵

Several of the 41 other supporters have already started domestic processes to sign or accede to the TPNW. Eight—Azerbaijan, Egypt, Gabon, Iraq, Morocco, Senegal, Tunisia, and Yemen—participated as observers at the Third Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW in March 2025.

OPPOSED STATES

The number of States opposed to the TPNW at the close of 2025 remained at 44. Four of these are States with nuclear-free defence postures (Argentina, Micronesia, Monaco, and Ukraine). The remaining 40 States in this category are nuclear umbrella States and nuclear-armed States. All nine nuclear-armed States continued to vote against the TPNW resolution in the UNGA in 2025, as did most nuclear umbrella States (31 of 33). At the First and Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, some of these umbrella States had attended as observers, but at the third, none of the 31 umbrella States categorized as opposed attended — a development closely linked to the tense security situation in Europe.

2 T. Fraise, 'The Magicians of Nuclear Strategy: Ritualized Knowledge Production and the Origins of Strategic Nuclear Thought' *Global Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 6, Issue 1 (January 2026), <https://bit.ly/4ut9ZjS>.

3 Report of the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, TPNW doc. TPNW/MSP/2025/11/Rev.1, 6 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rj2ji5>.

4 Of the 74 States Parties, four—the Cook Islands, Mongolia, Niue, and Sri Lanka—have acceded to the Treaty while all 70 others have signed and ratified it.

5 UN General Assembly Resolution 80/54 (2025), <https://bit.ly/4sXGLb4>.

UNDECIDED STATES

The number of undecided States at the end of 2025 was 13 – down from 15 in 2024 and 17 in 2023. As noted above, Kyrgyzstan moved from the undecided category to signatory, and South Sudan moved from undecided to other supporter.

Of the 13 States in this category, 11 have nuclear-free defence postures, but it also includes two nuclear umbrella States (Australia and Belarus). It should be noted that although Australia and Belarus meet the voting criteria set by the Ban Monitor for inclusion in the undecided category with respect to the TPNW, their governments clearly demonstrate support for nuclear armament.

The criteria for the Ban Monitor’s categorization of States by their position on the TPNW are explained in Table A below while Table C on page 19 lists all the 197 States by their region and support category. For details about individual States, see the State profiles on www.banmonitor.org.

BOX 1: Who are the States with nuclear-weapons-based defence postures?

- 155 States—almost four-fifths of the world’s total of 197—currently maintain defence postures that are based exclusively on non-nuclear means.
- 42 States have nuclear-weapons based defence postures. They are the nine nuclear-armed States (China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and 33 nuclear ‘umbrella’ States, which are non-nuclear-armed States that have arrangements of extended nuclear deterrence with one or more nuclear-armed allies.
 - ▶ One umbrella State (Belarus) is an ally of Russia.
 - ▶ 29 umbrella States have a multilateral arrangement of extended nuclear deterrence through NATO (Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Türkiye)
 - ▶ Three umbrella States (Australia, Japan, and South Korea) have bilateral arrangements of nuclear deterrence with the United States.

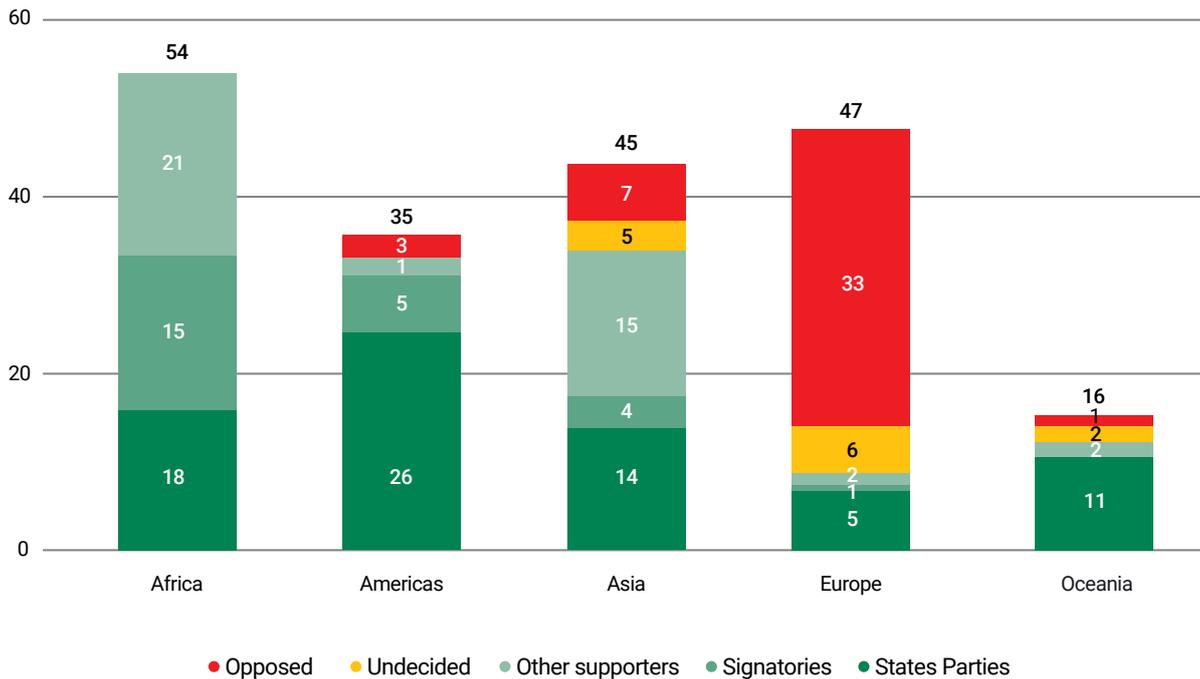
TABLE A: Criteria for TPNW support categories

CATEGORY	CRITERION
1 States Parties⁶	States that have either signed and ratified or acceded to the TPNW.
2 Signatories	States that have signed the TPNW but not yet ratified it.
3 Other supporters	States that are not in category 1 or 2 but whose most recent vote in the UN on the TPNW (the adoption of the treaty on 7 July 2017 or on subsequent annual UN General Assembly resolutions on the TPNW) was ‘yes’.
4 Undecided	All States that are not in category 1 or 2 and whose most recent vote in the UN on the TPNW (the adoption of the treaty on 7 July 2017 or on the subsequent annual UN General Assembly resolutions on the TPNW) was an abstention, or which never participated in such a vote.
5 Opposed	All States that are not in category 1 or 2 and whose most recent vote in the UN on the TPNW (the adoption of the treaty on 7 July 2017 or on the subsequent annual UN General Assembly resolutions on the TPNW) was ‘no’.

⁶ In accordance with Article 15(2) of the TPNW, a State formally becomes party to the treaty 90 days after it deposits its instrument of ratification or accession with the UN Secretary-General. For the purpose of this report, however, States are considered Parties from the date of their deposit.

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPORT

FIGURE 2: Global distribution of support for the TPNW by region, as of 31.12.2025



Breaking down all States' positions on the TPNW by region, Figure 2 above shows that support for the TPNW is high in all regions of the world apart from Europe. Three-quarters of global opposition to the TPNW is found in Europe, where 33 of 47 States were opposed to the treaty in 2025. Europe stands out as a significant obstacle for further progress towards universalization of the TPNW and agreement on nuclear disarmament.

Thus far, Europe has only five States Parties to the TPNW: Austria, the Holy See, Ireland, Malta, and San Marino; and one signatory: Liechtenstein. One important reason for this limited support is the concentration in Europe of nuclear umbrella States. Of the world's 33 umbrella States, 29 (or 88%) are European. (The only four umbrella States located outside of Europe are Australia, Canada, Japan, and South Korea.) Three of the world's nuclear-armed States are also located in Europe: France, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

In Africa, all 54 States supported the TPNW in 2025, either as States Parties or signatories, or as other supporters. As noted above, South Sudan once again voted in favour of the annual UN General Assembly resolution on the TPNW in 2025, making the African continent completely green.

The Americas is the region with the highest share of States Parties. More than 74% of the States in the region are already party to the Treaty, while Argentina along with nuclear-armed United States and umbrella State Canada are the only opposed States in the region.

In Oceania, too, the share of States Parties is high, with 11 States Parties (68%) among the 16 States in the region. Micronesia remains the only opposed State in this region, while umbrella State Australia along with the Marshall Islands are undecided.

In Asia, the five nuclear-armed States located in this region (China, India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan) were opposed to the TPNW also in 2025, together with US umbrella States Japan and the South Korea. Support for the TPNW, however, is relatively high also in Asia. With the addition of Kyrgyzstan as a signatory, a total of 33 of 45 States in the region (73%) are now States Parties, signatories, or other supporters.

For an overview of the States in each region by support category, see Table C on page 19.

NWFZ MEMBERS

The world's five nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) treaties currently have 105 members, up one from 2024.⁷ Of those, 60 (or 57%) were at the close of 2025 also States Parties to the TPNW. Of the 45 States that were not yet party to the TPNW, 20 had already signed the TPNW and need only to ratify it. The other 25 States, the majority of which are already supporters of the TPNW, also constitute a significant and immediate potential for new signatories or acceders to the Treaty.

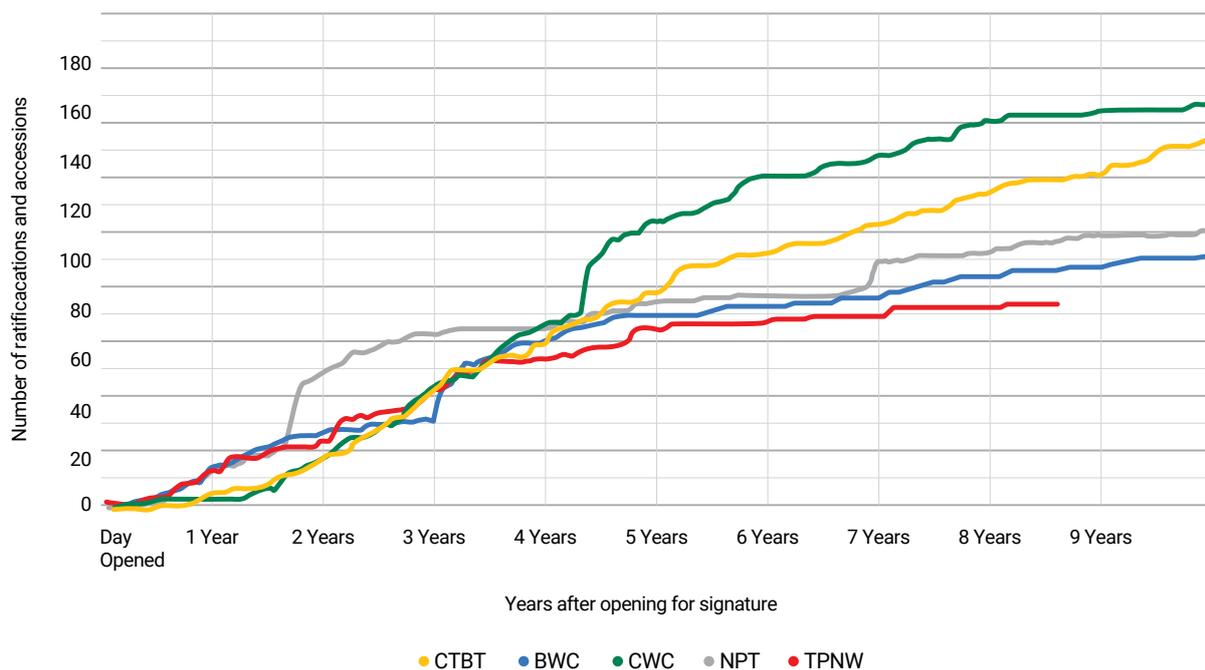
Table B below provides an overview of the outstanding NWFZ members that should be encouraged by their fellow NWFZ members to also urgently ratify or sign or accede to the TPNW.

TABLE B: Members of NWFZ treaties that are not yet States Parties to the TPNW, as of 31.12.2025

	Pelindaba Treaty	Rarotonga Treaty	Bangkok Treaty	Semipalatinsk Treaty	Tlatelolco Treaty
20 NWFZ Parties that have signed the TPNW and should ratify the treaty	Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe.		Brunei, Myanmar.	Kyrgyzstan.	Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Haiti.
25 NWFZ Parties that should sign or accede to the TPNW	Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Tunisia	Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Australia, Marshall Islands.	Singapore.	Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan.	Suriname, Argentina.

SPEED OF ADHERENCE ACROSS WMD TREATIES

FIGURE 3: Speed of ratification and accession in first ten years – WMD treaties compared



In 2026, the TPNW is in its ninth year after opening for signature. Figure 3 above shows the speed of ratification and accession of the TPNW relative to the other key multilateral treaties in the legal architecture for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in the first 10 years after their opening for signature: the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

⁷ The five NWFZ treaties are the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Pelindaba Treaty), the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Rarotonga Treaty), the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty), the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia (Semipalatinsk Treaty), and the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Tlatelolco Treaty). The Marshall Islands acceded to the Rarotonga Treaty in 2025. Together, the five treaties cover a total of 115 States, of which 105 are parties. The Pelindaba Treaty has 10 signatories that have not yet ratified it. The UN has also recognized one additional State, Mongolia, as having nuclear-weapon-free status.

As the figure shows, the TPNW fell behind the other treaties at approximately three-and-a-half years after opening for signature but then picked up more speed again after the COVID-19 pandemic. While still behind all of the other WMD treaties in numbers, the TPNW has since then largely followed the same trajectory of ratifications/accessions that the BWC and the NPT did at the equivalent point in time. This serves as a reminder that it took several years also for those treaties to accrue the authority they have today.

LEVEL OF ADHERENCE ACROSS WMD TREATIES

In building upon and contributing to the other multilateral WMD treaties, the TPNW has the potential to reinforce the legitimacy of the legal WMD architecture as a whole. The objective must be universal adherence to all of the components in this architecture, meaning that all States should be party to each and every one of them. Figure 4 below therefore highlights the gaps in adherence as of 31 December 2025 among the 197 States that may adhere to the WMD treaties.

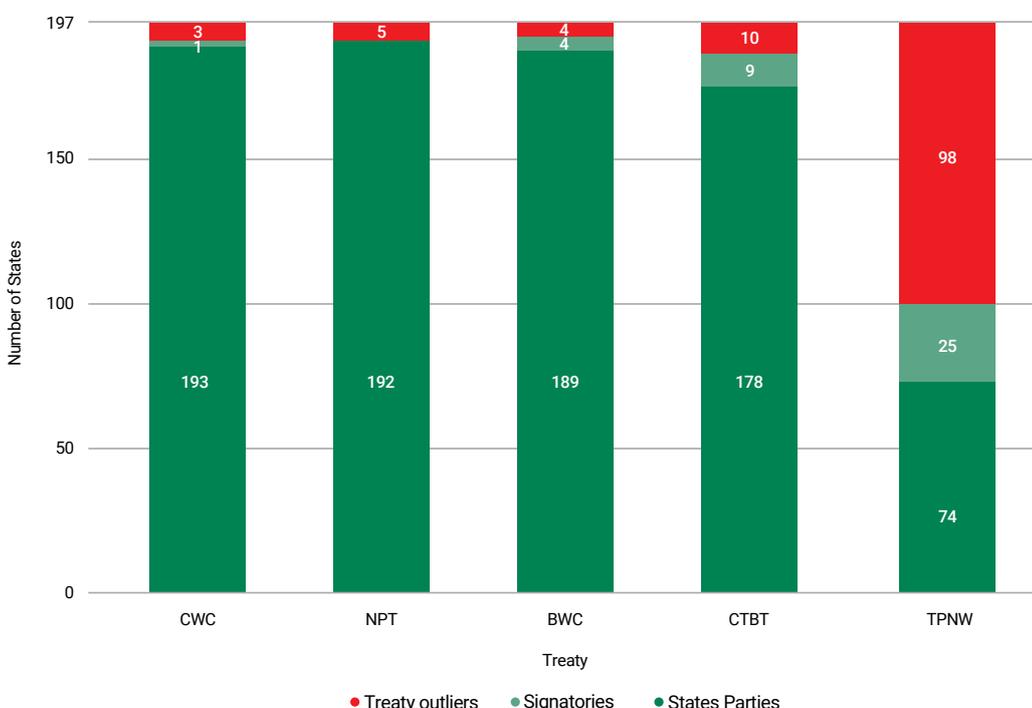
The world continued to move closer to universal adherence to all five key WMD treaties in 2025. In addition to the new TPNW State Party Ghana, the BWC gained two parties (Comoros and Kiribati). There were, however, no new accessions or ratifications to the CTBT, CWC, or the NPT in 2025. The most recent accession to the CWC was by Palestine in 2018. Palestine was also the most recent State to adhere to the NPT, in 2015. The latest to join the CTBT was Papua New Guinea, in 2024.

The most ratified WMD treaty is the CWC, to which only four States are not yet party. One of the four has signed, and three are outliers.⁸ At the end of 2025, the NPT had five outliers,⁹ the BWC had four signatories and four outliers¹⁰ and the CTBT nine signatories and ten outliers.¹¹

As shown in Figure 5 opposite, a total of 73 States have now adhered to all of the five key multilateral WMD treaties, while 102 have adhered to four of the five treaties, fourteen States to three of the five, four States (India, Pakistan, Somalia, and Syria) to only two of the treaties, and three (Egypt, North Korea, South Sudan) to only one. Only one State, Israel, has not adhered to any of the five key WMD treaties.

Where a State is not yet a party to a treaty, this is noted in its respective State profile on www.banmonitor.org, along with a recommendation for urgent adherence. States that have adhered to all of the five treaties and in addition also to a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) and Additional Protocol (AP) with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) are highlighted in their State profiles as examples to be followed by other States.

FIGURE 4: Gaps in adherence – WMD treaties compared, as of 31.12.2025



8 CWC: Israel has signed, while the three outliers are Egypt, North Korea, and South Sudan.

9 NPT: The five outliers are India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, and South Sudan. Note that the Cook Islands and Niue have not adhered to the NPT in their own right, but New Zealand's ratification of the NPT included territorial application to both States, which remain bound by the Treaty's provisions.

10 BWC: The four signatories are Egypt, Haiti, Somalia, and Syria, and the four outliers are Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Israel.

11 CTBT: The nine signatories are China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, Nepal, Russia, Somalia, the United States, and Yemen. The ten outliers are Bhutan, India, Mauritius, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Syria, and Tonga.

FIGURE 5: Progress towards universalization of the five key WMD treaties, status as of 31.12.2025

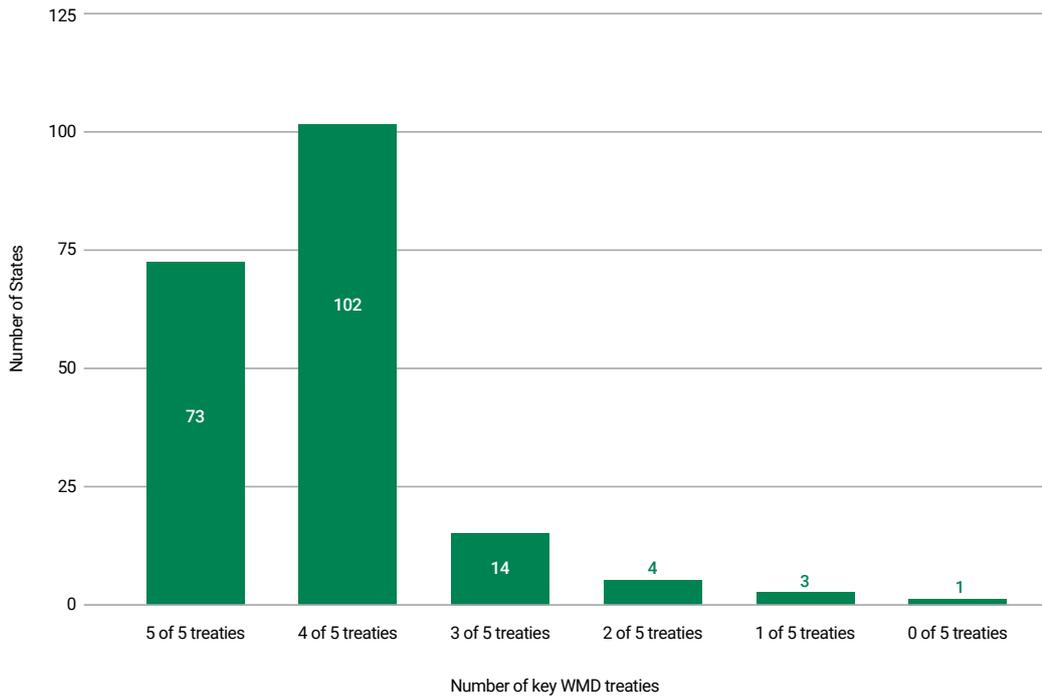


TABLE C: All States by region and their position on the TPNW

Category	Asia	Europe	Africa	Americas	Oceania
States Parties (74 States)	Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Palestine, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam.	Austria, Holy See, Ireland, Malta, San Marino.	Benin, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa.	Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela.	Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.
Signatories (25 States)	Brunei, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nepal.	Liechtenstein.	Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe.	Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Haiti.	
Other supporters (41 States)	Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bhutan, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Yemen.	Andorra, Cyprus.	Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda.	Suriname.	Papua New Guinea, Tonga.
Undecided (13 States)	Armenia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Syria, Tajikistan.	Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, Switzerland.			Australia, Marshall Islands.
Opposed (44 States)	China, India, Israel, Japan, North Korea, Pakistan, South Korea.	Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Kingdom.		Argentina, Canada, United States.	Micronesia.

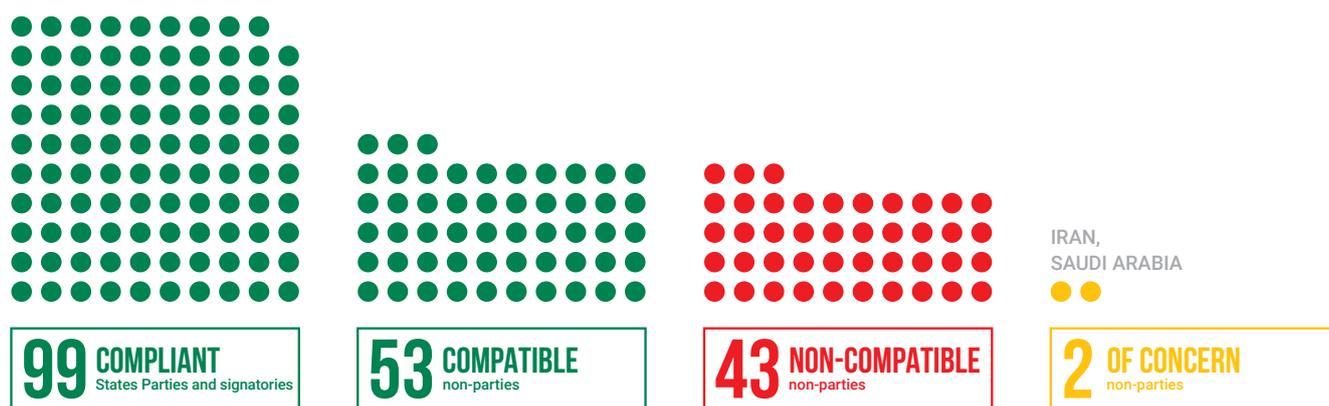


A Russian Yars intercontinental ballistic missile launcher is photographed on 7 May 2025 while driving in downtown Moscow during preparations for the general rehearsal of the annual military parade ahead of Victory Day celebrations in Red Square two days later. Photograph © Maxim Shipenkov, EPA/NTB

COMPLIANCE AND COMPATIBILITY IN 2025 WITH THE PROHIBITIONS OF THE TPNW

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) establishes a comprehensive set of prohibitions that are necessary for the creation and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. A total of 152 States—77% of the world’s total—already act in accordance with all of the TPNW’s prohibitions. However, a significant minority of 43 States not party (nearly 22%) engaged in activities in 2025 that conflicted, in various ways, with the treaty’s prohibitions. The actions of this minority create nuclear risks that affect the security of all States. Of the 43 non-compatible States, 32 (more than 74%) are European. Progress towards the elimination of nuclear weapons will therefore depend to a considerable extent on policy shifts in Europe.

FIGURE 6: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibitions of the TPNW: Summary of findings across all States



In ten sections below, the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor provides interpretations of each of the ten principal prohibitions that are set out in Article 1 of the TPNW.¹ It also assesses whether each of the 197 States that are eligible to adhere to the TPNW—regardless of whether it has done so yet—acts in accordance with those prohibitions. The findings are summarized here. Based on their policies and practices in 2025, States Parties and signatories are categorized by the Ban Monitor as either ‘compliant’ or ‘non-compliant’, while non-parties are categorised as ‘compatible’ or ‘non-compatible’. Where a State is assessed as being ‘of concern’, this means that developments signal a potential breach of the relevant norm by that State and therefore warrant close monitoring.

¹ See Annex 1 for the treaty text. Article 1(1)(e) of the TPNW contains eleven distinct prohibitions: To 1) develop, 2) test, 3) produce, 4) possess or stockpile, 5) use, 6) threaten to use, 7) transfer, 8) receive transfer or control, 9) assist, encourage, or induce anyone to engage in prohibited activity, 10) seek or receive assistance to engage in prohibited activity, and 11) allow stationing, installation, or deployment of nuclear weapons. Given their close relationship, the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor considers the two distinct prohibitions on development and production of nuclear weapons together. For practical reasons, therefore, the Ban Monitor discusses a total of ten principal prohibitions.

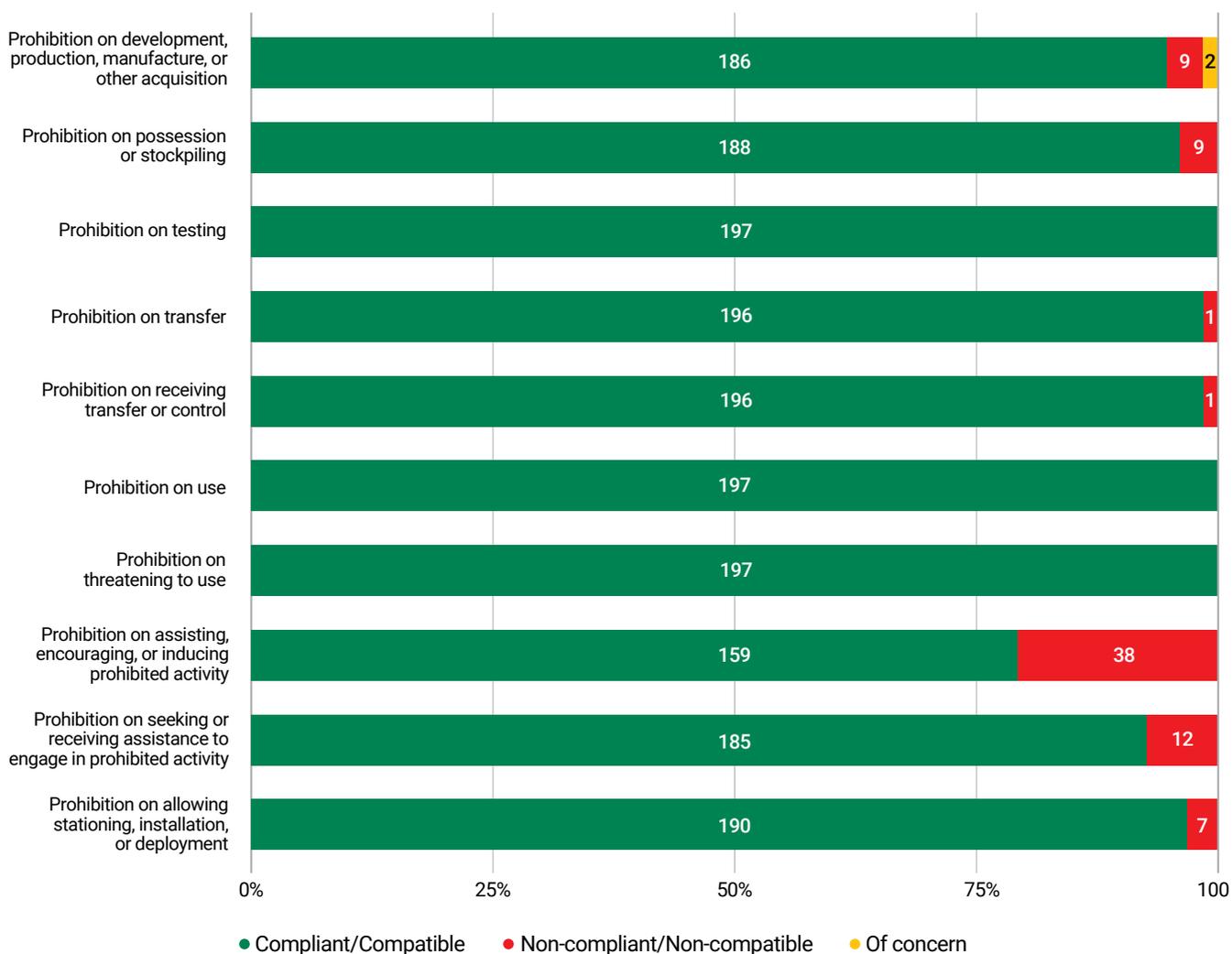
As Figure 6 above shows, the Ban Monitor finds that all 99 TPNW States Parties and signatories fully complied with all ten of the treaty’s prohibitions throughout 2025. Among the other 98 non-parties, the conduct of 53 was likewise fully compatible with all of the treaty’s prohibitions. By contrast, 43 non-parties engaged in conduct in 2025 that was not compatible with one or more of the prohibitions. The remaining two non-parties—Iran and Saudi Arabia—both of which had differing degrees of latent nuclear weapons development capability in 2025, were again recorded as States of concern.

Every State may sign and ratify the TPNW. The 53 States not yet party whose conduct is already fully compatible with all of the treaty’s prohibitions can adhere to the TPNW without needing to alter their existing policies or practices to meet its obligations. The 43 remaining States not yet party whose conduct currently conflicts with the TPNW would need to make varying adjustments to their policies and practices in order to meet the treaty’s obligations.

COMPLIANCE AND COMPATIBILITY BY PROHIBITION

Figure 7 below, which disaggregates the Ban Monitor’s findings for 2025 by prohibition, also demonstrates that the great majority of States have policies and practices that are compliant or compatible with all of the prohibitions of the TPNW. The only three prohibitions for which no State was found non-compatible in 2025 were those on testing, use, and threats to use nuclear weapons.² This underscores the urgent need to reject and roll back policies and activities that conflict with the other prohibitions, as such conduct compounds the risks of further threats and ultimately testing or use of nuclear weapons.

FIGURE 7: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibitions of the TPNW: Summary by prohibition



² Aggressive rhetoric regarding nuclear weapons use did indeed occur in some nuclear-armed States also in 2025, but no examples were identified that amounted to a threatening to use under international law. See page 59 for more information.

It follows that the world's nine nuclear-armed States are responsible for the most significant prohibited conduct. China, France, India, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States continued in 2025 to engage in activities fundamentally incompatible with several of the TPNW's prohibitions. All nine remained in conflict with the prohibition in Article 1(1)(a) on developing, producing, manufacturing, or otherwise acquiring nuclear weapons, as well as with the prohibition in the same provision on possessing or stockpiling them.

As in previous years, one nuclear-armed State—the United States—continued to contravene the prohibition in Article 1(1)(b) on the transfer of nuclear weapons or their key components. One State—the United Kingdom—continued to contravene the prohibition in Article 1(1)(c) on receiving such transfer.

The TPNW's comprehensive set of prohibitions has also brought into sharper focus the role played by non-nuclear-armed States that have arrangements of extended nuclear deterrence with one or more nuclear-armed allies. These are the so-called nuclear 'umbrella' States (see Text Box 1 on page 15 for more information).

As in previous years, the prohibition of the TPNW most widely contravened in 2025 was Article 1(1)(e), which prohibits assisting, encouraging, or inducing prohibited activities. The policies and practices of a total of 38 States not party were assessed as not compatible with this provision. The vast majority of these were the world's 33 umbrella States. Also one State with a nuclear-free defence posture (the Marshall Islands) was again found not compatible with this prohibition, along with four nuclear-armed States (France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States). TPNW State Party Kazakhstan, which in the previous edition of the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor was assessed as non-compliant with the prohibition on assistance after having allowed Russia in 2024 to use a firing range on its territory as an impact area for a test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), was in 2025 found fully compliant with this prohibition, as no such test launch appears to have taken place in that year.

A total of twelve States not party (five nuclear-armed States and seven umbrella States) were found in 2025 to have contravened the prohibition in Article 1(1)(f) on seeking or receiving assistance with a prohibited activity. This was one more than in 2025, as North Korea was added for seeking and possibly receiving assistance from Russia for its development of nuclear weapons.

Finally, together with the United Kingdom, six umbrella States—Belarus, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Türkiye—contravened the TPNW's prohibition on allowing the stationing, installation, or deployment of another State's nuclear weapons on their territory.

BOX 2: The TPNW and nuclear deterrence

The TPNW does not explicitly prohibit or even mention 'nuclear deterrence', because deterrence is not a specific activity but a psychological state that may, or may not, exist in the mind of an adversary. However, the TPNW prohibits a range of specific activities typically undertaken with the aim of generating nuclear deterrence, including development and possession of nuclear weapons, hosting a foreign State's nuclear weapons, threatening to use nuclear weapons, or assisting or encouraging, or other States to engage in such conduct. Crucially, these activities are prohibited irrespective of whether they succeed in fostering 'deterrence' in the minds of potential adversaries.

COMPLIANCE AND COMPATIBILITY BY REGION

Figure 8 overleaf presents the Ban Monitor's compliance and compatibility findings for 2025 by region. As it shows, Africa continues to stand out as the only region in which all States maintain policies and practices that are fully compliant or compatible with the TPNW's prohibitions.

Europe remains the region with by far the largest number of States whose conduct conflicts with the treaty. Of the 47 States in Europe, 32 (68%) were in 2025 found to have policies and practices that were not compatible with one or more of the TPNW's prohibitions. This reflects the high concentration of umbrella States in Europe. As discussed in the previous chapter, 29 (88%) of the world's 33 umbrella States are located in this region. The 32 incompatible States in Europe comprise three nuclear-armed States—France, Russia, and the United Kingdom—and the region's 29 umbrella States.

Figure 9 overleaf further illustrates Europe's prominent role: these same 32 European States account for more than 74% of the 43 States globally whose conduct in 2025 conflicted with one or more of the TPNW's prohibitions.

In Asia, only nine of the region's 45 States were assessed as non-compliant or non-compatible, but five of those are nuclear-armed States (China, India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan). The two States identified as 'of concern'—Iran and Saudi Arabia—are also in Asia. In the Americas, only two States (Canada and the United States) continued in 2025 to engage in conduct that was not compatible with the TPNW, while in Oceania this applied to Australia and the Marshall Islands.

It is the nine nuclear-armed States that are primarily responsible for exposing the entire world to unacceptable nuclear risks. While those nine nuclear-armed States are spread out across the Americas, Asia, and Europe, policies that endorse and perpetuate nuclear armament are particularly widespread in Europe. Consequently, policy shifts in this region in favour of nuclear disarmament could provide considerable impetus toward a world without nuclear weapons.

Table D opposite provides an overview of the States whose conduct in 2025 was not compatible with one or more of the TPNW's prohibitions, or that were assessed as 'of concern', broken down by region and prohibition. For further information on individual States, see the following sections on the respective prohibitions and the State profiles at www.banmonitor.org.

FIGURE 8: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibitions of the TPNW: Summary of findings by region

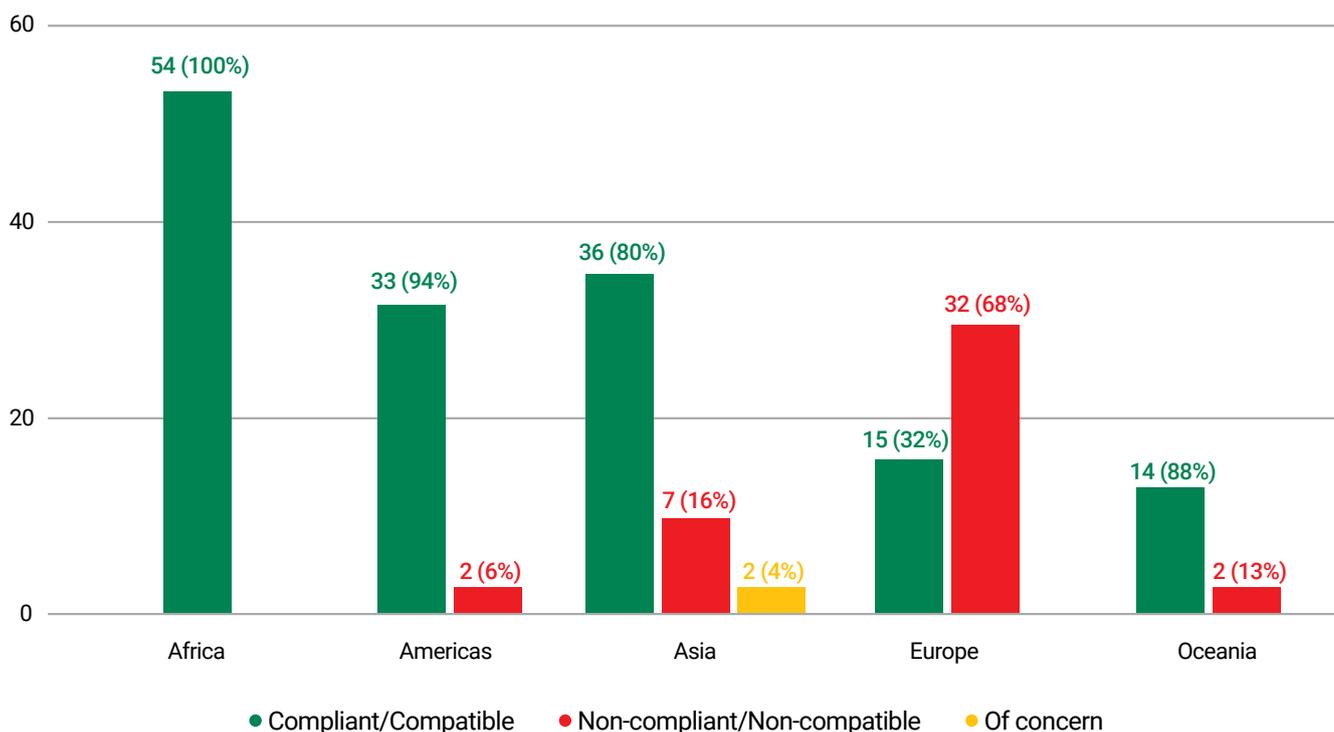


FIGURE 9: Regional distribution of the States with policies and practices that in 2025 were not compatible with one or more of the prohibitions of the TPNW

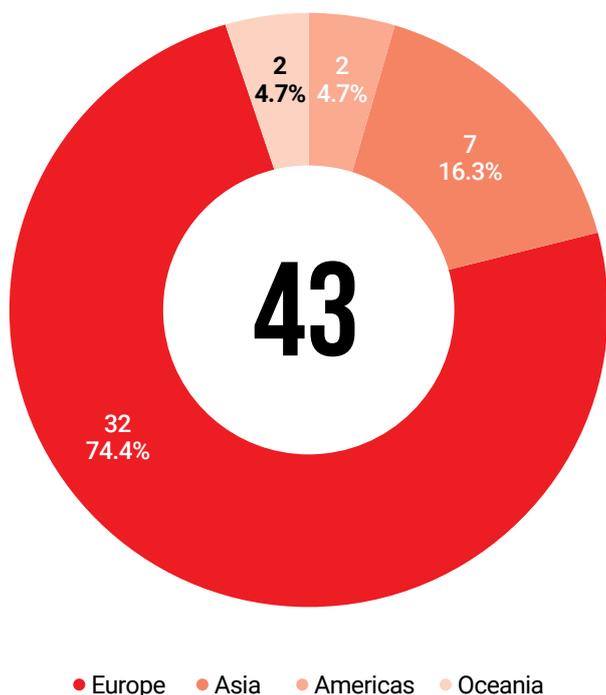


TABLE D: Overview by region of States with policies or practices that in 2025 were non-compatible with, or of concern in relation to, one or more of the TPNW's prohibitions

TPNW Article	Art 1(1)(a)	Art 1(1)(a)	Art 1(1)(a)	Art 1(1)(b)	Art 1(1)(c)	Art 1(1)(d)	Art 1(1)(d)	Art 1(1)(e)	Art 1(1)(f)	Art 1(1)(g)
Prohibition	Prohibition on development, production, manufacture, or other acquisition	Prohibition on possession or stockpiling	Prohibition on testing	Prohibition on transfer	Prohibition on receiving transfer or control	Prohibition on use	Prohibition on threatening to use	Prohibition on assisting, encouraging or inducing prohibited activity	Prohibition on seeking or receiving assistance to engage in prohibited activity	Prohibition on allowing stationing, installation or deployment
Asia										
China	Non-compatible	Non-compatible								
India	Non-compatible	Non-compatible								
Iran	Of concern									
Israel	Non-compatible	Non-compatible								
Japan								Non-compatible		
North Korea	Non-compatible	Non-compatible							Non-compatible	
Pakistan	Non-compatible	Non-compatible								
Saudi Arabia	Of concern									
South Korea								Non-compatible		
Europe										
Albania								Non-compatible		
Belarus								Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible
Belgium								Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible
Bulgaria								Non-compatible		
Croatia								Non-compatible		
Czechia								Non-compatible		
Denmark								Non-compatible		
Estonia								Non-compatible		
Finland								Non-compatible		
France	Non-compatible	Non-compatible						Non-compatible	Non-compatible	
Germany								Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible
Greece								Non-compatible		
Hungary								Non-compatible		
Iceland								Non-compatible		
Italy								Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible
Latvia								Non-compatible		
Lithuania								Non-compatible		
Luxembourg								Non-compatible		
Montenegro								Non-compatible		
Netherlands								Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible
North Macedonia								Non-compatible		
Norway								Non-compatible		
Poland								Non-compatible	Non-compatible	
Portugal								Non-compatible		
Romania								Non-compatible		
Russia	Non-compatible	Non-compatible						Non-compatible	Non-compatible	
Slovakia								Non-compatible		
Slovenia								Non-compatible		
Spain								Non-compatible		
Sweden								Non-compatible		
Türkiye								Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible
United Kingdom	Non-compatible	Non-compatible			Non-compatible			Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible
Americas										
Canada								Non-compatible		
United States	Non-compatible	Non-compatible		Non-compatible				Non-compatible	Non-compatible	
Oceania										
Australia								Non-compatible		
Marshall Islands								Non-compatible		

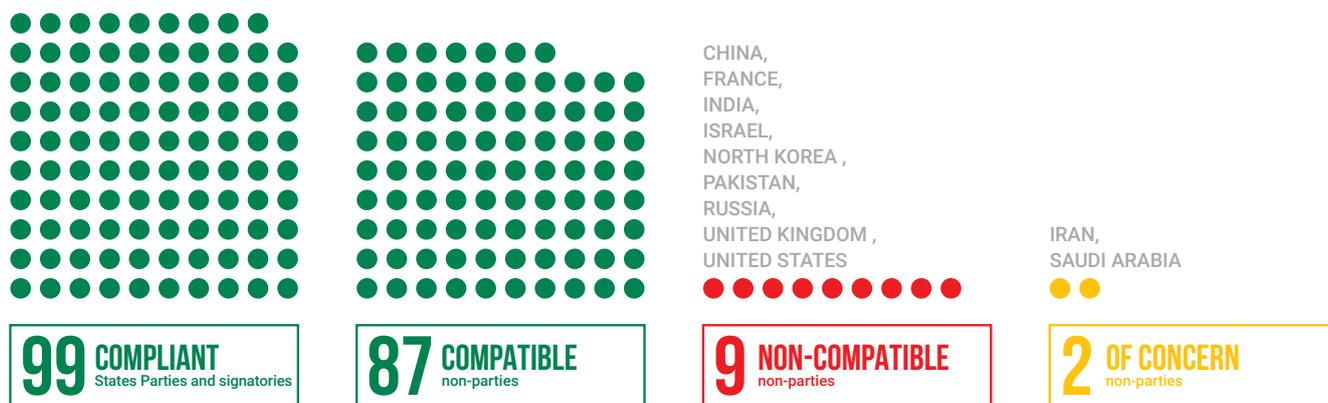


Nuclear missiles are shown in a military parade held in Beijing on 3 September 2025 to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War. Photograph © Zhang Cheng, Xinhua/NTB

THE PROHIBITION ON DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, AND OTHER ACQUISITION

The nine nuclear-armed States continued to engage in conduct in 2025 that was not compatible with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) prohibition on developing, producing, manufacturing, or otherwise acquiring nuclear weapons. Two further States not party to the TPNW—Iran and Saudi Arabia—were again recorded as States of concern. While discussion on the possibility of pursuing nuclear armament had been steadily rising in several other States not party to the TPNW, most notably across Europe as well as in Japan and South Korea, these discussions escalated in 2025 and early 2026 to fears of Russian and Chinese expansionism and a perceived degradation of American commitments to extended nuclear deterrence.

FIGURE 10: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibition on development, production, or other acquisition



Although most nuclear-armed States brand their ongoing development and production efforts as nuclear ‘modernization’, their actions go well beyond simple maintenance and sustainment operations. In reality, every nuclear-armed State continued actively to develop and produce new nuclear warheads and/or delivery vehicles in 2025, in addition to upgrading their existing nuclear capabilities. Concerningly, several countries which had previously been focused on stewardship of their existing stockpiles are now shifting their nuclear enterprises towards production of entirely new warheads.

Moreover, against the backdrop of rising global tensions and the erosion of bilateral strategic arms control, many nuclear-armed States are increasing the roles of nuclear weapons in their military doctrines and committing tremendous sums of money towards their nuclear programmes. In 2025, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) documented that spending by the nine nuclear-armed States on their arsenals surged to a combined total of US\$100 billion in 2024. This was an increase of almost US\$10 billion over the preceding year.¹ Nuclear deterrence is an increasingly fragile system and nuclear weapons are a source of constant insecurity. Nevertheless, nuclear deterrence as a security ideology remains a core driver of investment in expensive and expansive nuclear modernization.

¹ ICAN, ‘Hidden Costs: Nuclear Weapons Spending in 2024’, June 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aTpigA>.

Nuclear modernization is typically prompted by several interlocking factors, including the long timelines and inertial process of weapons development; the tremendous influence of corporate lobbyists on nuclear policy decisions; and the lack of arms control treaties keeping arsenals in check. Nuclear modernization is also an inherent feature of the 21st-century nuclear arms competition, as States continuously seek to maximize the number, types, and characteristics of their weapon systems for every conceivable conflict scenario. These actions are often framed by nuclear-armed States as an effort to stabilize the arms race by negating their adversaries' advantages. But the endless pursuit of 'stability' has typically resulted in new research and development for nuclear weapons.²

Finally, nuclear-armed States are becoming increasingly opaque about their nuclear forces. This is highly problematic, as ambiguity about nuclear stockpiles, deployments, and employment policies can lead to worst-case assumptions about how countries will develop or use nuclear weapons in the future.

During the Cold War, the two superpowers took pains to make sure their nuclear and conventional military capabilities were operated separately. But increasingly that line is being blurred. Russia and China, in particular, continue to develop dual-capable systems that are specifically designed to deliver either nuclear or conventional payloads. This poses a serious challenge for crisis stability: if a salvo of dual-capable missiles were to be detected in flight, how would the targeted country know whether the payloads were nuclear or conventional? And would countries be able to target those dual-capable missiles without that same country assuming that a nuclear attack was incoming?

The year 2025 also saw the rise of a renewed intermediate-range nuclear arms race – a class of weapon that had previously been banned for the United States and Russia under the now-defunct 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.³ Both the United States and Russia are developing weapons that would have fallen within the scope of that treaty. While the United States' INF-range weapons are expected to be conventional only, Russia's Oreshnik intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) is dual-capable and has already been used in combat in Ukraine.

The Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor collaborates with the Nuclear Information Project of the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) to estimate and analyse global nuclear forces. The following summary provided by FAS is intended to be a snapshot of the primary nuclear developments for each of the nine nuclear-armed States in 2025. It is not an exhaustive overview.⁴

RUSSIA

Russia's strategic nuclear modernization programme has been mired in multi-year delays and budgetary overruns prompted by programmatic inefficiencies, poor quality control, economic sanctions, and competing prioritization with conventional munitions production due to Russia's war in Ukraine.⁵ Nowhere is this more apparent than in regard to its effort to replace its Soviet-era intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with a flagship new Sarmat heavy ICBM. This is more than eight years behind schedule and has failed many more test-launches than it has passed, including its two most recent tests in 2024 and 2025 that also significantly damaged their launch infrastructure.⁶

Despite these setbacks, Russia continues to make progress on testing some new types of strategic delivery systems. In October 2025, Russia tested its new Burevestnik nuclear-powered cruise missile to a claimed distance of 14,000 kilometres and flight time of approximately 15 hours.⁷ This test followed several catastrophic failures of the same system, however, and it is likely several years away from operational deployment. In 2025, Russia also appeared to deploy its new Oreshnik IRBM, which can carry up to six submunitions, to Belarusian territory.⁸ The Oreshnik is distinct from traditional weapon systems that carry multiple independently-targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs) in that it is dual-capable, further complicating the entanglement challenges described above.

In 2025, Russia's eighth improved Borei-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), the *Knyaz Pokharsky*, was delivered to the Russian Navy for entry into service and assigned to the Northern Fleet at Gadzhiyev.⁹ In addition, following a decade of construction, in November 2025 Russia launched its new 'special purpose' submarine, *Khabarovsk*, which is designed to carry new nuclear-armed Poseidon torpedoes.¹⁰ Russia claimed to have tested the Poseidon in October 2025.¹¹ Russia has also continued to modernize its fleet of legacy strategic bombers, although some of its newer development programmes are suffering from significant delays amid damage to the airframes from Ukrainian drone strikes.¹²

2 See generally B. Wilson, *Strange Stability: How Cold War Scientists Set Out to Control the Arms Race and Ended Up Serving the Military-Industrial Complex*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2025.

3 Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles; signed at Washington, DC, 8 December 1987; entered into force, 1 June 1988. The Treaty was defunct as of 2 August 2019.

4 For more detailed overviews of each State's nuclear developments, see FAS, 'Status of World Nuclear Forces', <https://bit.ly/4aMXvuk>.

5 M. Starchak, 'Why Russia's Nuclear Forces Are No Longer Being Updated', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 23 January 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aBdSvC>.

6 E. Marcuz (@Etienne_Marcuz), Post on X, 28 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/3ZTufNB>.

7 President of Russia, 'Visit to the Joint Force command post', 26 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/3ZTl9QW>.

8 Republic of Belarus, 'Lukashenko addresses rumors about Oreshnik location in Belarus', 19 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rwFO9u>; M. Duitsman, D. Eveleth, and J. Lewis, 'Possible Oreshnik Deployment in Belarus', Blog post, Arms Control Wonk, 26 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/30t9gyl>.

9 President of Russia, 'Церемония подъёма флага на атомном крейсере «Князь Пожарский»', 24 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aRuiuy>; Sevmarsh, 'Ракетный подводный крейсер «Князь Пожарский» прибыл в пункт постоянного базирования на Северном флоте', 2 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aTsdJj>.

10 Sevmarsh, 'На предприятии ОСК Севмаш состоялась церемония вывода из эллинга атомной подводной лодки «Хабаровск»', 1 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qWgclC>.

11 Reuters, 'Russia tests nuclear-capable Poseidon super torpedo, Putin says', 29 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4sdJ61r>.

12 M. Collett-White, P. Kumar Dutta, and M. Zafra, 'How Ukraine pulled off an audacious attack deep inside Russia', *Reuters*, 4 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/30yOY8M>.

THE UNITED STATES

The United States is in the midst of a wide-ranging modernization programme to upgrade or replace every nuclear warhead and delivery system in its nuclear arsenal. The cost of this programme could reach US\$2 trillion, and it is expected that this will serve to maintain nuclear weapons in the US nuclear arsenal through most of the remainder of this century.

Similarly to Russia, the United States' nuclear modernization programme has also been beset by multi-year delays and budgetary overruns, with several key nuclear procurement programmes breaching key congressional statutes and triggering renewed scrutiny. These programmes include the Sentinel ICBM—which has been delayed by approximately four years and will cost more than 80 per cent above original projections—and the new Columbia-class SSBN, which in 2025 was estimated by the Navy to be delayed by approximately 17 months, necessitating a life-extension programme for up to five existing Ohio-class submarines.¹³

In May 2025, following the completed production of its B61-12 gravity bomb at the end of the previous year, the United States completed its First Production Unit of the new B61-13, which is designed for 'the defeat of certain harder and large-area military targets'.¹⁴ In 2025, a modified W80—the W80-5—was also chosen as the warhead for the nuclear-armed sea-launched cruise missile, which became a formal 'programme of record' in 2024.¹⁵

Notably, in recent years, the expansion of China's nuclear arsenal and its growing economic and military power have been framed as a 'three-body problem', with particular emphasis on how the United States can deter both Russia and China in a tripolar nuclear relationship. While not yet official US policy, a prominent narrative continued throughout 2025, particularly in the final months of the New START treaty that expired in early February 2026, that this could require a near-term increase in the number of deployed US nuclear weapons. This involved uploading additional warheads to deployed US bombers and ballistic missiles, as well as a longer-term expansion to the current modernization programme of record that could ultimately increase the overall size of the US nuclear arsenal. It remains to be seen whether such actions will take place; it would likely depend on whether the United States and Russia are able to agree to respect the New START Treaty's central limits in the absence of a formal treaty structure.

CHINA

China's nuclear stockpile is expected to increase significantly in the next decade, although its arsenal is still expected to remain much smaller than that of either Russia or the United States. It is possible that China's stockpile could reach approximately 1,000 warheads by the end of the decade, although this would likely require a political decision to divert plutonium produced at China's new CFR-600 fast-breeder reactors for military use.

In 2025, China continued rapid construction and likely loading operations at all three of its new solid-fuel missile silo fields—into which the US Department of Defense assessed in 2025 that China had loaded more than 100 missiles—and additional liquid-fuel missile silos further south, totalling approximately 350 new silos. In its September 2025 Victory Day parade, China featured several nuclear-capable systems that had not been previously displayed, including a likely silo loader for its DF-31 class ICBMs and a new DF-61 ICBM, which appears to have strong similarities to the DF-41.¹⁶

China has also continued to build additional SSBNs, including Type 094s and next-generation Type 096s, and deploying its new long-range JL-3 submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). China is also developing a new type of strategic bomber aircraft, which will presumably be able to carry China's new JL-1 air-launched ballistic missile, which was also showcased at the parade for the first time.

China's silo-based launchers and SSBN deterrence patrols could indicate that China may now be deploying a small number of its warheads on missiles during peacetime, marking a change in its long-standing policy of keeping warheads and missiles de-mated. The Pentagon believes these actions, coupled with development of a robust early warning capability, could also indicate China's intent to move to a launch-on-warning posture similar to that of the United States or Russia.¹⁷

13 J. Kirschbaum, 'Air Force Actions Needed to Expediently Address Critical Risks to Sentinel Transition', Government Accountability Office, GAO-25-108466, September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rCcpuB>; US Department of Defense, 'DOD Press Briefing Announcing Sentinel ICBM Nunn-McCurdy Decision', Transcript, 8 July 2024, <https://bit.ly/30zrajK>; M. Korda and M. Knight-Boyle, 'The Two-Hundred Billion Dollar Boondoggle', FAS, June 2025, <https://bit.ly/4tRQbXf>; R. O'Rourke, 'Navy Columbia (SSBN-826) Class Ballistic Missile Submarine Program: Background and Issues for Congress', Congressional Research Service, R41129, 4 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/456s313>; J. Katz, 'Navy planning to execute 3-year Ohio-class sub life extensions', Breaking Defense, 7 November 2023, <https://bit.ly/30CByH1>.

14 US Department of Energy, 'NNSA completes assembly of the first B61-13 nuclear gravity bomb ahead of schedule', National Nuclear Security Administration, 19 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/4tXlsrD>.

15 S. Salem, 'W80-5 "just came up," will go on SLCM-N, weapons directors say', Exchange Monitor, 30 January 2026, <https://bit.ly/4aB4Iim>; Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, 'Statement of administration policy: HR 2670—National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024', 10 July 2023, <https://bit.ly/4aDmKk6>; and US Public Law 118-31, signed into law on 22 December 2023, HR 2670, <https://bit.ly/4aEZhyQ>, pp. 460–62.

16 CGTN Europe, 'Full Video: China's 2025 V-Day Military Parade', 4 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4sfgrLf>; H. Kristensen, E. Johns, M. Korda, and M. Knight-Boyle, 'Nuclear Weapons At China's 2025 Victory Day Parade', FAS, 4 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/46r2lXq>.

17 US Department of Defense (US DOD), 'Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2025', Annual Report to Congress, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, DC, 23 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/46r4KXw>.

THE UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom has committed to a comprehensive nuclear modernization programme that includes replacing its SSBNs, re-entry bodies, and warheads. This programme is expected to keep nuclear weapons in the UK military arsenal until at least 2065. In 2025, the United Kingdom continued to build its next generation of Dreadnought-class SSBNs. It also continued to advance its programme to construct a new warhead, the Astrea, which will be based on the United States' planned W93 warhead.

The UK government released a new Strategic Defence Review in 2025 that continued its 'triple lock' commitment to nuclear weapons iterated the previous year. The government committed to building four new nuclear submarines; to maintaining Britain's continuous at-sea nuclear deterrence; and to making all future upgrades that may be needed.¹⁸

In a significant shift in its nuclear policy, in June 2025 the United Kingdom announced the purchase of 12 new nuclear-capable F-35As from the United States and its intention to join NATO's nuclear-sharing mission. These aircraft will be based at RAF Marham, which will also eventually be equipped to host US nuclear gravity bombs in the 2030s in a similar manner to ongoing upgrades at RAF Lakenheath.¹⁹

FRANCE

France is modernizing both of its nuclear delivery systems – its SLBMs and air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMs). France is in the process of developing a new SSBN (SNLE 3G), a third iteration of its M51 SLBM (M51.3), and a follow-on hypersonic ALCM—the ASN4G—scheduled for deployment in 2035. In March 2025, President Emmanuel Macron announced plans to reactivate the nuclear mission at Luxeuil-Saint-Sauveur air base with the introduction of two additional Rafale squadrons by 2035.²⁰ In March 2026, President Emmanuel Macron also announced that France would increase its nuclear warhead stockpile as part of a shift in its deterrence posture.²¹

ISRAEL

Israel is modernizing its arsenal of land-based ballistic missiles and may be upgrading its plutonium and warhead production facility. In 2025, Israel continued its significant construction effort at its Dimona nuclear weapons facility. Given the age of the legacy reactor at Dimona, it is possible that this construction may be for a new heavy water reactor for plutonium production, or possibly another facility related to Israel's nuclear mission.²²

In 2025, Israel's sixth submarine—the first of which to apparently feature a vertical launch system within its sail—began sea trials.²³ The new submarine, as well as the future Dakar-class, could potentially be used to carry dual-capable missiles.

INDIA

India is in the midst of completing and operationalizing its relatively nascent nuclear triad, and is modernizing its existing nuclear forces to place increased emphasis on prompt missile launches and mobile basing modes. This ongoing development was characterized in 2025 by missile test launches of both India's new Agni-V IRBM (which had been tested the previous year with MIRV capability) and a test of the new Agni-P medium-range ballistic missile (MRBM) from a rail-based launcher for the first time.²⁴ Unlike earlier versions of Agni missiles, both the Agni-V and the Agni-P will be deployed in new mobile canister systems, which will reduce the time required to launch the missiles in a crisis because they can be transported with the warhead installed.

India is also continuing to develop its ballistic missile submarine force. Its third SSBN, INS *Aridhaman*, neared completion in 2025 and was scheduled to be inducted into service in 2026.²⁵ In 2025, India continued to develop its longer-range K-4 SLBMs, which it tested from INS *Arighaat* in December.²⁶

PAKISTAN

Pakistan continued in 2025 to invest in its nuclear weapons programme despite substantial economic turmoil. It is expanding its fissile material production and is in the process of building a nuclear triad, placing particular emphasis on developing several short-range, tactical nuclear-capable weapon systems specifically designed to deter large-scale conventional strikes against, or incursions into, Pakistani territory. In 2025, Pakistan also continued development of its new dual-capable land-based ballistic missiles, including the capability to deliver MIRVs.

18 HM Government, 'The Strategic Defence Review 2025 – Making Britain Safer: secure at home, strong abroad', 8 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4cPQxY1>.

19 HM Government, 'UK to purchase F-35As and join NATO nuclear mission as Government steps up national security and delivers defence dividend', 24 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/401E7ou>.

20 French Ministry of the Armed Forces, 'Retour de la dissuasion nucléaire à Luxeuil-Saint-Sauveur', 19 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4b9uSsG>.

21 'Speech by the President of the Republic on France's nuclear deterrence', 2 March 2026, <https://bit.ly/4uzA5Sa>.

22 J. Gambrell, 'Construction intensifies at site linked to Israel's suspected nuclear program, satellite photos show', *Associated Press*, 3 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aB5wUq>.

23 Marine Forum, 'Submarine for Israel undergoing trials', 31 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/40vulep>.

24 Press Information Bureau, 'Successful test-firing of 'Agni 5' Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile', Indian Ministry of Defence, 20 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4c9Wn6p>; K. Dewey, C. Wiley, and J. Dempsey, 'On track: India's rail-based Agni-Prime', *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 4 February 2026, <https://bit.ly/4lFFycV>.

25 S. Gupta, 'Arihant class nuclear-powered submarine S4* likely to be named INS Arisudani', *Hindustan Times*, 5 January 2026, <https://bit.ly/4b9vzCi>.

26 S. Gupta, 'India nears sea-based nuclear triad as K-4 missile clears key test', *Hindustan Times*, 25 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/4cfQPat>.

NORTH KOREA

Throughout 2025, North Korea continued to advance its fissile material production activities, including likely uranium enrichment and reprocessing campaigns, in addition to construction at various facilities connected with its nuclear programme. In 2025, North Korea continued to unveil and test new missile systems with incremental improvements over their predecessors, including the new 'next-generation' Hwasong-20 ICBM, as well as regional systems with advanced manoeuvrability. The solid-fuel Hwasong-20 appears to be designed with MIRV capability in mind. In September 2025, Vice Foreign Minister Kim Son Gyong told the United Nations General Assembly that North Korea will never relinquish nuclear weapons as this would be 'tantamount to demanding it to surrender sovereignty and right to existence'.²⁷

Throughout 2025, North Korea's missile production capabilities and infrastructure appear to have been boosted by Russian procurement of North Korean technologies for use in Ukraine.²⁸ It is likely that these corresponding technology transfers are flowing in both directions, meaning that North Korea's engineering capacity could in turn be boosted by Russia's expertise in missile production.

STATES OF CONCERN

The Ban Monitor continues to list Iran and Saudi Arabia as States of concern in relation to the TPNW's prohibition on developing, producing, manufacturing, or otherwise acquiring nuclear weapons. Iran and Saudi Arabia do not possess nuclear weapons, but both have latent nuclear breakout capabilities. Therefore, in the event that either State intended to become party to the TPNW, possible compliance issues would need to be addressed by a Meeting of States Parties or a Review Conference.

IRAN

Iran's nuclear programme underwent significant disruption in 2025, largely due to Israeli and American strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities and assassinations of key scientific personnel. The strikes appeared to damage key sites at Fordow, Isfahan, and Natanz, although it is unclear how much of the damage permeated the extensive underground facilities at these sites. Despite the Trump administration's claims that Iran's nuclear programme was 'totally obliterated', media reporting and leaked intelligence analyses indicated that Iran's nuclear programme—while certainly set back—could be reconstituted within relatively short order.²⁹

In addition, the uranium that had already been enriched to 60% purity levels remains in Iran without International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) access. In June 2025, immediately prior to the Israeli and American strikes, the IAEA estimated that Iran possessed a stockpile of approximately 440.9 kilograms of uranium enriched up to 60% purity—an increase of more than 250 kilograms from the previous year—in addition to another 184.1 kg of uranium enriched up to 20%.³⁰ Very little additional work is required to enrich uranium from 20% purity to weapons-grade quality.

In September, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany reimposed sanctions against Iran that had been suspended with the entry into force of the Joint Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015. In November 2025, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian is reported to have said the nuclear programme is intended to 'meet the essential needs of the people and enhance national welfare' and that 'building a nuclear weapon is not on our agenda and they [Western States] know this well'.³¹ In December 2025, the spokesperson for Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, Behrouz Kamalvand, said Iran had made significant nuclear advances and that developing an atomic bomb would be straightforward should a decision be made to do so.³²

At the end of February 2026, Israel and the United States again attacked Iran. Israel and Iran continued to bombard each other's territory as the Ban Monitor was going to press, with the conflict spilling across the region.³³

SAUDI ARABIA

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince has long insisted that if Iran develops nuclear weapons, then so will Saudi Arabia.³⁴ Although Saudi Arabia's capabilities are much further behind Iran's, the nation possesses a sizable stockpile of mineable uranium ore; it has announced the intention to build several nuclear reactors across the country; and it possesses several types of ballistic missiles that could be used to deliver nuclear warheads.

27 'North Korea tells UN: We will never give up nuclear program', *Reuters*, 29 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aXir30>.

28 C. Zwirko, 'North Korea showcases new long-range nukes at rain-soaked military parade', *NK News*, 11 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rgXc1j>; J. Daly, 'How Russia Is Supercharging North Korea's War Machine', *United 24 Media*, 17 April 2025, <https://bit.ly/3N3XVog>.

29 A. Roth, W. Christou, and J. Borger, 'Donald Trump says US has attacked three Iranian nuclear sites and "totally obliterated" them', *The Guardian*, 22 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/4tTPvQS>; N. Bertrand, K. B. Lillis, and Z. Cohen, 'Exclusive: Early US intel assessment suggests strikes on Iran did not destroy nuclear sites, sources say', *CNN*, 25 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/4cywg9B>.

30 'Verification and monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in light of United Nations Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), Report by the Director General', IAEA doc. GOV/2025/50, 3 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qVgRU4>.

31 'Pezeshkian says Iran will bolster nuclear program, rules out bomb', *Iran International*, 2 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rDAUra>.

32 'Iran boasts of nuclear advances, calls building an atomic bomb a simple task', *Iran International*, 20 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/4tKT3Fd>.

33 'US, Israel launch attack on Iran, explosions in Israel, Gulf Arab States', *Al Jazeera*, 28 February 2026, <https://bit.ly/3N8P84s>.

34 S. Fortinsky, 'Saudi crown prince on Iran acquiring nuclear weapons: "If they get one, we have to get one"', *The Hill*, 20 September 2023, <https://bit.ly/4b05Ad4>.

In 2025, Saudi Arabia formally accepted implementation of a full-scale Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement to replace its Small Quantities Protocol, which had previously exempted it from IAEA monitoring and inspections obligations. This allows for much more stringent monitoring of Saudi Arabia's nuclear facilities, although it remains unclear whether Riyadh intends to adopt the Additional Protocol as well. Saudi Arabia and the United States agreed a Civilian Nuclear Cooperation agreement in November 2025 but it is not clear if it allows for uranium enrichment in the Kingdom.³⁵

NATIONAL DEBATES TO WATCH

In 2025, there was also increasing debate in several States on whether to acquire their own nuclear weapons. The national debate in the following States is now particularly important to follow, and the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the TPNW should communicate to these States that any new State that develops or acquires nuclear weapons will be met with global condemnation and expansive sanctions.

GERMANY

In Germany, debate continued in 2025 on whether it should consider developing nuclear weapons in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine and perceptions of weakening commitment on the part of the Trump administration to providing extended nuclear deterrence to Europe. It appears, however, that German leaders are prioritizing engagement with the United Kingdom and France over a new type of deterrence arrangement rather than developing one of their own.³⁶ A YouGov poll in Germany in April 2025 found that 49% of respondents opposed an indigenous nuclear weapons programme with 34% in favour. However, a different poll found that 64% of respondents wanted a European nuclear capability independent of the United States.³⁷

JAPAN

The Japanese government and policy elite continue to seek a balance between responding to military security threats posed by North Korea, China, and Russia through the development of its military forces and the nuclear alliance with the United States, and security through nuclear disarmament that is widely supported by Japanese civil society. Repeatedly in 2025, senior Japanese lawmakers called for a debate on nuclear sharing and a review of Japan's traditional three non-nuclear principles policy not to possess, manufacture, or host nuclear weapons.³⁸ Elected in October 2025, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has, however, equivocated on whether she intends to push for a change to those principles as her administration begins the process of formulating a new defence strategy.³⁹

SOUTH KOREA

In South Korea, discussion about the acquisition of nuclear weapons continued in response to North Korea's nuclear arsenal and the 'strategic partnership' signed between Russia and North Korea in June 2025. The return to the US presidency of Donald Trump and concerns about the long-term reliability of US protection have also fuelled the debate. In February 2025, South Korean Foreign Minister, Cho Tae-yul, said that developing nuclear weapons to counter North Korea was 'not off the table'.⁴⁰ Professor Lami Kim reported in April 2025 that 'the majority of conservative candidates—Kim Moon-soo, Oh Se-hoon, and Hong Joon-pyo—support nuclear armament'.⁴¹ In the same month, a public opinion poll found that 76% of South Koreans supported the nation developing nuclear weapons.⁴² However, in December 2025, President Lee Jae-myung said that pursuit of nuclear weapons by South Korea would turn the country 'into North Korea' as a sanctioned pariah State.⁴³

South Korea's path towards nuclear latency could become easier after it obtained approval from the Trump administration in 2025 to proceed with its planned acquisition of nuclear-powered attack submarines – a capability that the nation has long sought. In addition, the Trump administration approved South Korea's planned enrichment capabilities and spent fuel reprocessing. The White House's fact sheet stated that the United States 'supports the process that will lead to the ROK [South Korea]'s civil uranium enrichment and spent fuel reprocessing for peaceful uses'.⁴⁴

35 'Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Solidifies Economic and Defense Partnership with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia', The White House, 18 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/30BByH7>.

36 'Der Kanzler – Das Interview', Podcast Machtwechsel, 18 February 2026, <https://bit.ly/4aN0N0c>.

37 L. Höller, 'Most Germans want Europe to have its own nuclear umbrella, poll finds', *Defense News*, 23 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aEZZeb>.

38 T. Kelly, J. Geddie, J. Park, J. Lee, J. Smith, and D. Lague, 'Trump shock spurs Japan to think about the unthinkable: nuclear arms', *Reuters*, 19 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4kVoeJZ>.

39 T. Kelly, and J. Geddie, 'Japan reaffirms no-nukes pledge after official floats weapons idea', *Reuters*, 19 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/3MvXbZ3>.

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41 L. Kim, 'Will South Korea's Nuclear Ambitions Subside in the Next Five Years?', *CSIS*, 7 April 2025, <https://bit.ly/4asAzBR>.

42 Asan Poll: "South Koreans and Their Neighbors 2025". Record 76.2% Public Support for Nuclear Armament, Asan Institute, 28 April 2025, <https://bit.ly/3Op3T3r>.

43 J. Kim, 'Pursuing nukes would transform Seoul into "second North Korea", officials warn', *NK News*, 2 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qMkFAM>.

44 The White House, 'Joint Fact Sheet on President Donald J. Trump's Meeting with President Lee Jae Myung', 13 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/3N4dSe7>.

BOX 3: What is a nuclear weapon?

- As is the case with the NPT, the TPNW does not define 'nuclear weapons' or 'other nuclear explosive devices'. There is, though, a settled understanding among States of these terms.
- A nuclear explosive device is an explosive device whose effects are derived primarily from nuclear chain reactions.
- A nuclear weapon is a nuclear explosive device that has been weaponized, meaning that it is contained in and delivered by, for example, a missile, rocket, or bomb.
- Thus, all nuclear weapons are a form of nuclear explosive device but not all nuclear explosive devices are nuclear weapons.

ARTICLE 1(1)(a) - INTERPRETATION

Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to: 'Develop, ... produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire ... nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.'

- The prohibited 'development' of a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device encompasses any of the actions and activities intended to prepare for its production. This covers relevant research, computer modelling of weapons or warheads, and the testing of key components, as well as sub-critical testing (i.e. experiments simulating aspects of nuclear explosions using conventional explosives and without achieving uncontrolled nuclear chain reactions).
- The concepts of 'production' and 'manufacture' overlap significantly, covering the processes that are intended to lead to a completed, useable weapon or device. In general parlance, 'production' is a broader term than 'manufacture': manufacture describes the use of machinery to transform inputs into outputs. Taken together, these concepts encompass not only any factory processes, but also any improvisation or adaptation of a nuclear explosive device.
- The prohibition on 'otherwise acquiring' a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device is a catch-all provision that encompasses any means of obtaining nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices other than through production. This could be through import, lease, or borrowing from another source or, in theory, by recovering a lost nuclear weapon or capturing or stealing one. This prohibition overlaps with the one in Article 1(1)(c) on receiving the control over nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (discussed below).
- The prohibition on development, production, manufacturing, and acquisition also covers key components. It is widely accepted that the missile, rocket, or other munition, including both the container and any means of propulsion and launch capability, are key components in a nuclear weapon. Test-launches of missiles designed to carry nuclear weapons are often used to validate particular systems or subcomponents and therefore constitute prohibited development of nuclear weapons. Delivery platforms such as aircraft and submarines are not key components of nuclear weapons as such, and are therefore not in and of themselves captured by the prohibitions in Article 1. They may, however, of course be integral to a nuclear-weapon system, and any components of a delivery platform that are designed specifically for the launching of nuclear weapons are indeed captured by the prohibitions in Article 1.
- Development and production of dual-use components, such as navigation or guidance systems, which could be used in both nuclear and conventional weapons, would only be prohibited under the TPNW when they were intended to be used in nuclear weapons.
- Key components are also the fissile material (plutonium or highly enriched uranium) and the means of triggering the nuclear chain reaction. Production or procurement of fissile material constitutes prohibited development when this is done with the intent to produce nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. To research, produce, and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is permitted both under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the TPNW.
- Under Article II of the NPT, a similar obligation is imposed not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, but this applies only to the non-nuclear-weapon States designated under the treaty and does not prohibit the designated nuclear-weapon States from continuing to develop, produce, and manufacture nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

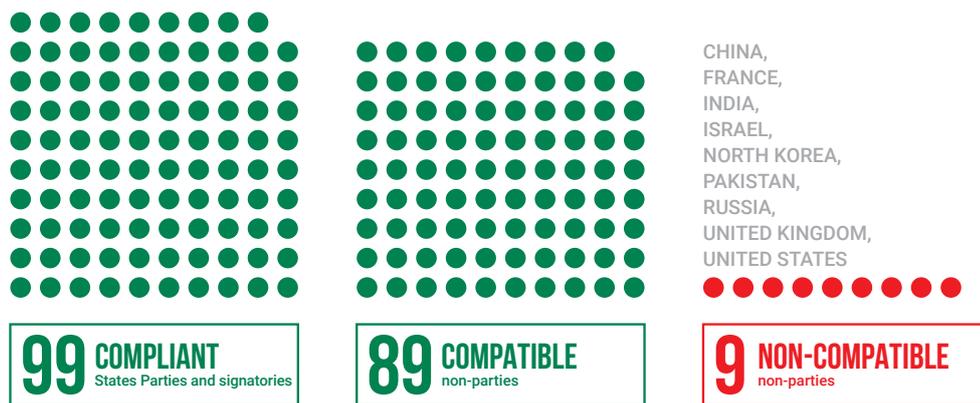


A member of the 90th Missile Maintenance Squadron prepares to disassemble Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) components during a weapons transfer operation near Sydney, Nebraska on 5 February 2025. This operation involves transporting ICBM components to F. E. Warren Air Force Base for routine maintenance. Photograph © US Air Force Airman 1st Class Mattison Cole

THE PROHIBITION ON POSSESSION AND STOCKPILING

The Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor collaborates with the Nuclear Information Project of the Federation of American Scientists to estimate and analyse global nuclear forces. At the beginning of 2026, the nine nuclear-armed States had a combined inventory of approximately 12,187 nuclear warheads, which is, of course, incompatible with the TPNW’s prohibition on possession and stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

FIGURE 11: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibition on possession and stockpiling



The world’s nuclear warhead inventories at the beginning of 2026 are summarized in Table E and Figure 12 overleaf. The total inventory of warheads continued to slowly decrease by approximately 144 from 12,331 warheads in early 2025 to 12,187 in early 2026. This reduction was only, however, due to Russia and the United States dismantling a small number of previously retired nuclear weapons during the course of 2025. Of the total inventory at the beginning of 2026, 2,442 warheads have previously been retired and are awaiting dismantlement in Russia, the United States, and France.

The number of warheads available for use by the military increased in 2025 for the ninth year in a row, to an estimated 9,745 warheads with an estimated collective explosive yield equivalent to more than 135,000 Hiroshima bombs. This represents an increase of 141 warheads since the beginning of 2025 and 473 since 2017, when the global stockpile of warheads available for use reached an all-time low of 9,272 warheads. The number of warheads available for use has risen steadily since 2017 and is expected to continue to do so.

Estimates of nuclear warhead inventories can fluctuate from year to year depending on a variety of factors like routine maintenance, the changing pace of warhead retirement, and modernization schedules. As a result, it is more appropriate to consider the general trends of each country’s inventory over several years. The stockpiles of Israel and the United States are generally stable (although the United States has plans to increase its arsenal), while China, India, North Korea, Pakistan, and Russia all continued to expand their nuclear arsenals in 2025. In March 2026, France too announced that it would increase the number of nuclear warheads for the first time in decades. The UK government in 2021 announced a significant increase to the upper limit of its warhead inventory compared with previous plans, but there is no publicly available evidence to indicate that such an increase has begun.

Combined, the United States and Russia now possess approximately 86% of the world’s total inventory of nuclear weapons and 83% of the stockpiled warheads available for use by the military. These percentages have been shrinking over the past few years and are likely to continue to do so as other States increase their nuclear arsenals.

Meanwhile, the number of warheads dismantled each year appears to be decreasing, and the dismantlement rate is no longer keeping pace with the number of new warheads that are entering global nuclear stockpiles. As demonstrated in Figure 15 on page 40, this means we could soon reach a point where also the total number of nuclear weapons in the world will actually increase for the first time since 1986.

TABLE E: The world's nuclear warhead inventories at the beginning of 2026

	Russia	United States	China	France	United Kingdom	India	Pakistan	Israel	North Korea	Total
 Total inventory of warheads ^A	5,420 ↓	5,042 ↓	620 ↑	370 ^F ↑	225 ^H	190 ↑	170 ↑	90	60 ↑	12,187 ↓
 Retired warheads for dismantlement	1,020 ↓	1,342 ↓	0	80 ^F ↑	0	0	0	0	0	2,442 ↓
 Warheads available for use ^B	4,400 ↑	3,700	620 ↑	290	225	190 ↑	170 ↑	90	60 ↑	9,745 ↑
 Deployed strategic warheads ^C	1,796 ↑	1,670	34 ↑	280	120	12 ↑	0	0	0	3,912 ↑
 Deployed non-strategic warheads ^C	0 ^D	100 ^E ↑	0	0 ^G	0	0	0	0	0	100
 Warheads in reserve	2,604 ↑	1,930	586 ↑	10	105	178 ↑	170 ↑	90	60 ↑	5,733 ↑
 Estimated yield in megatons	970.8 Mt ↑	678.7 Mt ↓	305.8 Mt ↑	41 Mt	22.5 Mt	5.3 Mt ↑	3.4 Mt	2.5 Mt	3 Mt ↑	2,032.8 Mt ↓
 Hiroshima-bomb equivalents	64,719 ↑	45,244 ↓	20,383 ↑	2,733	1,500	351 ↑	226	165	200 ↑	135,521 ↓

Source: Nuclear Information Project, Federation of American Scientists. The arrows refer to general trends over the last few years. Red upwards arrows (↑) indicate increasing numbers, and green downward arrows (↓) indicate decreasing numbers.

- A.** Includes both warheads available for use and retired warheads.
- B.** Includes both deployed warheads and warheads in reserve.
- C.** Deployed warheads are either deployed on a delivery vehicle or at a base with delivery vehicles.
- D.** Russia's non-strategic nuclear weapons are believed to be in storage and not co-located with their launchers, and therefore are not formally counted as 'deployed'; however, many regional storage sites are located relatively close to their launcher garrisons and in practice warheads could be transferred to their launch units on short notice.
- E.** It is possible that the US number of deployed non-strategic warheads in Europe has increased to approximately 120.
- F.** The observed increase in France's total nuclear warhead inventory relative to 2024 is assessed to be a temporary effect associated with an ongoing transition to a newer warhead, where the legacy warheads are expected to be dismantled in the near term. France has, however, announced that it will increase its stockpile.
- G.** Fifty of France's nuclear warheads are for short-range air-launched cruise missiles that the French military considers to be strategic.
- H.** The United Kingdom has announced an increase in the upper limit of its nuclear warhead stockpile, reflecting an intension to increase the stockpile.

FIGURE 12: The world's nuclear warhead inventories at the beginning of 2026 (in total 12,187)



Federation of American Scientists, Status of World Nuclear Forces, <https://fas.org/initiative/status-world-nuclear-forces/>

INCREASED NUCLEAR SECRECY

States are increasingly—and unnecessarily—withholding information about their nuclear arsenals from their publics, allies, and adversaries. In particular, States that had previously been more transparent about their nuclear arsenals recently decided to stop providing details about the sizes of their nuclear stockpiles and the numbers of warheads they have deployed. After two years of denying declassification requests, the Biden administration in 2024 declassified the size of the United States (US) stockpile and the number of dismantled warheads;¹ however, this practice has yet to continue under the second Trump administration.

The United Kingdom (UK) government announced in 2021, and reaffirmed in its 2025 Strategic Defence Review, that it would no longer disclose how many warheads it deploys.² In March 2026, France too announced that it would no longer provide information on its exact number of nuclear warheads.³

This trend of increased nuclear secrecy poses challenges for understanding trends in nuclear arsenals, undercutting efforts to increase transparency. Furthermore, arms control treaties, most notably New START, which previously provided some semblance of stockpile transparency for the United States and Russia, expired on 5 February 2026.

At the same time that official transparency is decreasing, adversarial transparency—when States publish estimates of potential adversaries' arsenals to justify increasing their own—is increasing. As strategic competition has grown, for example, the United States has begun to public estimates of Chinese and Russian nuclear arsenals, something it did not do before 2018.

DEPLOYMENT AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Of the global total of warheads available for use in early 2026, an estimated total of 4,012 (or 41.2%) were deployed, meaning that the warheads are either loaded on or co-located with delivery vehicles. The remaining 5,733 warheads were held in reserve. This was 108 more deployed warheads than a year earlier. The continued annual increases in deployed warheads is a worrying development, which raises the risks of rapid escalation, miscalculation or accidental use.

As shown in Figures 13 and 14 opposite, only France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States are thought to deploy a significant portion of their warheads on or with launchers. These warheads are deployed on siloed and mobile missiles, at bomber bases, and on nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs). China may have started deploying a small number of warheads on SSBNs and during ICBM brigade training, and India may occasionally deploy warheads on its SSBNs. It is believed that Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan keep all of their nuclear warheads in central storage during peacetime.

In total, around 2,058 nuclear warheads—51% of the world's deployed nuclear warheads—are deployed on SSBNs. At all times, a significant number of nuclear warheads are carried through the world's oceans on SSBNs on active patrol, ready to be launched at short notice. Each of the five following nuclear-armed States—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States—now deploys at sea at all times at least one SSBN, with the option of increasing the number during periods of heightened tension. For example, in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, France briefly deployed three SSBNs concurrently rather than just one.⁴ As of January 2026, the United States was operating 14 SSBNs capable of carrying nuclear weapons while Russia was operating 13; China 6; the United Kingdom 4; France 4; and India 3. North Korea has one ballistic missile submarine (SSB) which is not thought to be operational. Russia also has attack submarines that can launch nuclear weapons, as does Israel.

In addition to submarines, the nine nuclear-armed States operate a wide variety of delivery vehicles from which they can launch nuclear weapons, including siloed and mobile missiles, heavy bombers, tactical aircraft, surface ships and naval aircraft, and defensive systems. These systems all have vastly different characteristics, and thus each nation generally operates a unique combination of delivery systems in accordance with its respective strategy.

Table F overleaf provides an overview of the diversity of nuclear-capable delivery vehicles in each nuclear-armed State's arsenal, and the breakdown of the number of nuclear warheads that are currently deployed on or in reserve for each category of delivery vehicle. Russia has by far the most types of nuclear-capable delivery systems.

1 H. M. Kristensen, 'United States Discloses Nuclear Warhead Numbers; Restores Nuclear Transparency', FAS Strategic Security Blog, 20 July 2024, <https://bit.ly/4aVDmlw>.

2 UK Government, 'Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy', 2 July 2021, <http://bit.ly/3mnbQYL>; HM Government, 'The Strategic Defence Review 2025 – Making Britain Safer: secure at home, strong abroad', 8 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4cNBkqr>.

3 'Speech by the President of the Republic on France's nuclear deterrence', 2 March 2026, <https://bit.ly/4uzA5Sa>.

4 S. Jézéquel, 'Pourquoi la France a-t-elle fait appareiller trois sous-marins nucléaires au départ de l'Île-Longue?', *Le Télégramme*, 21 March 2022, <https://bit.ly/41EJFVt>.

FIGURE 13: Number of nuclear warheads deployed, by nuclear-armed State and by category of delivery vehicle

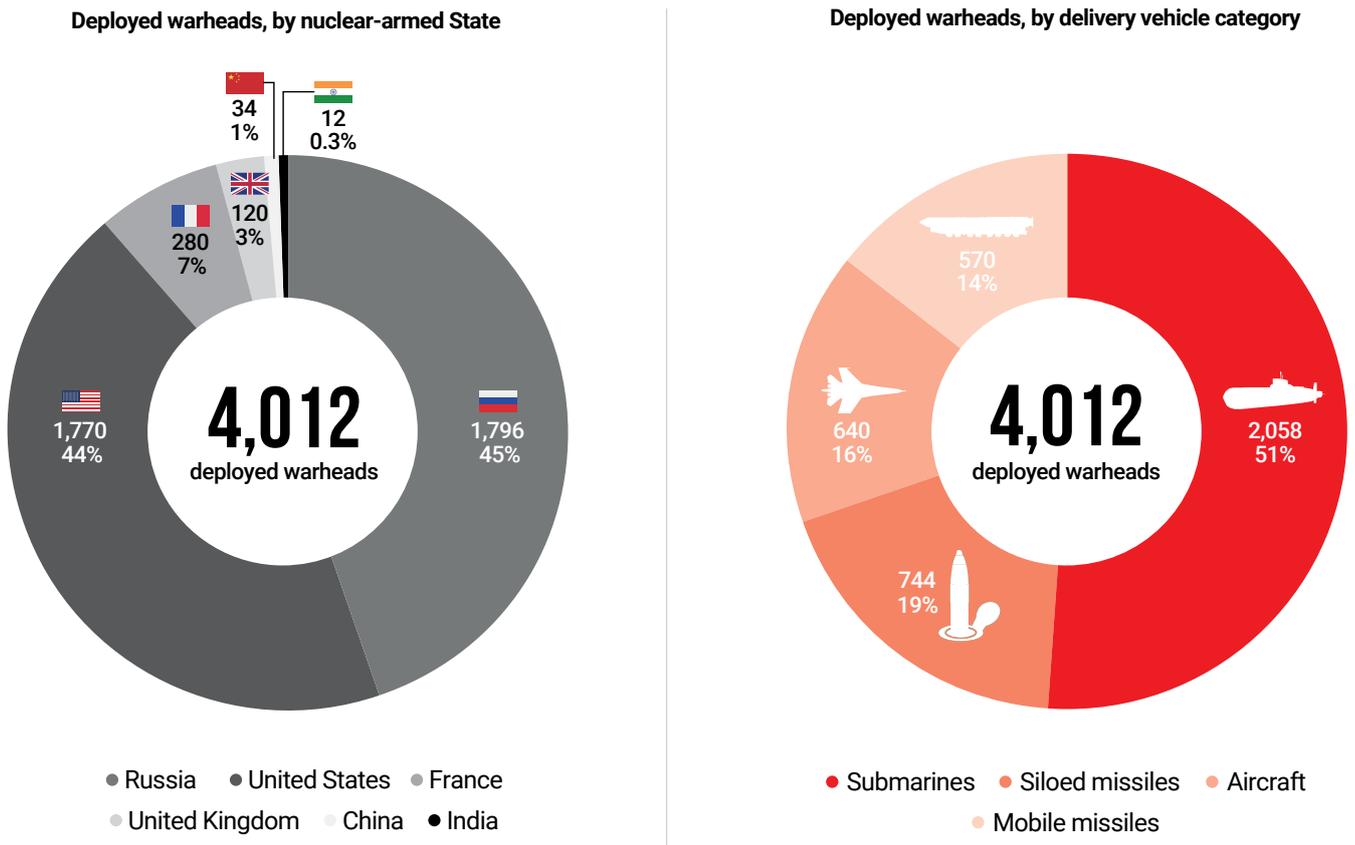
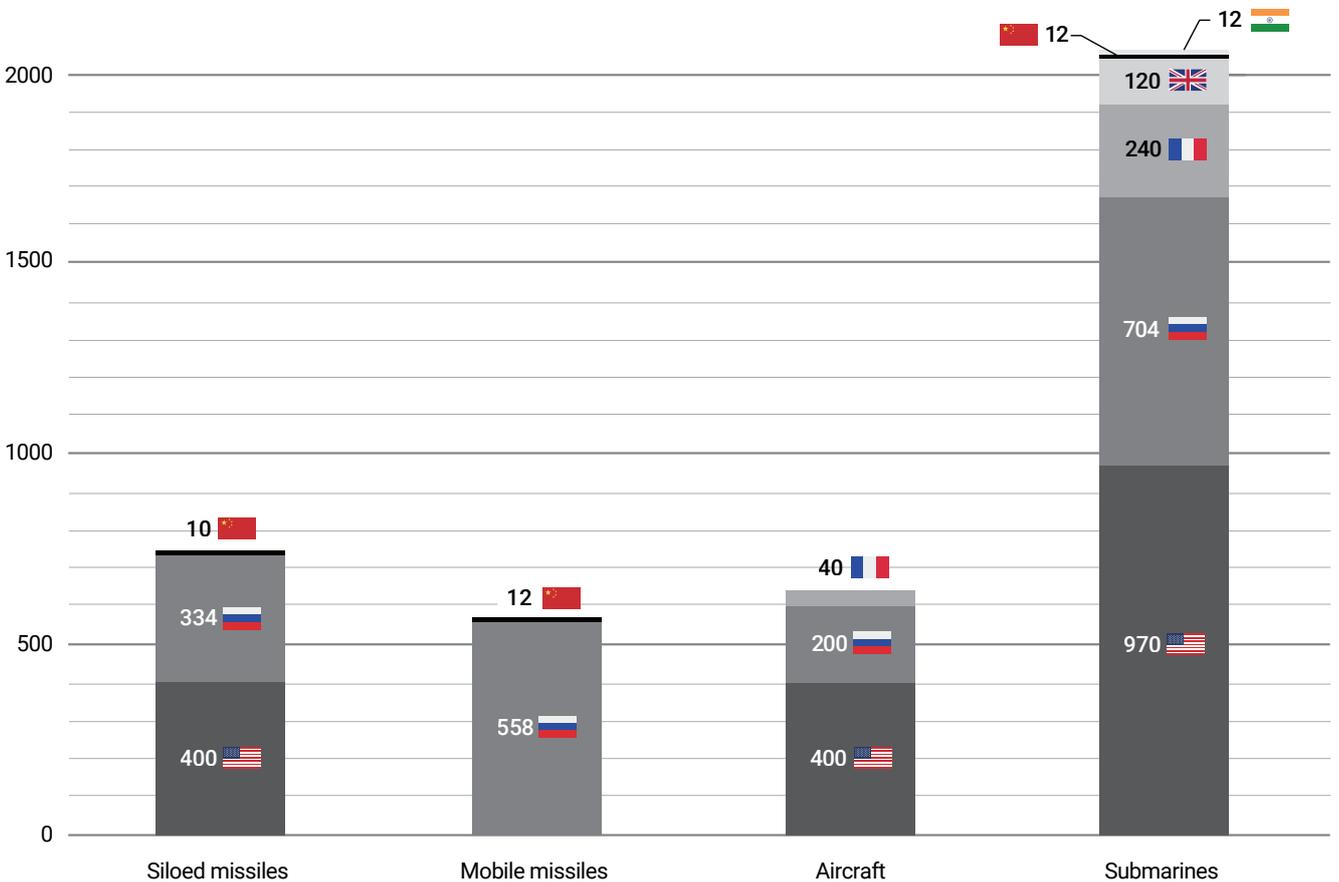


FIGURE 14: Deployment of nuclear warheads as of early 2026

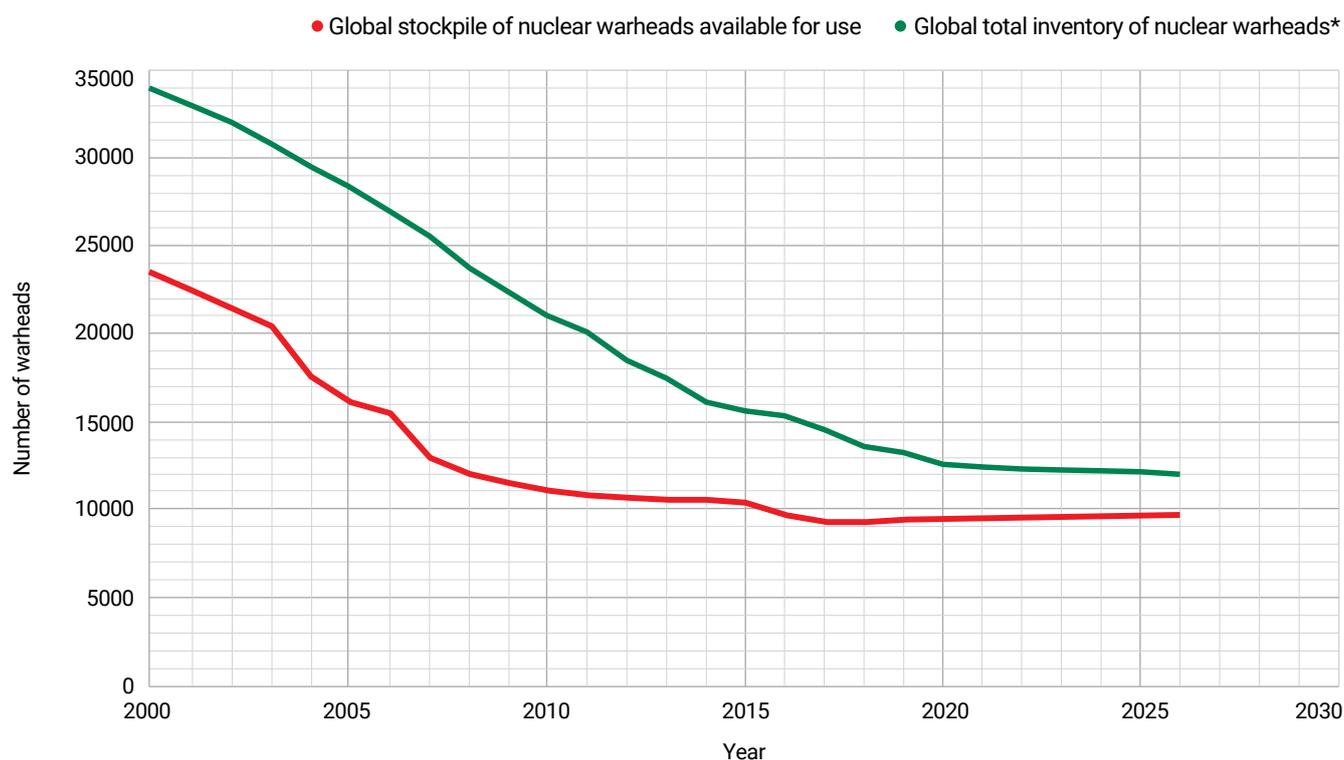


NON-STRATEGIC NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Until recently, the United States was the only State believed to deploy non-strategic warheads in other countries. In 2023, however, Russia announced that it had deployed nuclear weapons in Belarus. It has not been confirmed that this has involved the stationing on Belarusian territory of nuclear warheads, although satellite imagery clearly indicates developments at garrison at Asipovichy consistent with those typically seen at Russian nuclear storage sites.⁵ The other nuclear-armed States are believed to keep their non-strategic warheads in central storage during peacetime.

It is of further concern that several nuclear-armed States are placing increased emphasis on non-strategic nuclear weapons in their nuclear doctrine. Russia has added several types of non-strategic nuclear weapons, and North Korea declared in 2021 that it would work to ‘make nuclear weapons smaller and lighter for more tactical uses’, and it continued to develop and deploy those capabilities throughout 2025.⁶ Many analysts believe that this increased emphasis on nuclear warfighting could lower the nuclear threshold and increase the risk of nuclear use at the outset of a conflict.

FIGURE 15: The world’s total inventory of nuclear warheads compared with the number of stockpiled warheads available for use



* The total inventory of warheads includes both the warheads available for use and the retired warheads.

ARTICLE 1(1)(a) – INTERPRETATION

Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to: ‘possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices’.

- The prohibition on possession of any nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device under Article 1(1)(a) makes it illegal to have a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device.
- Possession does not require ownership.
- One nuclear weapon or other form of nuclear explosive device is sufficient to constitute a stockpile.
- The prohibition on possession covers activities such as maintenance and deployment of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Indirectly, it also acts to render nuclear deterrence practices unlawful.

5 H. M. Kristensen, M. Korda, E. Johns, and M. Knight-Boyle, ‘Russian nuclear weapons, 2025’, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (13 May 2025), <https://bit.ly/4r1S9S7>, pp. 208–37.

6 ‘On Report Made by Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un at Eighth Party Congress of WPK’, National Committee on North Korea, 9 January 2021, <https://bit.ly/3ZhQ4oa>.

TABLE F: Nuclear-weapon delivery vehicles fielded by the nuclear-armed States at the beginning of 2026, and the number of warheads (wh) currently deployed on or in reserve for them.^A

The delivery vehicle categories currently deployed with nuclear warheads are highlighted.

	Siloed missiles	Mobile missiles	Aircraft	Submarines	Surface ships and naval aircraft	Air/Coast/Missile defence
Russia	SS-18 ICBM SS-19 Mod 4 ICBM SS-27 Mod 1 ICBM SS-27 Mod 2 ICBM Deployed: 334 wh Reserve: 200 wh	SS-27 Mod 1 ICBM SS-27 Mod 2 ICBM 9K720 Iskander SRBM 9M728 Iskander GLCM 9M729 GLCM Oreshnik IRBM Deployed: 558 wh Reserve: 232 wh	Tu-160M1/M2 Tu-95MS/M Tu-22M3M Su-24M/M2 Su-34 Su-57 MiG-31K Deployed: 200 wh Reserve: 874 wh	Delta-IV SSBN Borei/-A SSBN Various SSGNs Various SSNs Deployed: 704 wh Reserve: 696 wh	A large range of surface ships and naval aircraft Reserve: 295 wh	A-135 ABM SH-08 Gazelle SSC-1B Sepal S-300/400 SAM P-800 ASCM Reserve: 307 wh
United States	Minuteman III ICBM Deployed: 400 wh Reserve: 400 wh		B-2A B-52H F-15E F-16C/D Deployed: 400 wh Reserve: 605 wh	Ohio-class SSBN Deployed: 970 wh Reserve: 925 wh		
China	DF-5A/B/C ICBM DF-31-class ICBM Deployed: 10 wh Reserve: 230 wh	DF-26 IRBM DF-31A/AG/B ICBM DF-41 ICBM Deployed: 12 wh Reserve: 276 wh	H-6N Reserve: 20 wh	Type 094 SSBN Deployed: 12 wh Reserve: 60 wh		
France			Rafale BF3/4 Deployed: 40 wh	Le Triomphant-class SSBN Deployed: 240 wh	Rafale MF3/4 Reserve: 10 wh	
United Kingdom				Vanguard-class SSBN Deployed: 120 wh Reserve: 105 wh		
India		Prithvi-II SRBM Agni-I SRBM Agni-II MRBM Agni-P MRBM Agni-III IRBM Agni-IV IRBM Agni-V IRBM Reserve: 110 wh	Mirage 2000H Jaguar IS Reserve: 48 wh	Arihant-class SSBN Deployed: 12 wh Reserve: 20 wh		
Pakistan		Abdali SRBM Ghaznavi SRBM Shaheen-I/A SRBM Shaheen-II MRBM Ghauri MRBM Nasr SRBM Babur-1A GLCM Reserve: 126 wh	Mirage III/V Reserve: 44 wh			
Israel		Jericho II MRBM Jericho III IRBM Reserve: 50 wh	F-16I F-15 Reserve: 30 wh	Dolphin-I/II SSGN Reserve: 10 wh		
North Korea^B		Hwasong-5/-6 SRBM Hwasong-11A/B/D SRBM KN25 SRBM Hwasong-7 MRBM Hwasong-9 MRBM Pukgukson-2 MRBM Hwasal-1/2 LACM Hwasong-12 IRBM Hwasong-15 ICBM Hwasong-17 ICBM Hwasong-18 ICBM Reserve: 60 wh				
Totals:	Deployed: 744 wh Reserve: 830 wh Total: 1,574 wh	Deployed: 570 wh Reserve: 854 wh Total: 1,424 wh	Deployed: 640 wh Reserve: 1,621 wh Total: 2,261 wh	Deployed: 2,058 wh Reserve: 1,816 wh Total: 3,874 wh	Reserve: 305 wh Total: 305 wh	Reserve: 307 wh Total: 307 wh

A. The table uses some national designations, and some US/NATO designations. It is possible that certain systems in the table are nearing retirement, or that they at the beginning of 2026 were nearing entry into the respective State's nuclear forces but not yet declared fully operational.

B. It is uncertain which of North Korea's missiles are assigned nuclear weapons and which are operational. North Korea has several additional types of delivery systems, but only those assessed to be possibly operational are listed in this table



The 'Sedan Crater', the result of a 'peaceful' underground nuclear test detonation at the Nevada Test Site in the United States on 6 July 1962. The explosion, which occurred 194 metres underground, was equivalent to 104 kilotons of explosive yield. Three seconds after detonation, hot gases burst through the ascending alluvial dome as the debris cloud climbed to 3,650 metres. The test displaced around 12 million tonnes of earth leaving a crater 98 metres deep and 390 metres in diameter. Photograph © Science Photo Library/NTB

THE PROHIBITION ON TESTING

No State engaged in conduct in 2025 that violated or was not compatible with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons' (TPNW) prohibition on the explosive testing of nuclear weapons. That said, there are continued risks of new test-detonations by China, North Korea, Russia, and the United States. The United States has alleged that China conducted—and hid—a nuclear test detonation on 22 June 2020. The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization has not been able to confirm or deny that a nuclear test occurred in Lop Nur on that day, confirming only that two seismic events 12 seconds apart did take place.

FIGURE 16: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibition on testing



NORTH KOREA

Despite the US allegations about China's conduct, the only State known to have conducted a nuclear test detonation in recent years remains the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). North Korea's last nuclear test detonation was in September 2017. At the end of October 2024, however, the South Korean Armed Forces told the nation's parliament that it was likely that North Korea had completed preparations for its seventh nuclear test.¹ In January 2026, Chairman Kim Jong Un declared that the Ninth Party Congress would 'clarify the next-stage plans for further bolstering the country's nuclear war deterrent'.² Any new nuclear test detonation by North Korea would violate United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions and contravene the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as well as, arguably, customary international law, in addition to being incompatible with the prohibition on testing in Article 1(1)(a) of the TPNW. It might also amount to threatening to use nuclear weapons.

CHINA

On 6 February 2026, the United States accused China of having 'conducted nuclear explosive tests, including preparing for tests with designated yields in the hundreds of tons'. Speaking at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Thomas G. DiNanno, US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control, claimed that one such test took place on 22 June 2020. He alleged that China used 'decoupling'—a technique designed to weaken seismic signals—to obscure evidence of testing from international monitoring systems. Mr DiNanno also said the US government had evidence that China was laying the groundwork for further explosive nuclear tests.³

1 T.-H. Kim, 'South Korean military says North Korea appears poised to conduct nuclear and ICBM tests', *Associated Press*, 30 October 2024, <https://bit.ly/3VaDIUj>.
2 'DPRK Missile Administration Test-fires Large-caliber MRLS', *KCNA*, Pyongyang, 28 January 2026, <https://bit.ly/4qHn5qN>. The Congress was due to convene in late February 2026. 'North Korea to convene 9th Congress in late February, KCNA reports', *Reuters*, 7 February 2026, <https://bit.ly/3ZnOxyA>.
3 Remarks by Thomas G. DiNanno, Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security, Statement to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 6 February 2026, <https://bit.ly/4rGII1R>.

Shen Jian, Deputy Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Office at Geneva, did not directly respond to the allegations but said that Beijing had always acted prudently and responsibly on nuclear issues. He accused Washington of exaggerating what he termed a 'so-called China nuclear threat'.⁴ China's last explosive nuclear test was ostensibly in July 1996, a few months prior to the adoption of the CTBT by the UN General Assembly.⁵ But new construction was reported in 2023 at China's Lop Nur nuclear test site.⁶ *The New York Times* reported in 2024 that a rig had drilled a vertical shaft at the site down to more than 500 metres.⁷ In 2025, it was again claimed that China continued to expand and develop its nuclear test site at Lop Nur.⁸

Later in February 2026, the United States reiterated its claim, declaring that a small earthquake, registering 2.75 on the standard scale, had been detected at a remote monitoring station run by the CTBTO in Kazakhstan.⁹ The Central Asian country borders the Xinjiang region of China, which is home to Lop Nur, its main nuclear test site. The International Monitoring System (IMS), which was established pursuant to the CTBT, still not in force, has not confirmed the test 'but has not denied it either, saying that the evidence was "inconclusive".¹⁰ The CTBTO said it had detected two 'very small' seismic events, 12 seconds apart, at 9.18am GMT. Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of the CTBTO, said further:

The IMS is currently capable of identifying events consistent with nuclear test explosions with a yield equivalent to or greater than approximately 500 tonnes of TNT. These two events were far below that level. As a result, with this data alone, it is not possible to assess the cause of these events with confidence.¹¹

THE UNITED STATES

In October 2025, US President Donald Trump had suggested that the United States might resume nuclear testing 'on an equal basis' with Russia and China, but without specifying the form that the testing might take.¹² The president posted on his social media platform, Truth Social, that: 'Because of other countries' testing programs, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our Nuclear Weapons on an equal basis'. Asked by reporters to elaborate on his statement, he said: 'We've halted many years ago, but with others doing testing I think it's appropriate to do so'.¹³ The US Department of Energy subsequently clarified that the United States will conduct 'non-critical explosions' that are not nuclear test-detonations,¹⁴ and legislation was introduced in the House of Representatives in November 2025 to prevent any president from authorizing such tests unilaterally.¹⁵

Under Secretary DiNanno referred to the remarks by the president in his 6 February 2026 statement to the Conference on Disarmament, declaring:

the United States will continue to pursue responsible pathways to reduce the number of nuclear weapons in the world, consistent with President Trump's vision and our obligation under the NPT, through both bilateral and multilateral venues. Together, we can prevent an unmitigated nuclear arms race, limit the build-up of nuclear arms, restore responsible behavior when it comes to nuclear testing, and, as appropriate, address issues concerning non-NPT nuclear weapons possessing States.¹⁶

The United States signed the CTBT in September 1996. As a signatory State, it would be unlawful for the United States to conduct a nuclear test detonation, at the least until it had declared that it would not be ratifying the treaty. Under the international law of treaties, each State is obliged 'to refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of a treaty' when it has signed it. This rule, which is codified in the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties,¹⁷ is also a rule of customary international law applicable to all States.¹⁸ If the United States were to resume explosive nuclear testing, other nations will perceive that as a threat and 'almost certainly' follow suit.¹⁹

4 Ibid.

5 Government of China, Statement on the Moratorium of Nuclear Tests, *Xinhua*, 29 July 1996, via <https://www.cnr.cn>; see Nuclear Threat Initiative, 'China Nuclear Overview', Fact Sheet, 29 April 2015 (last reviewed on 2 December 2025), <https://bit.ly/33iBvZ8>.

6 E. Cheung, B. Lendon and I. Watson, 'Exclusive: Satellite images show increased activity at nuclear test sites in Russia, China and US', *CNN*, 23 September 2023, <https://bit.ly/3ucftoL>.

7 W. J. Broad, C. Buckley, and J. Corum, 'China Quietly Rebuilds Secretive Base for Nuclear Tests', *The New York Times*, Updated 9 January 2024, <https://bit.ly/3Vcj5S6>.

8 C. Cadell, 'China rapidly expands nuclear test site as Trump revives Cold War tension', *The Washington Post*, 17 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/4tT1o9Z>.

9 R. Spencer, 'US accuses China of conducting secret nuclear test in desert', *The Times*, 17 February 2026, <https://bit.ly/4aGPxTq>.

10 Ibid.

11 'Statement by Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of the CTBTO', Vienna, 17 February 2026, <https://bit.ly/4q05zAR>.

12 H. Barber, 'US accuses China of secret nuclear explosive tests', *Daily Telegraph*, 6 February 2026, <https://bit.ly/4r45Mkq>.

13 R. Oliphant, 'Are we on the brink of a new nuclear arms race?', *Daily Telegraph*, 3 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qXEIZA>.

14 'US not planning nuclear explosions at this time, energy secretary says', *Reuters*, 3 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/45SJhXe>.

15 'Nuclear Testing Without Approval Act introduced in U.S. House of Representatives', *2 News Nevada*, 7 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/3Mt0IXS>.

16 Remarks by Thomas G. DiNanno to the Conference on Disarmament, 6 February 2026.

17 Art. 18(a), Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties; adopted at Vienna, 23 May 1969; entered into force, 27 January 1980.

18 US Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Law of War Manual*, June 2015 (Updated July 2023), Washington, DC, 2023, §19.2.3 and note 35.

19 J. Knox, 'We Need to Prevent a New Era of Nuclear Weapons Testing', Blog post, The Equation blog, Union of Concerned Scientists, 20 November 2024, <https://bit.ly/4fkVQqv>.



RUSSIA

Indeed, the Soviet Union/Russia undertook its last known explosive test in 1990 but in 2023 analysts reported an expansion of the nation's nuclear test site in Novaya Zemlya in the Arctic Ocean archipelago.²⁰ The site was where the Soviet Union conducted more than 200 nuclear tests, including the detonation of the world's most powerful nuclear explosive device ('Tsar Bomba') in 1961.²¹ In November 2023, Russia withdrew its ratification of the CTBT.²² In September 2024, Andrei Sinitsyn, the head of Russia's nuclear testing site, said that the facility was ready to resume nuclear tests 'at any moment' if Moscow gave the order.²³ In November 2025, following the remarks by President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his senior officials to draft proposals for a possible test of nuclear weapons.²⁴

HISTORY OF TESTING

Between 1945 and 2017, at least eight States—and most probably nine—conducted an estimated total of 2,069 nuclear tests involving 2,425 devices worldwide: China, France, India, Israel,²⁵ North Korea, Pakistan, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States.²⁶ One quarter of the 2,069 tests were atmospheric, and the remaining three quarters of tests were conducted underground. Atmospheric nuclear tests are generally associated with the greatest environmental and humanitarian consequences. Underground nuclear testing, while typically less devastating than atmospheric tests, still poses potential risks such as groundwater contamination and radioactive gas release.

ARTICLE 1(1)(a) – INTERPRETATION

Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to 'test ... nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices'.

- The prohibition on testing in Article 1(1)(a) of the TPNW bans the detonation of a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device. It is therefore limited to explosive testing involving a nuclear chain-reaction.
- All non-explosive forms of nuclear testing, including sub-critical tests and computer simulations, and the testing of missiles designed to carry nuclear warheads are outlawed by the prohibition on development in the TPNW.
- Maintenance of a nuclear test site in a state of readiness would amount to prohibited development under the TPNW.
- All explosive nuclear testing also contravenes the CTBT (a treaty not in force) and, arguably, customary international law.
- The CTBT does not specifically prohibit maintaining preparedness at nuclear test sites, although dismantling test sites would contribute to prevention of a nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion as its Article 1 requires.
- The preamble of the TPNW recognises 'the vital importance' of the CTBT and its verification regime as a core element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.
- The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) does not prohibit the testing of nuclear weapons by the five nuclear-weapon States designated under that treaty.

20 E. Cheung, B. Lendon and I. Watson, 'Exclusive: Satellite images show increased activity at nuclear test sites in Russia, China and US', CNN, 23 September 2023, <https://bit.ly/3ucftol>.

21 A. Osborn, 'Russian nuclear test chief says Moscow is ready to resume testing "at any moment"', *Reuters*, 17 September 2024, <https://bit.ly/496A9yF>.

22 B. Vitkine, 'Russia withdraws from two arms treaties and tests a ballistic missile', *Le Monde*, 9 November 2023, <https://bit.ly/4bfsHSs>.

23 Osborn, 'Russian nuclear test chief says Moscow is ready to resume testing "at any moment"'.
24 V. Soldatkin and M. Trevelyan, 'Putin orders proposals on possible Russian nuclear test', *Reuters*, 5 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/45VbDQD>.

25 It is believed that Israel conducted one nuclear test in 1979, but this has never been confirmed. The test may have been conducted jointly with the apartheid regime of South Africa.

26 *Is it Safe? A Framework for Assessing and Addressing the Ongoing Humanitarian and Environmental Consequences of Nuclear Testing*, Norwegian People's Aid, Oslo, November 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rP5T33>.

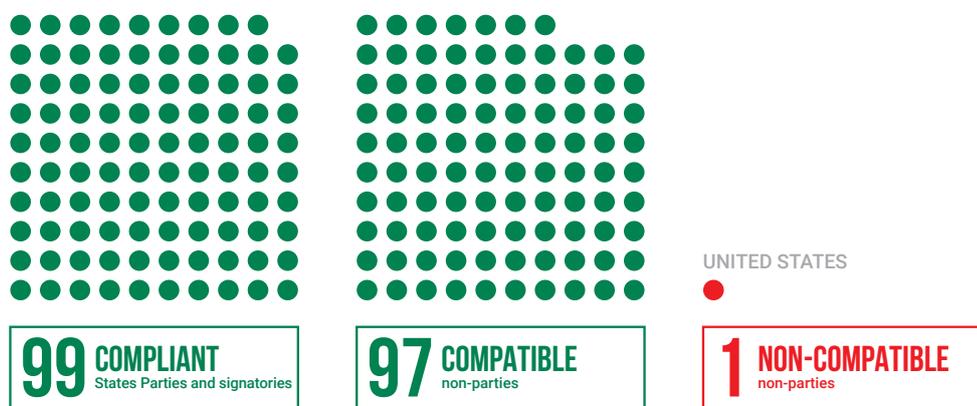


An unarmed Trident II D5 Life Extension missile launches from a United States (US) Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine off the coast of Florida. The four launches conducted between 17 and 21 September 2025 were part of a planned test. Tests are conducted on a recurring, scheduled basis to evaluate and ensure continued system reliability and accuracy. The Trident II D5 missiles were originally developed in the 1980s, and a 'life-extension refresh' was completed in 2017 to extend the service life of the system to the 2040s. Photograph © US Navy

THE PROHIBITION ON TRANSFER

As was the case in previous years, in 2025 one State not party—the United States—engaged in conduct that was not compatible with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons’ (TPNW) prohibition on transfer of nuclear weapons. This occurred by virtue of its export of the key components to the United Kingdom’s nuclear arsenal.

FIGURE 17: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibition on transfer



The United Kingdom’s nuclear-weapon system is, in very large measure, exported by the United States (US) to the United Kingdom. The United States leases Trident II (D5) submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) to the United Kingdom from its missile inventory; the design for the United Kingdom’s Holbrook nuclear warhead for its Trident missiles is based on the US W76 design; and the Mk4A re-entry vehicle for the Holbrook warhead is exported from the United States. Although not in and of itself determinative, the Trident SLBM fire control system and missile compartment—key components of the United Kingdom’s nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs)—are also exported from the United States to the United Kingdom.¹ Without these transfers, the United Kingdom would be forced to design, test, and manufacture all the components for its nuclear weapons or terminate its nuclear weapons programme.

The transfers of key components by the United States also violate the corresponding prohibition on transfer by nuclear-weapon States in Article 1 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

NEW WARHEAD

In earlier years, UK officials lobbied the US Congress to expedite the development of a new warhead, the W93, on which a replacement for the Holbrook warhead will be based.² In 2020, a senior civil servant at the UK Ministry of Defence told the House of Commons Select Committee of Defence that there is ‘a close realignment’ between the US W93 warhead and the new British warhead. He explained: ‘It’s not exactly the same warhead but ... there is a very close connection in design terms and production terms. So we are intimately involved in that.’³ The W93 is the first new warhead produced by the United States for more than 30 years. In March 2025, the W93 successfully completed Phase 2 of the development process, which included a draft stockpile-to-target sequence – a detailed description of the physical conditions a weapon must endure from storage to detonation.⁴

1 D. Plesch and J. Ainslie, ‘Trident: Strategic Dependence & Sovereignty’, Working Paper, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 2016, <https://bit.ly/4r4NvUg>, p. 10; S. Jones, ‘A wonk’s guide to the Trident nuclear deterrent’, *Financial Times*, 18 July 2018, <http://on.ft.com/30ShqDo> (subscription required); and N. Ritchie, *A Nuclear Weapons-Free World? Britain, Trident and the Challenges Ahead*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2012, Chap. 6: ‘A very special nuclear relationship’.

2 J. Borger, ‘UK lobbies US to support controversial new nuclear warheads’, *The Guardian*, 1 August 2020, <http://bit.ly/3hRtqga>.

3 House of Commons Select Committee on Defence, meeting with the UK Ministry of Defence, London, 8 December 2020, video available at: <https://bit.ly/40oy9fB>.

4 W. Spivey, ‘Full ahead for the W93: Los Alamos engineers help design a new warhead for submarine-launched ballistic missiles’, Los Alamos National Laboratory, 5 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/4ahaZy3>.

It has been noted, the United States' need for the W93 'is not as urgent as the timeline suggests'. Rather, the programme's urgency 'seems attributable to the United Kingdom's nuclear modernization efforts'.⁵ In December 2023, the US Congress authorized the request by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) for funding of US\$390 million for the new W93 SLBM programme.⁶ One commentator has suggested that over the course of 25 years of studies, engineering, and production, the W93 programme may cost up to US\$14 billion, with production of the first warheads expected between 2034 and 2036.⁷ In outlining its \$46.3 billion budget request for fiscal year 2026, the US Department of Energy indicated that the W93 warhead would receive accelerated funding (up by \$350 million to \$807 million under the NNSA plan for fiscal year 2026), while the W87-1 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) warhead would receive less funding than previously signalled.⁸

The W93 warhead is still in its early phases and has 'not developed a complete design definition', according to the budget request.⁹ That said, in June 2025, the Los Alamos National Laboratory announced that it was 'full ahead' for the new warhead. The W93 is being developed alongside a new re-entry body, known as the Mark 7 (Mk7), which 'will also be used by the United Kingdom, continuing a long-standing partnership between the two countries'.¹⁰ The Los Alamos Study Group had earlier noted that the United Kingdom 'will be highly dependent on our Mk7 aeroshell technology development work'.¹¹ In 2022, a US Department of Energy fact sheet on the W93 programme had noted that it was 'vital for continuing the United States' longstanding support to the United Kingdom'.¹²

In May 2024, Jill Hruby, Under Secretary for Nuclear Security at the US Department of Energy, and NNSA Administrator, told the US Congress Subcommittee on Strategic Forces that: 'The W93 program is being undertaken in parallel with the U.K. Replacement Warhead program continuing our coordination through the U.S.-U.K. Mutual Defense Agreement'.¹³ This agreement, which was otherwise due to expire at the end of 2024, was made permanent in July 2024.¹⁴ The journalist Richard Norton-Taylor observed that 'in one of its first, and little-noticed foreign policy moves', the incoming Labour government had made the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons 'forever reliant on US military scientists'.¹⁵

These statements all imply that the UK's replacement nuclear warhead is inextricably linked to the status of the US W93 programme, and that the degree of technical information-sharing will amount to indirect transfer under Article 1(1)(b) of the TPNW as well as under Article 1 of the NPT.

DUAL-CAPABLE MISSILES TO BELARUS

Russia has provided dual-capable Iskander missiles to Belarus.¹⁶ It is widely accepted that the missile, rocket, or other munition, including both the container and any means of propulsion, are key components in a nuclear weapon. The missiles alone do not constitute a transfer under the TPNW, however, but rather encouragement of Belarus to assist Russia's possession of nuclear weapons in a potential foreign-deployed role. It has also been suggested, but not confirmed, that Russia has deployed the nuclear warheads for the Iskander missiles in Belarus.

In December 2025, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko announced that the Russian Oreshnik mobile intermediate-range missile system had also been deployed to Belarus and was operational. The missile can deliver conventional or nuclear warheads.¹⁷ Construction continued at the 1405th Artillery Ammunition Base in Asipovichy, which is 100 kilometres from Minsk and the suspected site of forward-deployed Russian nuclear warheads. The Center for Naval Analysis in the United States has said that the base 'is a conventional munitions storage facility that includes a Soviet nuclear weapon storage igloo that has not been used to store nuclear weapons since 1996'. Evidence suggests that the site has been modernized in order to be able to store Russian nuclear weapons in accordance with modern safety and security standards.¹⁸

5 S. Ward, 'America's new multibillion-dollar nuclear warhead is a great deal for the British', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 14 April 2022, <https://bit.ly/3VYt3oj>.

6 S. Bugos, 'Congress Endorses New Nuclear Weapon', *Arms Control Today*, January/February 2024, <https://bit.ly/3vVpU0q>.

7 Ward, 'America's new multibillion-dollar nuclear warhead is a great deal for the British'.

8 L. Shetty, 'U.S. Energy Department to Reshuffle Warhead Budgets', *Arms Control Today*, July/August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4tINqgv>.

9 Ibid.

10 Spivey, 'Full ahead for the W93: Los Alamos engineers help design a new warhead for submarine-launched ballistic missiles'.

11 Los Alamos Study Group, 'W93/Mk7 Navy Warhead – Developing Modern Capabilities to Address Current and Future Threats', White Paper, 2020, available at: <https://bit.ly/4tkacFq>.

12 US Department of Energy, 'W93/MK7 Acquisition Program', Fact Sheet, National Nuclear Security Administration, January 2022, <https://bit.ly/3FQ5rN6>.

13 Testimony Statement of Jill Hruby, Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, US Department of Energy, and Administrator of the NNSA before the Senate Armed Services, May 2024.

14 C. Mills, 'Amendments to the UK-US Mutual Defence Agreement', Research Briefing, House of Commons Library, London, 6 September 2024, <https://bit.ly/3VfZT5Y>, pp. 22–23.

15 R. Norton-Taylor, 'Starmer permanently ties UK nuclear arsenal to Washington', *Declassified*, 3 September 2024, <https://bit.ly/4eSs1fB>.

16 See, e.g., N. Sokov, 'Russia is deploying nuclear weapons in Belarus. NATO shouldn't take the bait', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 24 April 2023, <https://bit.ly/4hdXT6V>.

17 L. Harding, 'Russia claims to have moved nuclear-capable missile system into Belarus', *The Guardian*, 30 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/4r3Dc2R>.

18 G. I. Rosa-Hernandez, D. Eveleth, and P. Schwartz, 'When Nuclear Weapons Return to Belarus: Evolving Concepts in Russian Escalation Strategy', Center for Naval Analysis, October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qirWNQ>.

At any rate, there is no suggestion that Belarus has been given custody of nuclear warheads. On the contrary, Russian spokespersons have insisted that nuclear weapons deployed in Belarus will remain under Russian jurisdiction and control, mirroring NATO practices.¹⁹ This means that there has been no transfer of nuclear weapons or control over them as prohibited in the TPNW.

POTENTIAL TRANSFER BEFORE USE

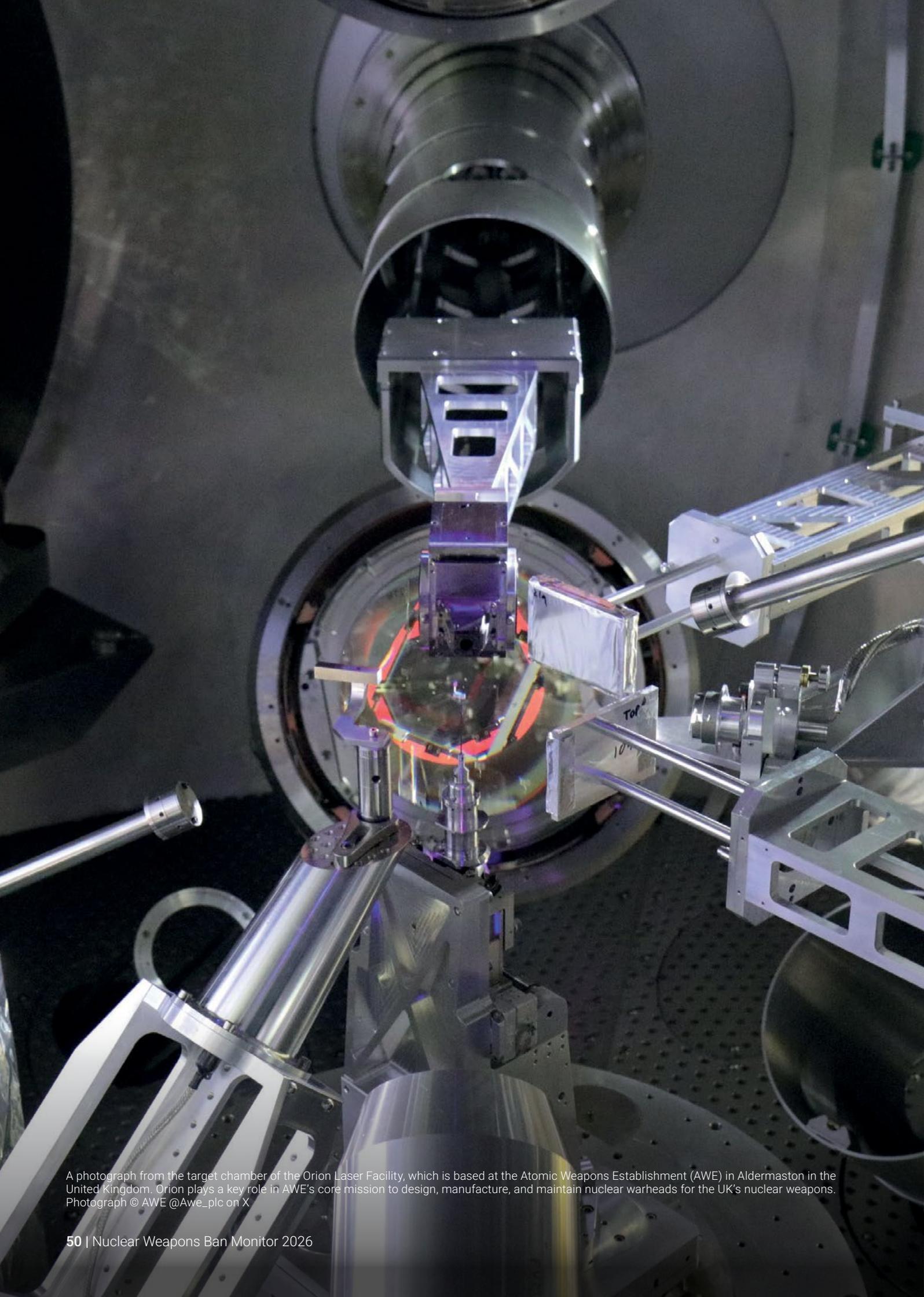
As discussed in the section below on the prohibition under the TPNW on receiving transfer or control of nuclear weapons, another potential compatibility issue concerns the US B61 nuclear bombs that are stored in Europe but remain under the command and control of the United States. If, in a future war, full control over any of the bombs should be transferred by the United States to another State for loading and use in their dual-capable NATO-designated aircraft, this would contravene the prohibition on transfer in Article 1(1)(b) of the TPNW, and also the prohibition on transfer in Article 1 of the NPT. The same would apply if Russia transferred control of nuclear weapons to Belarus for delivery by the latter State's dual-capable aircraft.

ARTICLE 1(1)(b) – INTERPRETATION

Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to 'transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly or indirectly'.

- 'Transfer' means to transmit either possession or ownership of a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device or of its key components. 'Control' means the power to use a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device. Unlawful transfer does not necessarily involve payment or other form of 'consideration'.
- It is a fundamental principle of the law of treaties that a treaty must be interpreted and applied in good faith. Since transfer is prohibited 'to any recipient whatsoever' and that this is irrespective of whether it occurs 'directly or indirectly', it is also illegal to transmit possession or ownership to any other State or to any natural or 'legal' person (e.g. a company or organization) of the key components of a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device. The principle of good faith precludes transmission of the key components of a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device where this occurs in separate instalments or via intermediaries or third Parties, where it is known that the components will be used to produce a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device.
- For transfer to occur, possession or ownership of all the key components of a nuclear weapon or nuclear explosive device need to be transmitted. In other cases, (e.g. when only a missile and not the nuclear warhead is transmitted), the act may amount to, for instance, assistance with development or production of nuclear weapons under Article 1(1)(e) of the TPNW.
- Providing another State with sufficiently detailed technical information for a nuclear warhead or other nuclear explosive device to be developed, and in the knowledge that it will be so used, also constitutes indirect transfer under Article 1(1)(b) of the TPNW. This is in addition to assistance with development under Article (1)(1)(e).
- Under Article 1 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the five nuclear-weapon States Parties have already committed never to transfer nuclear weapons 'to any recipient whatsoever'; this similarly applies whether this transfer occurs 'directly or indirectly'.
- The NPT does not include a corresponding prohibition on non-nuclear-weapon States to assist in a transfer of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. This important lacuna is addressed by Article 1(1)(b) and (e) of the TPNW.

19 L. Kelly and A. Osborn, 'Belarus starts taking delivery of Russian nuclear weapons', *Reuters*, 14 June 2023, <https://bit.ly/3Onz0JU>.

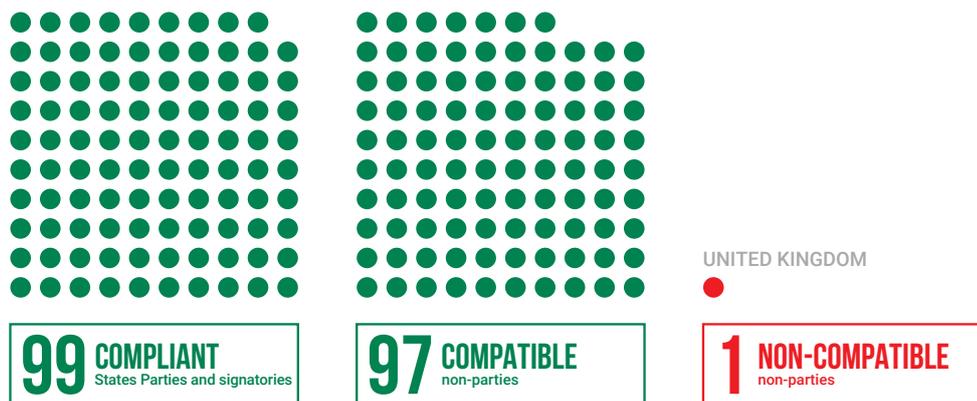


A photograph from the target chamber of the Orion Laser Facility, which is based at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) in Aldermaston in the United Kingdom. Orion plays a key role in AWE's core mission to design, manufacture, and maintain nuclear warheads for the UK's nuclear weapons. Photograph © AWE @Awe_plc on X

THE PROHIBITION ON RECEIVING TRANSFER OR CONTROL

In 2025, as in previous years, one State not party—the United Kingdom—engaged in conduct that was not compatible with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) prohibition on receiving the transfer or control of nuclear weapons. This occurred by virtue of its import of key components from the United States to the United Kingdom's nuclear arsenal.

FIGURE 18: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibition on receiving transfer or control



As the discussion in the above section on the prohibition of transfer outlines, the United Kingdom (UK)'s nuclear weapons system is, in very large measure, imported from the United States. The United States leases Trident II (D5) submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) to the United Kingdom from its missile inventory; the design for the United Kingdom's Holbrook nuclear warhead for its Trident missiles is based on the US W76 design; and the Mk4A re-entry vehicle for the Holbrook warhead is imported from the United States. The Trident SLBM fire control system and missile compartment—key components of the UK's nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs)—are also exported from the United States to the United Kingdom.¹ Without these transfers, the United Kingdom would be forced to design, test, and manufacture all the components for its nuclear weapons or terminate its nuclear weapons programme.

The importance to the United Kingdom of the new W93 warhead being developed by the United States is also discussed in the section above on the prohibition of transfer and will not be repeated here. In a report on the UK nuclear deterrent submitted to Parliament in March 2024, the UK Secretary of State for Defence stated that the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) had begun work on a new warhead designated the A21/Mk7, also known as Astraea.² The report acknowledged that the programme 'is being delivered in parallel with the US W93/Mk7 warhead', but maintained that 'each nation is developing a sovereign design'.³ It has been reported that the warhead's yield will vary between 90 and 455 kilotons, a significant increase from the 100 kilotons of the Holbrook warhead currently equipping UK ballistic missiles.⁴

1 D. Plesch and J. Ainslie, 'Trident: Strategic Dependence & Sovereignty', Working Paper, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 2016, <https://bit.ly/4r4NvUg>, p. 10; S. Jones, 'A wonk's guide to the Trident nuclear deterrent', *Financial Times*, 18 July 2018, <http://on.ft.com/30ShqDo> (subscription required); and N. Ritchie, *A Nuclear Weapons-Free World? Britain, Trident and the Challenges Ahead*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, 2012, Chap. 6: 'A very special nuclear relationship'.

2 The name Astraea comes from the ancient Greek goddess of justice.

3 Defence Nuclear Enterprise, 'Delivering the UK's Nuclear Deterrent as a National Endeavour', March 2024, <https://bit.ly/40goxVz>.

4 S. Atlamazoglou, 'Inside Project Astraea: The Nuke That Could Redefine Britain's Power', *The National Interest*, 26 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4bCpaAh>.

In October 2025, the UK Minister for Defence Procurement, Luke Pollard, submitted a response to a parliamentary question in which he declared that ‘funding for the Astraea programme is included within the £15 billion investment in the sovereign nuclear warhead programme’. He added that he was withholding the projected cost of Astraea ‘for the purpose of safeguarding our national security’.⁵ The system is being developed in coordination with the W93 programme, ‘sharing certain non-nuclear components such as the Mk7 aeroshell under established treaty frameworks to ensure continued compatibility with the Trident system’.⁶

The receipt of transfers of key components of nuclear weapons by the United Kingdom as a nuclear-weapon State is not regulated by the NPT. This lacuna is addressed by Article 1(1)(c) of the TPNW, which does not permit any State Party to receive the transfer or control of nuclear weapons.

Astraea will be the first UK nuclear warhead to be developed without live nuclear testing. The Orion laser facility is capable of reproducing the extreme pressures and temperatures found inside a nuclear explosion—up to 10 million degrees Celsius—allowing engineers to observe how materials behave under those conditions. Simulations on a supercomputer model every stage of a detonation in virtual form.⁷ Through Project Teutates, France and the United Kingdom jointly operate the EPURE hydrodynamic facility in Valduc, at a site 45 kilometres from Dijon, which uses high-speed X-ray imaging to examine how components perform under stress. Experiments at Valduc will confirm findings at the AWE.⁸

RECEIPT OF DUAL-CAPABLE MISSILES BY BELARUS

Russia has provided dual-capable Iskander missiles to Belarus.⁹ The missiles alone do not constitute a receipt of transfer under the TPNW, but amount rather to assistance by Belarus to Russia’s possession of nuclear weapons. It has also been suggested, but not confirmed, that Russia has deployed the nuclear warheads for the Iskander missiles in Belarus. There is, however, no suggestion that Belarus has been given custody of nuclear warheads. On the contrary, Russian spokespersons have insisted that nuclear weapons deployed in Belarus will remain under Russian jurisdiction and control, mirroring NATO practices.¹⁰ This means that there has been no receipt of transfer of nuclear weapons or control over them as prohibited in the TPNW.

In December 2025, Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko announced that the Russian Oreshnik mobile intermediate-range missile system had also been deployed to Belarus and was operational. The missile can deliver conventional or nuclear warheads.¹¹

POTENTIAL RECEIPT OF CONTROL

Another potential future compatibility issue under this prohibition concerns the US B61 nuclear bombs stored in Europe. Arrangements are reportedly in place for control over the US bombs to be given by the United States to the host States in war for loading and use on their dual-capable, NATO-designated aircraft. If this were to occur such that the receiving State could use the weapons itself, this would contravene Article 1(1)(c) of the TPNW (and also the NPT).

This specific task division arrangement has therefore been much discussed, not least when the German Bundeswehr in 2008 handed out directives, in the form of a pocket card (‘Taschenkarte’), stipulating that German soldiers were prohibited from using nuclear weapons under international law.¹² The directives have since been changed and the sentence in question omitted. For more information on umbrella States that allow the stationing of another State’s nuclear weapons on their territory, see pages 79-81.

5 ‘Nuclear Weapons: Costs’, Question for Ministry of Defence, Written questions, answers and statements, UK Parliament, UIN 79351, tabled on 10 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4k11lv>.

6 L. West, ‘UK confirms new Astraea nuclear warhead progressing’, UK Defence Journal, 21 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qXXWJ8>.

7 ‘New Dreadnought-class on track’, Australian Naval Institute, 25 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rDVvLU>.

8 Ibid.; and C. Casimiro, ‘UK’s “Astraea” Sovereign Nuclear Warhead Program Makes Progress’, The Defense Post, 23 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aoSdVO>.

9 See, e.g., N. Sokov, ‘Russia is deploying nuclear weapons in Belarus. NATO shouldn’t take the bait’, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 24 April 2023, <https://bit.ly/4hdXT6V>.

10 L. Kelly and A. Osborn, ‘Belarus starts taking delivery of Russian nuclear weapons’, *Reuters*, 14 June 2023, <https://bit.ly/3Onz0JU>.

11 L. Harding, ‘Russia claims to have moved nuclear-capable missile system into Belarus’, *The Guardian*, 30 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/4r3Dc2R>.

12 See: O. Nassauer, ‘Pilots practice delivering nuclear bombs. Tornado pilots between orders and international law’ [‘Piloten üben Atombomben Abwurf. Tornado-Piloten zwischen Befehl und Völkerrecht’], Berlin Information-center for Transatlantic Security, 10 July 2008, <https://bit.ly/3rMOQSi>. The pocket card (‘Taschenkarte’) is the summary of the central service regulation 15/2 of the Bundeswehr, which was adapted in 2013 to no longer include this prohibition (and the resultant personal responsibility under international law).

ARTICLE 1(1)(c) – INTERPRETATION

Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to ‘receive the transfer of or control over nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices directly or indirectly’.

- ‘Transfer’ means to transmit either possession or ownership of a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device or of its key components. ‘Control’ means the power to use a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device. Unlawful transfer does not necessarily involve payment or other form of ‘consideration’.
- To ‘receive’ a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device is to take possession or control over it. This broad notion does not require that ownership also pass to the recipient.
- The prohibition on indirect receipt covers accepting the key components of any nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device as well as an assembled version. This extends to transfers made through intermediaries.
- Receiving comprehensive technical information for the design of a nuclear warhead or other nuclear explosive device, with the intent of using it to develop a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device, would also constitute indirect receipt of transfer under Article 1(1)(c) of the TPNW.
- Article 1(1)(c) of the TPNW follows a similarly worded provision in Article II of the NPT, but the corresponding prohibition in that latter treaty applies only to those States that are designated as non-nuclear-weapon States and not also to the five States designated as nuclear-weapon States.

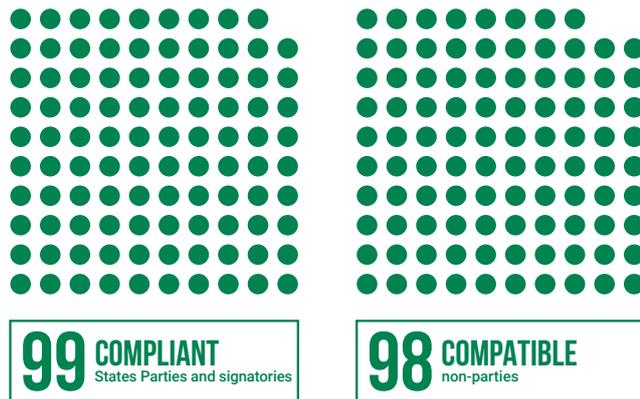


A visitor photographs a huge picture of Hiroshima devastated by the world's first atomic bombing at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima, western Japan, on 5 August 2025 – the day before the 80th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima. In 1945, the United States dropped two nuclear bombs over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki—on 6 and 9 August, respectively—killing more than 200,000 people. Photograph © Frank Robichon, EPA/NTB

THE PROHIBITION ON USE

Of the nine States that possess nuclear weapons, none used them in 2025. The prohibition on use therefore remained intact. That said, the risk of use remained embedded in global politics and the risk of the escalation of conflicts involving nuclear-armed States in Europe, East Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East remained a cause of significant concern.

FIGURE 19: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibition on use



The intention to use nuclear weapons is intrinsic to the practice of nuclear deterrence. Indeed, if the possession of nuclear weapons is to achieve its intended coercive effect, the threat to actually use nuclear weapons must be credible. That means that the capability to use nuclear weapons must be real and the intention to use them in certain circumstances must be both believable and believed. Judging the credibility of a threat to use nuclear weapons has always been difficult because authorizing the use of nuclear weapons is often concentrated in the hands of one or two individuals, thereby necessitating potential adversaries can reliably discern their thought processes, interpretations, and reactions to events.

Four armed conflicts were sources of particular risk of nuclear use in 2025:

1. Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine and its potential expansion to a NATO-Russia conflict.
2. Short-lived armed conflict between India and Pakistan in May 2025.
3. Short-lived armed conflict between Israel and Iran, and the United States and Iran, in June 2025.
4. Ongoing tensions between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan that could turn violent.

RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

There is a continuing risk that Russia expands its war against Ukraine to other Eastern European countries, notably Estonia and Latvia, with the potential for a direct NATO-Russia war. A strategic defeat for NATO or Russian armed forces in such circumstances would likely increase the attractiveness, or compel the use, of nuclear weapons as the least worst option available. There is no guarantee that nuclear deterrent threats on either side will have their intended political effect in an escalating war - they might, but they might not. As discussed further also in the next section, escalatory rhetoric continued in 2025 in the context of the war in Ukraine, underscoring its nuclear risks.

In March, UK Secretary of State for Defence, John Healey, said the United Kingdom takes Vladimir Putin's nuclear threats seriously and that it would not be shy of using its own nuclear weapons, stating that 'We have the power to do untold damage to them if they attack us'.¹

¹ L. Brown and B. Waterfield. 'UK will not shy away from nuclear weapons, John Healey tells Russia', *The Times*, 20 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4bBBgld>.

In April, former president and now Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia, Dimtry Medvedev (Putin is the Chair of the Council) said that NATO's newest members (widely read as Sweden and Finland) were now potential targets for Moscow and 'at risk of possible revenge strikes using nuclear weapons in the event of a conflict'.²

In May, President Vladimir Putin said in comments aired in a film by Russian State television that 'there has been no need to use those [nuclear] weapons' in Ukraine and that he hopes they 'will not be required', while insisting Russia has the strength and means to bring the war to a 'logical conclusion'.³

In September, Medvedev warned in relation to the Ukraine war that European States 'cannot afford a war with Russia' and that such a conflict carries an 'absolutely real risk of escalating into a war using weapons of mass destruction'.⁴



INDIA AND PAKISTAN

India and Pakistan fought a short war on 7–10 May 2025. India launched punitive strikes on Pakistan on 7 May following a terrorist attack on 22 April in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir. India fired nuclear-capable but conventionally armed BrahMos cruise missiles (co-developed with Russia) and European SCALP-EG cruise missiles at Pakistani targets for the first time, and Pakistan used conventional short-range Fatah-I and Fatah-II ballistic missiles against targets in India for the first time. Both militaries also used armed drones.⁵

Former Foreign Minister of Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto Zardari stated in June 2025 that India's use of its nuclear-capable BrahMos missile during the conflict had increased the risk of nuclear use in future conflicts between the two States.⁶ It was later reported that Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Asim Munir, stated at a private dinner with the Pakistani-American community in Tampa, Florida, in September 2025 that 'We are a nuclear nation. If we are going down, we will take half the world down with us'.⁷

MOUNTING CONCERN

In March, the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World Without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP) held its sixth and final meeting in Tokyo. The group's declaration said 'Rising geopolitical tensions, resurgent nuclear salience, and the advent of emerging technologies have brought us closer to the precipice, threatening to plunge the world into a perilous era of unrestrained arms races, with consequences extending beyond nuclear rearmament. Most alarming is the growing risk that an escalating conventional conflict could push us over the edge into nuclear use. It is time for us to face the fact that the consequences could be catastrophic and to take urgent action to prevent nuclear war'.⁸

Similarly, the Nobel Laureate Assembly for the Prevention of Nuclear War in July issued a declaration following a three-day meeting of Nobel laureates and nuclear experts. The Declaration said that 'a global security structure forever dependent on fear is ultimately a reckless gamble. Despite having avoided nuclear catastrophes in the past, time and the law of probability are not on our side. Without clear and sustained efforts from world leaders to prevent nuclear war, there can be no doubt that our luck will finally run out'.⁹

EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR WAR

In October 2024, the UN General Assembly had voted to establish an independent Scientific Panel on the Effects of Nuclear War comprising 21 people to be appointed by the UN Secretary-General to study the effects of nuclear detonations. The last serious studies conducted in the 1980s have been superseded by a wealth of new knowledge about the climatic and wider impacts of nuclear war.¹⁰ The panel is mandated to examine 'the physical effects and societal consequences of a nuclear war on a local, regional and planetary scale, including, inter alia, the climatic, environmental and radiological effects, and their impacts on public health, global socioeconomic systems, agriculture and ecosystems, in the days, weeks and decades following a nuclear war', with the support of the UN system and its relevant agencies. In July 2025, 21 experts were appointed to the panel from a range of scientific fields, including: nuclear and radiation studies; atmospheric sciences and climate; environment and environmental studies; agriculture, biology and life sciences; public health and medicine; and behavioural and social sciences and applied economics.¹¹

In October, the Panel's Chair, Professor Ana María Cetto, briefed the First Committee of the UN General Assembly. The Panel met in September 2025 and established three working groups focusing on 1) the physical effects of nuclear

2 'Russia's Medvedev says NATO's newer members are now potential targets for Moscow, TASS reports', *Reuters*, 29 April 2025, <https://bit.ly/4uBa9pf>.

3 'Putin says he hopes there will be no need to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine', *Associated Press*, 4 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/4lBa1IH>.

4 Reuters. Medvedev warns Europe of the nuclear danger of war with Russia. 29 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/47PM9oA>.

5 C. Clary, 'Four Days in May: The India-Pakistan Crisis of 2025', *Stimson Centre*, 28 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/4bi5Jwq>.

6 'Pakistan says India's use of nuclear-capable missiles boosts risk in future conflict', *Arab News*, 6 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/45tLfgF>.

7 A. Mahjar-Barducci, 'Pakistan's Army Chief Sparks Alarm with Nuclear Threats on U.S. Soil', *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, 11 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4abkEYa>.

8 'The Sixth Meeting of the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World Without Nuclear Weapons', *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, 31 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/47ULDFV>.

9 The Nobel Laureate Assembly Declaration for the Prevention of Nuclear War. *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. 26 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4cTolnp>.

10 Z. Mian, 'We Need a UN Study of the Effects of Nuclear War', *Scientific American*, 28 October 2024, <https://bit.ly/4auMpeM>.

11 UN, 'Secretary-General Announces Members of Independent Scientific Panel on Effects of Nuclear War', *Press release*, New York, 18 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/46gmsNm>.

explosions (single or multiple), including blast effects, climate, radiation and fires; 2) the direct impacts on populations, ecosystems, agriculture, and animal health; and 3) the cascading economic, financial, societal, and governance impacts, including the effects on interdependent critical infrastructure systems.¹²

In July 2025, the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NAS) published a consensus study report on the Potential Environmental Effects of Nuclear War, which had been authorized by Congress in 2021. The study investigated: nuclear weapons employment scenarios and weapons effects; fire dynamics and emissions; plume rise, fate and transport of aerosols, and gas-phase chemistry (this refers to the injection of soot into the upper atmosphere from firestorms caused by nuclear detonations); physical earth system impacts (ozone, rain, oceans, solar radiation, and so on); ecosystem impacts; and social and economic impacts.¹³

The report highlighted core uncertainties, but concluded that: 'The available evidence indicates that the environmental effects of even regional-scale nuclear exchanges would cause substantial drops in temperatures and levels of PAR [Photosynthetically Active Radiation] reaching ecosystems, while also allowing more harmful UV rays to penetrate due to ozone depletion in the upper atmosphere. The severity and duration of the environmental disruptions would scale with the size of the nuclear exchange'.¹⁴

On the wider socio-ecological effects of nuclear war, the report said: 'The global supply chain, financial markets, and communication networks are all interconnected. A shock to these complex systems (e.g., nuclear war) could result in cascading risks beyond the directly impacted populations. Globally, the interconnected impacts on ecosystems especially food security, the economy, society, and the environment are influenced by the magnitude of the nuclear event and the directly and indirectly impacted communities' resilience, health status, and well-being. Hence, there is a critical need for developing and investing in multidisciplinary frameworks and advanced research to anticipate and, where possible, mitigate the potential risks to and vulnerabilities of these interconnected systems'.¹⁵

This body of work—the NAS study and the UN Panel—will provide a much needed update of the last UN study in 1988,¹⁶ an independent peer review of the significant body of research on the ecological effects of nuclear detonations over the past two decades, and develop a research agenda to further develop modelling and reduce uncertainties where possible. This will give the public, diplomats and policy-makers a robust and accurate picture of the likely effects of nuclear war scenarios as possible with current data, models and computing power.

ARTICLE 1(1)(d) – INTERPRETATION

Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to: 'Use ... nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.'

- Preventing any use of any nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device is a fundamental aim of the TPNW – unquestionably central to the Treaty's object and purpose.
- To use a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device is to launch, release, deliver, or detonate it with hostile intent or for so-called 'peaceful' use, such as in civil engineering. Intent can be discerned from the circumstances and does not have to be publicly espoused.
- Possession or deployment of nuclear weapons for the purpose of 'deterrence' does not amount to their use under the TPNW but is covered by the prohibition on possession in Article 1(1)(a).
- The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) does address the use of nuclear weapons but only in so far as it allows 'peaceful' detonation of nuclear explosive devices by nuclear-weapon States. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which prohibits all such 'peaceful' nuclear explosions, has not entered into force.
- Nuclear weapons have not been used since August 1945 when the United States dropped a nuclear weapon first on Hiroshima and then, three days later, on Nagasaki. Other nuclear explosive devices have not been used since some 150 such devices were detonated for 'peaceful' use (for civil engineering purposes) between the second half of the 1950s and the end of the 1980s by the erstwhile Soviet Union and the United States.

12 Briefing by Prof. Ana María Cetto, Chair of the independent Scientific Panel on the Effects of Nuclear War, to the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 21 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aZ9VjY>.

13 The National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, 'Potential Environmental Effects of Nuclear War', Committee on Independent Study on Potential Environmental Effects of Nuclear War, July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rF8DQq>.

14 Ibid., p. 188.

15 Ibid., p. 190.

16 Study on the Climatic and Other Global Effects of Nuclear War: Report of the Secretary-General', UN doc. A/43/351, 5 May 1988, <https://bit.ly/40iDUn>.



Students take part in an emergency simulation as part of a nationwide civil defence mock drill at a school in Kolkata in India on 7 May 2025. Border tensions had surged with India and Pakistan firing heavy artillery across their contested international border after India launched missiles into Pakistan. This was the worst violence between the nuclear-armed neighbours in two decades. India organized civil defence drills on 7 May, while schools in Pakistan's Punjab and Kashmir were closed. Photograph © Dibyangshu Sarkar/AFP

THE PROHIBITION ON THREATENING TO USE

The Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor found that no State acted in contravention of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) prohibition on threatening to use nuclear weapons in 2025. Senior Pakistani officials overtly threatened to use nuclear weapons against India but it was not certain that they were instructed to do so by anyone in a position to authorize the use of nuclear weapons. Bellicose statements by a former Russian president also did not breach the TPNW rule prohibiting the threatening of use as the individual responsible no longer has any power to direct the use of nuclear weapons.

FIGURE 20: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibition on threatening to use



Explicit threats to use nuclear weapons by the leader of a nuclear-armed State are rare. More often, threats are made by people close to but not in government, or a threat is implied through use of euphemistic language or general statements of ‘all options are on the table’.

INDIA AND PAKISTAN

The day after a terrorist attack on 22 April 2025 in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, India unilaterally announced it was placing the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in ‘abeyance’ until Pakistan ends its alleged support for cross-border terrorism. The treaty was negotiated by India and Pakistan in 1960 to govern the distribution of water from the Indus River system. Pakistan’s ambassador to Russia, Muhammad Khalid Jamali, stated that Pakistan will use ‘both conventional and nuclear’ weapons if India were to escalate or cut off water supplies.¹ Hanif Abbasi, a minister in the Pakistan government, warned that 130 missiles were ‘kept for India’ if India cut off Indus water supply to Pakistan.² The statements by these senior Pakistani officials would amount to unlawful threats to use nuclear weapons if they were endorsed by senior political or military officials empowered to authorize such use; however, it is uncertain whether any such endorsement was provided.

RUSSIA AND THE UNITED STATES

Bellicose threats to use nuclear weapons were again made by a former Russian president in 2025. In July, US President Donald Trump issued an ultimatum to Russia to bring the war in Ukraine to an end or face crippling economic sanctions. Former president and now Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev responded on X, saying that ‘each new ultimatum is a threat and a step towards war’.³ The US president warned Mr Medvedev on Truth Social to ‘watch his words. He’s entering very dangerous territory’, he wrote. In response, Medvedev reminded Trump of ‘how dangerous

¹ D. Ashtakala, ‘What Led to the Recent Crisis Between India and Pakistan?’, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, 20 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/4bPoRC4>.

² ‘130 missiles kept for India’: Pakistan minister’s open threat as tensions escalate after Pahalgam attack’, *Times of India*, 27 April 2025, <https://bit.ly/4sVdm2c>.

³ Post on X by Dmitry Medvedev (@MedvedevRussiaE). 17:33, 28 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/45sg4SM>.

the supposedly non-existent “Dead Hand” system can be’. (‘Dead Hand’ is a reference to the Soviet Union’s late Cold War Perimeter system, which was designed to automatically launch a retaliatory nuclear strike.)⁴ Mr Medvedev has no practical power to direct or influence the use of nuclear weapons by Russia and thus his comments would not breach the prohibition on threatening to use nuclear weapons in the TPNW.

President Trump subsequently ordered two nuclear submarines to ‘be positioned in the appropriate regions’ in response to Medvedev’s ‘highly provocative’ comments. The president went on to say: ‘A threat was made, and we didn’t think it was appropriate. So I have to be very careful.... I do that on the basis of safety for our people. A threat was made by a former president of Russia. And we’re going to protect our people’.⁵

TRAINING EXERCISES

There were four major nuclear weapon training exercises in 2025 – two led by Russia and two involving NATO forces. The holding of these exercises was announced well in advance to the potential adversaries and none amounts to threatening to use nuclear weapons under the TPNW.

ZAPAD-2025

The first of the three exercises to take place in 2025 was ‘Zapad’ (the Russian word for ‘West’), an exercise that has been held regularly since the 1970s to practice theatre-level military operations and signal the costs and potential escalation risks of a NATO-Russia conflict. The ‘hot phase’ for Zapad was conducted on 12–16 September 2025, although drills for the exercise were initiated several weeks earlier.⁶ As researchers at *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* observed, Zapad-25 was especially anticipated as it was the first such exercise since Russia and Belarus announced their nuclear-sharing arrangement and Russia publicly updated its deterrence policy.⁷

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko declared that his country’s forces had practised the launch of tactical nuclear weapons with their Russian counterparts. Although President Vladimir Putin claimed that 100,000 service members were involved, other sources suggested a far smaller figure of some 30,000 Russian and Belarussian troops combined. India is reported to have sent 65 soldiers, with Russian news agencies claiming that Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iran, and Mali also sent soldiers to the exercises.⁸ But despite the relatively limited scale of the exercises, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk described Zapad-2025 as ‘very aggressive’.⁹

The exercises were reported to have included rehearsal for a potential use of the Oreshnik intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) system.¹⁰ In December 2025, Moscow declared that it had positioned the nuclear-capable hypersonic missiles in Belarus. Stationing Oreshnik missiles there could shorten the time Russian nuclear weapons would need to reach targets in Western Europe.¹¹

GROM

In October 2025, President Vladimir Putin supervised the annual Grom (‘thunder’) exercise, a top-level readiness drill for Russia’s strategic nuclear forces. The exercises, which involved all three components of the nuclear triad (land, sea, and air), included the launch of a Yars intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) from Plesetsk Cosmodrome.¹² During the Yars launch, the launcher was placed inside a Krona shelter (with a video including a shot from inside the shelter).¹³

STEADFAST NOON 2025

On 13–24 October 2025, NATO organized its annual Steadfast Noon exercise, which (among other actions) simulates a nuclear strike. The exercise, which involved combat aircraft capable of carrying conventional or nuclear warheads, was based out of the Netherlands, with supporting elements in Belgium, Denmark, and the United Kingdom. Its aim is to test and refine the effectiveness, readiness, and security of NATO’s nuclear deterrent. It is reported by NATO to have involved 14 Member States and some 2,000 personnel with around 70 aircraft taking part in the exercise, including, for the strike mission, F-35 combat aircraft from Volkel Air Force Base.¹⁴

4 K. Jochecova, ‘Trump threatens Russia’s “failed former president” Medvedev’, Politico, 31 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/3LSRGmz>. See D. Hoffman, *The Dead Hand: The Untold Story of the Cold War Arms Race and its Dangerous Legacy*, Anchor Books, New York, 2010.

5 J. Lukiv, ‘Trump moves nuclear submarines after Russian ex-president’s comments’, BBC, 1 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4sZ5kWa>.

6 R. Astapenia, ‘Zapad 2025: What the Russia–Belarus military exercise will reveal about Lukashenko’s intentions’, Chatham House, 4 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4c7gmCu>.

7 G. Rosa-Hernández and D. Eveleth, ‘The “Zapad” exercise and how Lukashenko learned to love the Bomb’, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 6 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/4am1kaS>.

8 ‘Russia and Belarus Stage Simulated Nuclear Strike During Zapad-2025 War Games’, *The Moscow Times*, 16 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/45F5dol>.

9 X. Liang, ‘Belarus, Russia Practice Nuclear Operations’, Arms Control Today, October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4t9PeJj>.

10 ‘Russia and Belarus Stage Simulated Nuclear Strike During Zapad-2025 War Games’.

11 D. D. Lee and Reuters, ‘Russia deploys hypersonic Oreshnik missiles in Belarus amid Europe tensions’, *Al Jazeera*, 31 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/49ZpDKo>.

12 President of Russia, ‘The Supreme Commander-in-Chief conducted strategic nuclear forces exercise’, News release, The Kremlin, Moscow, 22 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qNbYgt>.

13 ‘Regular exercise of strategic forces’, Blog entry, Russian strategic nuclear forces, 22 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qONQKx>.

14 NATO, ‘Exercise Steadfast Noon 25: NATO Allies train for nuclear deterrence’, 30 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4ajqNSh>.

GLOBAL THUNDER

Global Thunder is a major annual US exercise designed to test and demonstrate the readiness of its nuclear forces and command systems in a conflict scenario. On 21 October 2025, Global Thunder 26 opened at Offutt Air Force Base, south of Omaha in Nebraska. The annual exercise is 'not held in response to world events or actions by any nation or entity'.¹⁵ The Operation concluded on 26 October at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota. While the exercise occurred at multiple locations, Minot Air Force Base supported activities among two bomb wings and a missile wing, 'accounting for two thirds of the U.S. nuclear triad'.¹⁶

ARTICLE 1(1)(d) – INTERPRETATION

Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to 'threaten to use nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices'.

- Article 1(1)(d) of the TPNW prohibits threatening to use a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device at all times, and regardless of whether such use would itself be a violation of international law or in legitimate self-defence against foreign aggression. It is therefore broader in scope than the prohibition on threat of force in Article 2(4) of the UN Charter.
- To violate the TPNW, a threat of use must be credible in the circumstances. This means that the threat must emanate from a person or an authority in a position to either direct or authorise the use of a nuclear explosive device. Typically, therefore, such a threat would be made by a senior (and pertinent) government official or leading member of the ruling party in a nuclear-armed State.
- The narrow wording in Article 1(1)(d), which uses the active verb 'threaten to use', requires that any signalled intention by a State to use nuclear weapons be specific as to the target of threatened use. Statements that reiterate the general circumstances for use in a nuclear-armed State's nuclear deterrence policies do not amount to threatening to use under the TPNW.
- Prohibited threats may, however, be implicit as well as explicit. A declared threat does not, therefore, have to refer to use of nuclear weapons, although it would be more likely to violate the norm in the TPNW should it do so.
- In certain circumstances of tension, a show of force by means of missile testing, an explosive test of a nuclear weapon, or a nuclear strike exercise or other demonstration of nuclear capability, could amount to a non-verbal threat to use nuclear weapons under the TPNW (along with other violations of the Treaty).
- Policies of nuclear 'deterrence' rest on the willingness to use nuclear weapons. Accordingly, reflecting the severity of the danger, some experts take the view that a practice of nuclear 'deterrence' in and of itself constitutes an unlawful threat of use of nuclear weapons. It is the view of the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor, however, that the broader concept of nuclear deterrence, where the threat to use is general and not specific in nature, is not sufficient in itself to constitute threatening to use under the TPNW. Deterrence practices are, however, illegal under the prohibition on possession and stockpiling.
- The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) does not prohibit threatening to use nuclear weapons.

¹⁵ USSTRATCOM Public Affairs, 'U.S. Strategic Command opens exercise Global Thunder 26', News release, 21 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4sYgQQS>.

¹⁶ Sr Airman Trust Tate, 'Global Strike Airmen strengthen strategic readiness during Global Thunder 26', New release, Minot Air Force Base Public Affairs, 17 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/3PIkISO>.

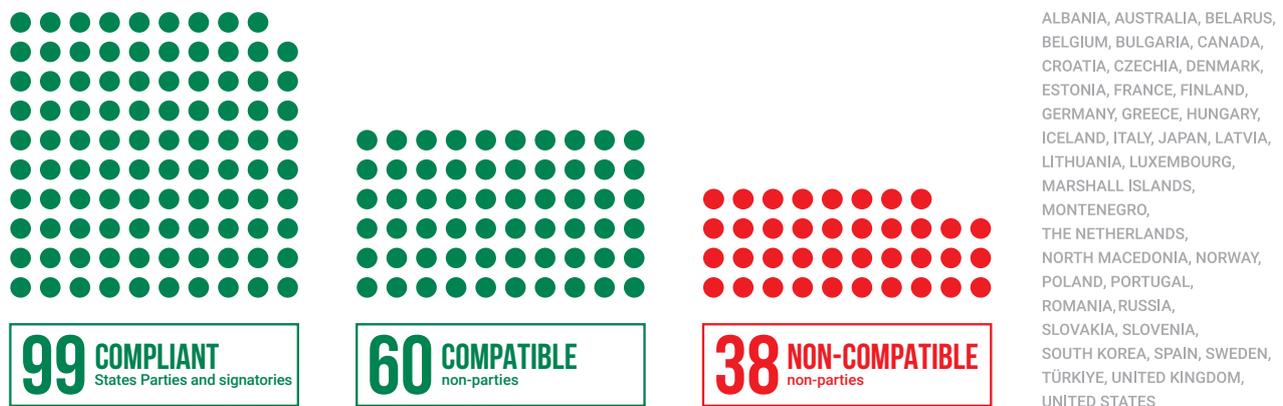


A German Air Force maintenance crew member prepares a Tornado fighter jet for take-off during NATO's nuclear strike exercise Steadfast Noon in October 2025. Seventy aircraft from a total of 14 NATO Member States took part in the 2025 iteration of the exercise. Photograph © NATO

THE PROHIBITION ON ASSISTANCE, ENCOURAGEMENT, OR INDUCEMENT

In 2025, no State Party contravened the prohibition on assistance, encouragement, or inducement of activities that are unlawful under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Kazakhstan does not appear to have had a Russian intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) land at its Sary Shagan test site in 2025. The conduct of 38 States not party was incompatible with the prohibition in Article 1(1)(e) of the TPNW. This included four nuclear-armed States (France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States), the world's 33 nuclear umbrella States, and one State with a nuclear-free defence posture (the Marshall Islands).

FIGURE 21: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibition on assistance, encouragement, or inducement



The conduct of the total of the 38 States that in various ways in 2025 assisted, encouraged, or induced activities prohibited by the TPNW, is discussed by sub-category below. It should be noted, however, that the secrecy associated with many military practices means that the information is once again likely to be incomplete.

ASSISTANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT BY NUCLEAR ‘UMBRELLA’ STATES

Nuclear ‘umbrella’ States are non-nuclear-armed States that have arrangements of extended nuclear deterrence with one or more nuclear-armed allies. In so doing, they play a major role in legitimizing nuclear weapons as necessary and acceptable. As of 2026, the 33 umbrella States are the 29 non-nuclear-armed States in NATO; US allies Australia, Japan, and South Korea; and Russian ally, Belarus. They bear considerable responsibility for the fact that trillions of dollars continue to be poured into the development and possession of nuclear weapons.

Table G overleaf provides a summary of the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor’s legal assessment of the nuclear weapons policies and practices of the umbrella States, or in other words of the conduct that each respective umbrella State would have to change should it wish to ensure compatibility with the TPNW’s prohibition on assistance, encouragement, or inducement of prohibited activities.

In 2025, the actions of three umbrella States—Belarus, Germany, and Italy—once again conflicted with all seven of the categories of incompatible conduct set out by the Ban Monitor; the Netherlands in six categories; and Belgium and Türkiye in five categories.

Since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in late February 2022, numerous umbrella States have been expanding the number of ways in which they assist or encourage activities that the TPNW prohibits. This includes greater involvement in the nuclear missions of their nuclear-armed allies.

TABLE 6: Umbrella State conduct in 2025 that was not compatible with Article 1(1)(e) of the TPNW

Umbrella State	Endorsement of doctrines and policies supporting nuclear possession	Participation in nuclear planning	Provision of capabilities in support of a nuclear posture	Participation in nuclear strike exercises and demonstrations of nuclear capability	Logistical and technical support to nuclear forces	Development, production, and maintenance of key components for nuclear weapons	Ownership in and other financial assistance to the nuclear-arms industry
Albania	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Australia	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Belarus	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible
Belgium	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible		
Bulgaria	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Canada	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Croatia	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Czechia	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible			
Denmark	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible			
Estonia	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Finland	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible			
Germany	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible
Greece	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible				
Hungary	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible				
Iceland	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Italy	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible
Japan	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Latvia	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Lithuania	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Luxembourg	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Montenegro	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Netherlands	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	
North Macedonia	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Norway	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible			
Poland	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible			
Portugal	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Romania	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible			
Slovakia	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Slovenia	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
South Korea	Non-compatible	Non-compatible					
Spain	Non-compatible	Non-compatible				Non-compatible	Non-compatible
Sweden	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible			
Türkiye	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible	Non-compatible		
Totals	33	33	15	13	6	5	4

ARTICLE 1(1)(e) – INTERPRETATION

Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to: ‘Assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Treaty’.

- The prohibition on assisting or encouraging in Article 1(1)(e) of the TPNW means that a State Party is precluded from assisting any other State, alliance, or international organization, company, non-State actor, or individual to develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess, stockpile, transfer, deploy, receive, threaten to use, or use nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.
- States Parties to the TPNW are allowed to participate in security alliances and military cooperation arrangements with nuclear-armed States—and may continue to carry out all planning, operations, exercises, and other military activities with them—so long as this does not involve nuclear weapons. Participation in nuclear-weapon-related military activities, however, would need to be discontinued.
- Other disarmament treaties contain a similarly worded prohibition, and there is an established understanding in international law of the concepts of assistance, encouragement, and inducement.
- Conduct by omission as well as by overt act is covered by the prohibition. This is so, irrespective of the inclusion of the words ‘in any way’.
- The effects of violating this prohibition are the same regardless of which alternative has been violated. If an act clearly amounts to prohibited assistance, for example, it is not necessary to determine whether the act also constitutes encouragement.
- In some cases, it may not be possible to conclude that a specific practice or capability in a given State presently amounts to assistance or encouragement of a prohibited act under the TPNW, but it is clear that it may do so in the future. For umbrella States considering which changes they would need to implement in order to ensure compatibility with the TPNW, the central issue is whether maintaining a particular practice or capability would run counter to the object and purpose of the TPNW – which is to ensure that nuclear weapons are never again used under any circumstances.

ASSISTANCE

- In order for conduct to constitute assistance, there must be a causal link between the conduct and a prohibited activity. In addition, the conduct must contribute significantly to this activity, although it does not need to be essential to its occurrence.
- Insignificant contributions would not constitute prohibited assistance. Inherent in the requirement that the contribution is significant is that the prohibited activity which is assisted must be ongoing or temporally proximate. This means that while the prohibited activity need not have happened or be ongoing, it cannot only be a theoretical possibility.
- The State must have acted with the knowledge that the conduct would, in the ordinary course of events, assist a prohibited activity. This excludes temporally remote or incidental contributions.
- Unlawful forms of assistance are, among others, financial (e.g. through economic assistance for nuclear-weapon production); technological (e.g. by the export of equipment/components for such production); operational (e.g. by conventional military support for nuclear bombing); technical (e.g. through the provision of expert information); and human (e.g. by seconding nuclear scientists to assist in another State’s nuclear-weapon programme).

ENCOURAGEMENT

- Encouraging in the context of the TPNW means persuading or seeking to persuade any other State or any legal or natural person to carry out a prohibited activity or continue an ongoing violation of any of the Article 1 prohibitions.
- Encouragement could take the form of verbal, written, material, or institutional support, whether from a government as such (for instance, through the adoption of a particular policy or document) or from pertinent senior government or military officials. Where such support has been given, the encouragement is understood to be ongoing until the point at which it is clearly withdrawn or effectively superseded by other events.
- The prohibited activity being encouraged does not need to materialise as it is the act of encouragement that is prohibited and not the result.

INDUCEMENT

- Inducing a prohibited activity means offering someone something in exchange for the performance of that activity. The act of inducing will always involve prohibited encouragement.

AJ ENDORSEMENT OF DOCTRINES AND POLICIES SUPPORTING NUCLEAR WEAPON POSSESSION

In 2025, all 33 umbrella States contravened Article 1(1)(e) of the TPNW by supporting specific nuclear-weapons related alliance doctrines and policies and/or through statements that advocate nuclear deterrence. They thus encouraged continued development and possession of nuclear weapons.¹

NATO's foundational document, the North Atlantic Treaty, does not mention nuclear weapons. However, every NATO member has supported possession and potential use of nuclear weapons through their endorsement of other alliance documents, particularly the Strategic Concept, which was last updated in 2022.² None of the alliance's members has so far rejected the possession or use, or even the first use, of nuclear weapons on its behalf. In July 2024, NATO adopted a summit declaration in Washington, proclaiming that nuclear deterrence 'is the cornerstone of Alliance security'.³

Three non-NATO allies of the United States (Australia, Japan, and South Korea) also continue to encourage development and possession of nuclear weapons through explicit statements and/or official documents.

In a United States-Japan Joint Leaders' Statement of 7 February 2025, the United States reaffirmed its commitment to defend Japan using its 'full range of capabilities, including nuclear,' and Japan reaffirmed the alliance framework under which this nuclear deterrence operates.⁴

In September 2024, the United States and South Korea had jointly emphasized 'that the ironclad US extended deterrence commitment' to South Korea 'is backed by the full range of US capabilities, including nuclear'.⁵ In 2025, the US-South Korea alliance saw a shift towards a stronger nuclear deterrence posture, focusing on expanding the technological capabilities of the Republic of Korea to counter North Korean threats. This culminated in a reiteration in December 2025, during the fifth US-South Korea Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) meeting in Washington, of the United States' commitment to provide extended deterrence 'utilizing all U.S. defense capabilities, including nuclear'.⁶

With respect to Australia, the most recent example of a government document which appears to directly encourage the United States to retain nuclear weapons is the 2024 National Defence Strategy, which maintains that 'Australia's best protection against the increasing risk of nuclear escalation is US extended nuclear deterrence and the pursuit of new avenues of arms control'.⁷

In addition to NATO, the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) has been understood by several commentators, including former CSTO secretaries general, as a 'nuclear alliance'.⁸ In 2024, the then Russian Minister of Defence, Sergei Shoigu, confirmed that Russia's nuclear doctrine provides for a nuclear umbrella—or, at any rate, the opportunity for one—over the members of the CSTO. That said, the CSTO has never adopted an official document stipulating a nuclear dimension to the alliance, and three members have actively distanced themselves from nuclear deterrence policy. Through the 2006 Treaty of Semipalatinsk—the treaty establishing Central Asia as a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ)—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan have committed never to 'assist or encourage' the development, manufacture, or possession of nuclear weapons.⁹ Kazakhstan is also a State Party to the TPNW, and Kyrgyzstan signed the treaty in 2025.

Armenia, which the Ban Monitor previously considered to fall under the Russian nuclear umbrella, has been removed from the list of umbrella States in this year's report given the suspension of its involvement in the CSTO.¹⁰ In January 2026, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan declared:

As of September 2022, the CSTO partners were refusing to fulfil their contractual obligations to guarantee the security and territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia. They were also refusing to supply hundreds of millions of dollars in weapons and equipment for which Armenia had already made payments. This was an existential threat to Armenia, and it was obvious that a decision was made to eliminate our statehood and nullify our sovereignty.¹¹

Belarus, however, which is allied to Russia through the CSTO and the Union State, has on multiple occasions expressed support for nuclear deterrence, including through requests to host Russian nuclear weapons on Belarusian soil and

1 The Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor finds that advocating nuclear deterrence on its own does not amount to encouragement of use of nuclear weapons. Such encouragement would require, for instance, support for a request for use of nuclear weapons in a specific context or agreeing to rules of engagement allowing the use of nuclear weapons in a particular multinational operation.

2 NATO, 'NATO 2022 Strategic Concept', 29 June 2022, <https://bit.ly/3ZrOLof>.

3 NATO, 'Washington summit declaration', 10 July 2024, <https://bit.ly/3DPNnfF>.

4 The White House, 'United States–Japan Joint Leaders' Statement', 7 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/4umEzVz>.

5 US Department of State, 'Joint Statement of the 2024 United States–Republic of Korea foreign and defense ministerial meeting (2+2)', 1 November 2024, <https://bit.ly/3PkvLTr>.

6 US Department of War, 'Joint Press Statement on the Fifth Nuclear Consultative Group Meeting', Press release, Washington, DC, 11 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/3ZoloTW>.

7 Australian Government, Defence, 'National Defence Strategy', 2024, <https://bit.ly/4bXOWpC>.

8 International Law and Policy Institute, 'Under my Umbrella', Report, 2016, p. 8.

9 Art. 1(1)(c), Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia; signed at Semipalatinsk, 8 September 2006; entered in force, 21 March 2009.

10 See the section above on the prohibition of use.

11 'Pashinyan Steps Up Attacks On Armenia's Ex-Soviet Allies', *RFE*, 28 January 2026, <https://bit.ly/4an0FG5>.

its endorsement of those weapons.¹² In August 2025, for instance, Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko said Belarus would be 'ready to use nuclear weapons in case of military aggression' against the country.¹³

In September 2025, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan signed a Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement that was understood by some to extend Pakistan's nuclear deterrence to Saudi Arabia. Associated Press reported that 'Pakistan's defense minister says his nation's nuclear program "will be made available" to Saudi Arabia if needed under the countries' new defense pact, marking the first specific acknowledgment that Islamabad had put the kingdom under its nuclear umbrella'.¹⁴ The public agreement however, does not mention nuclear weapons and does not establish a formal nuclear umbrella.¹⁵

BOX 4: Alliance membership and the TPNW

- Non-nuclear-armed States may adhere to the TPNW and remain within an alliance with one or more nuclear-armed States as long as they distance themselves from specific statements or formulations in alliance documents that encourage the use or possession of nuclear arms.
- A NATO member may become compliant with the TPNW through the acts of signing and ratifying the treaty. Having adhered to the TPNW, however, such a State would be obliged to refrain from endorsing future NATO language supporting the retention and potential use of nuclear weapons. This could be done either by adjusting the current language or by the State clearly rejecting possession or use of nuclear weapons on its behalf, for instance through 'footnotes', an interpretive or declaratory statement, or other means of signalling disagreement with any endorsement of the potential use or possession of nuclear weapons.
- Such footnotes or statements could be simple, phrased for instance as follows: 'State X does not support the possession or use of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on its behalf and will not assist the development, acquisition, possession or use of such weapons or devices in any way.'
- NATO members are not obliged to endorse every line of alliance language. Indeed, there is a tradition of Member States 'footnoting' or otherwise distancing themselves from specific statements in alliance documents.

B) PARTICIPATION IN NUCLEAR PLANNING

The Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor finds that all the 33 umbrella States participated in nuclear planning in 2025. Participation in nuclear strike planning entails an endorsement of the potential use of nuclear weapons in the future and thus an encouragement of the possession and development of nuclear weapons in the present. Participation in planning of temporally proximate use or threats to use nuclear weapons would amount to assistance with use or with the threatening of use.

With the exception of France, all NATO allies are members of NATO's Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), the alliance's senior body on nuclear strategy. Finland and Sweden are the newest members of NATO and the NPG. While several non-nuclear allies maintain that participation in the NPG allows them to shape the nuclear-armed allies' policies, there is little evidence that participation translates into meaningful influence. Indeed, a number of scholars have described the NPG as a 'largely symbolic forum' that exists primarily to 'rubber stamp' the policies of the alliance's most powerful members.¹⁶

Japan and South Korea are engaged in 'extended deterrence dialogues' with the United States, covering conventional as well as nuclear deterrence. At the end of the 2025, Japan and the United States announced their first guidelines for strengthening US extended nuclear deterrence, saying they faced 'an increasingly severe strategic and nuclear threat environment'.¹⁷ In a joint announcement, they declared that the guidelines addressed 'strategic messaging to maximize deterrence and enhance measures' for US extended deterrence, 'bolstered by Japan's defense capabilities', though without making the guidelines public or otherwise providing details on what had been agreed. It was claimed, however, based on information allegedly obtained from anonymous Japanese officials, that the guidelines foresee that Japan and the United States will communicate regarding any use of US nuclear weapons through the Japanese Self-Defense Forces' alliance coordination mechanism. If true, this would be the first time that Japan's involvement in US decision-making on nuclear use has been clearly articulated.¹⁸

12 'Belarus conducts checks on tactical nuclear weapons with Russia', *Voice of America*, 7 May 2024, <https://bit.ly/4a4mf04>.

13 Interfax, 'Lukashenko warns about possible use of nuclear weapons in case of military aggression against Belarus', 8 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/4lnM6Ga>.

14 J. Gambrell and M. Ahmed, 'Pakistan says its nuclear program can be made available to Saudi Arabia under defense pact', *Associated Press*, 19 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4k9nXTn>.

15 R. Akhtar, 'Beyond the Hype: Pakistan-Saudi Defense Pact Is Not a Saudi Nuclear Umbrella', Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, 18 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4blZ8j4>.

16 M. A. Smith, *NATO in the First Decade After the Cold War*, Springer, Dordrecht, 2000, p. 29; P. Buteux, *The Politics of Nuclear Consultation in NATO, 1965–1980*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, p. 143.

17 S. Kuramitsu, 'Japan, U.S. Announce Guidelines to Deepen Extended Deterrence', *Arms Control Today*, January/February 2025, <https://bit.ly/4blRqRN>.

18 Ibid.

The US-South Korea Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG), mentioned above, met twice in 2025.¹⁹ The group is modelled after NATO's NPG and is designed to enhance deterrence and response capabilities against the North Korean nuclear threat.²⁰ If Japan and South Korea were to adhere to the TPNW in the future, they would have to provide assurances that their respective 'extended deterrence dialogues' with the United States would not involve nuclear planning.

Australia is not involved in formal consultations on nuclear planning with the United States, although as mentioned below, in the past it has been named as a participant in the senior leadership team for the United States' nuclear command and control exercise Global Thunder.²¹ Forms of nuclear planning may also be ongoing in other forums.

Russia and Belarus do not appear to maintain any formal or dedicated consultation arrangement for nuclear planning, although Belarus has participated in Russian nuclear exercises, acts which necessitate a degree of nuclear planning.

C) PROVISION OF CAPABILITIES IN SUPPORT OF A NUCLEAR POSTURE

In 2025, a total of 15 known umbrella States provided capabilities in support of a nuclear posture – Belarus, Belgium, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden and Türkiye.

Of the above, seven umbrella States maintained and provided dual-capable means of delivery specifically certified to carry a nuclear-armed ally's nuclear weapons, providing a significant contribution to the foreign deployment and potential transfer of nuclear weapons to non-nuclear allies by the United States and Russia, respectively. The maintenance and provision of nuclear-capable means of delivery thus amounted to assistance with the possession of nuclear weapons.

Belgium, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, as well as Türkiye and Greece (the latter two in a contingency role), contribute so-called dual-capable aircraft (DCA) to NATO's nuclear mission and thus assist US possession of nuclear weapons.²² In NATO, the arrangement whereby certain umbrella States provide DCA is often referred to as 'nuclear sharing' (nuclear sharing is also often used in a wider sense) and the DCA-contributing States are sometimes referred to as 'user nations'.²³ The aircraft in question have been specifically configured to carry nuclear weapons and have been assigned specific weapons and roles in the event that the weapons were authorized for use. The aircraft have a clear nuclear role and constitute an integral and permanent part of NATO's nuclear forces.²⁴

Belarus assists Russian possession of nuclear weapons in a potential foreign-deployed role, through its readiness to modify, maintain, and provide dual-capable aircraft in support of the Russian nuclear posture. Russia's president Vladimir Putin announced in March 2023 that Russia had modified Belarus' Su-25 Frogfoot aircraft to carry nuclear weapons.²⁵ It was also announced in 2023 that Russia had transferred dual-capable Iskander missiles to Belarus.²⁶ The Ban Monitor's assessment is that Belarus has received and now maintains and provides the Iskander missiles in support of Russia's nuclear posture.

The provision by umbrella States of purely conventional capabilities in support of nuclear operations could potentially also be considered to amount to assistance with possession of nuclear weapons. In NATO, so-called Conventional Support to Nuclear Operations (CSNO) can include a broad array of both air, land, and sea-based capabilities, but most prominently features conventional aircraft for escort, refuelling, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), and suppression or destruction of enemy air defences.²⁷ In many of these cases, however, the question of whether a practice or capability is incompatible with the TPNW would depend on the significance and context of the contribution in question. No public overview is available of the non-nuclear-armed NATO States that have a CSNO role. However, the Ban Monitor assesses that the six States mentioned above that contribute DCA also assume CSNO roles. In addition, States that participate in Steadfast Noon with conventional aircraft likely take part in CSNO training missions beyond that specific exercise. As discussed below, in 2025 this included at least seven NATO members – Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Poland, Romania, and Sweden. Hungary has also previously been identified as a CSNO participant.²⁸

D) PARTICIPATION IN NUCLEAR STRIKE EXERCISES AND DEMONSTRATIONS OF NUCLEAR CAPABILITY

At least 13 umbrella States took part in nuclear strike exercises and other demonstrations of nuclear capability in 2025. Nuclear weapons-related exercises with umbrella States are conducted to ensure forces are well trained and

19 US Department of War, 'Joint Press Statement on the Fifth Nuclear Consultative Group Meeting', Press release, Washington, DC, 11 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/3ZoloTW>.

20 J. D. Kim, 'Upgrading U.S.-ROK Nuclear Deterrence: The Role of the Nuclear Consultative Group', The National Bureau of Asian Research, March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4ItxMfq>.

21 S. Losey, 'Global Thunder: Bombers practice for nuclear war', *Air Force Times*, 22 October 2020, <https://bit.ly/3VmYCJt>.

22 H. M. Kristensen, M. Korda, E. Johns, and M. Knight, 'Nuclear weapons sharing, 2023', *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 79, No. 6 (2023), 393–406, <https://bit.ly/3VJH25>.

23 Ibid. In addition to being user nations, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Türkiye are also host nations.

24 Kristensen, Korda, Johns, and Knight, 'Nuclear weapons sharing, 2023'.

25 'Интервью Владимира Путина Павлу Зарубину', *Smotrim*, 25 March 2023, <https://bit.ly/3x6p9ms>.

26 See, e.g., N. Sokov, 'Russia is deploying nuclear weapons in Belarus. NATO shouldn't take the bait', *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, 24 April 2023, <https://bit.ly/4hdXT6V>.

27 W. Alberque and A. Kacprzyk, 'More Pillars Needed: Ten Options for Europe to Improve NATO's Nuclear Deterrence', Stimson, 2 October 2024, <https://bit.ly/3WaqMZi>.

28 L. Sukin and R. Mukherjee, 'Navigating the New Nuclear Map', *Texas National Security Review*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (29 September 2025), <https://bit.ly/3P961N6>.

prepared, but frequently also to build collective resolve to maintain a nuclear posture and to demonstrate nuclear capability, or a so-called show of force. Participation in such activities clearly implies an acceptance not only of the potential use of nuclear weapons in the future but also the continued possession of nuclear weapons by allied nuclear-armed States in the present. By extension, participation in nuclear strike exercises and demonstrations of nuclear capability represent an encouragement of possession of nuclear weapons under Article 1(1)(e) of the TPNW.

In September 2025, Belarus participated in the five-day Russian war game Zapad (West), where the two nations rehearsed the launch of Russian tactical nuclear weapons. State media quoted the Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko as saying that the exercises also featured Russia's Oreshnik intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM).²⁹

On 13–24 October 2025, NATO organized its annual Steadfast Noon exercise, which (among other actions) simulates a nuclear strike. The exercise, which involved combat aircraft capable of carrying conventional or nuclear warheads, was based out of the Netherlands, with supporting elements in Belgium, Denmark, and the United Kingdom.³⁰ It was reported by NATO to have involved 14 Member States (not individually named) and some 2,000 personnel, with around 70 aircraft taking part in the exercise, including, for the strike mission, F-35 combat aircraft from Volkel Air Force Base.³¹ In addition to Belgium, Denmark, and the Netherlands, open sources suggest that the following non-nuclear-armed States participated with aircraft: Czechia,³² Italy³³, Finland,³⁴ Germany,³⁵ Norway,³⁶ Poland,³⁷ Romania,³⁸ Sweden,³⁹ and Turkey.⁴⁰ In 2024, Greece was also reported to have participated.

Overlapping with Steadfast Noon in October 2025, the United States also carried out the nuclear command and control exercise 'Global Thunder'.⁴¹ The exercise is known to involve 'key allied and NATO personnel and partners' in 'senior leadership teams and work across a broad spectrum of areas offering policy support and operational insight'.⁴² No information was disclosed in 2025 about the participating allies, beyond the United Kingdom. That said, in the past, 'foreign liaison officers to USSTRATCOM' from Australia, Canada, Denmark, and South Korea have been involved, 'offering legal, public affairs, and policy support; as well as targeting and information operations insight'.⁴³

The year 2025 also saw a number of joint exercises involving US strategic bombers and allied conventional fighter planes. Strategic bombers are often deployed to produce a nuclear signalling effect, but their dual capability renders unequivocal legal assessment of allied conventional participation in joint exercises with such assets difficult. Because it has not been possible to determine whether specific joint exercises with strategic bombers are demonstrations of nuclear or conventional capability, the Ban Monitor has not identified any joint exercises with strategic bombers in 2025 that were in direct conflict with the prohibition on assistance or encouragement in Article 1(1)(e) of the TPNW. Many nevertheless cast nuclear shadows on the participating States. On 14 March 2025, for instance, Norwegian F-35 fighter jets escorted a nuclear-capable US B-52 bomber in a rare low-altitude flyover of Norway's capital Oslo.⁴⁴

EJ LOGISTICAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO NUCLEAR FORCES

Six umbrella States were found by the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor to have provided logistical and/or technical support to nuclear forces in 2025.⁴⁵ Belarus likely provided logistical support to Russia's announced construction of a special storage facility for tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus. As discussed on page 81 the Asipovichy depot is the most likely candidate for nuclear storage given new security features observed at the site via satellite imagery in 2024. Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Türkiye continued in 2025 to provide logistical and security services at the bases where US nuclear weapons are deployed to their territory. This constitutes assistance with possession and stockpiling of nuclear weapons under Article 1(1)(e) the TPNW – as is the case also for Belarus under its agreement with Russia. In addition, these six States are also acting in conflict with Article 1(1)(g), which explicitly prohibits the hosting of another State's nuclear weapons.

The provision of logistical and technical support to planes or submarines specifically designed to carry nuclear weapons would likely constitute assistance with possession of the weapons within the meaning of Article 1(1)(e) of

29 Reuters, 'Moscow and Minsk Rehearse Launch of Nuclear Weapons Deployed in Belarus, Lukashenko Says', 16 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4IKpf8d>.

30 NATO's Annual Nuclear Exercise Steadfast Noon Begins', NATO News, 13 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4sL80px>.

31 Ibid, and NATO, 'Exercise Steadfast Noon 25: NATO Allies train for nuclear deterrence', 30 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4ajqNSh>.

32 See: <https://bit.ly/4bFHM1N>.

33 See: <https://bit.ly/4luK7A3>.

34 See: <https://bit.ly/4sH8yfQ>.

35 Ibid.

36 See: <https://bit.ly/47JZH51>.

37 See: <https://bit.ly/4luK7A3>.

38 See: <https://bit.ly/40pjHpJ>.

39 See: <https://bit.ly/4sH8yfQ>.

40 See: <https://bit.ly/4bGJMGY>.

41 U.S. Strategic Command Public Affairs, 'U.S. Strategic Command Opens Exercise Global Thunder 26', 21 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4s2g9FW>.

42 Malmstrom Air Force Base, 'U.S. Strategic Command to commence exercise Global Thunder 25', 18 October 2024, <https://bit.ly/40gOYfm>.

43 US Strategic Command Public Affairs, 'U.S. Strategic Command Conducts Exercise Global Thunder, News release', 29 October 2018, <https://bit.ly/30BHnRn>.

44 I. Uleberg and N. Didriksen, 'Amerikansk bombeflyr flyr over Oslo fredag', NRK, 14 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rwbwmG>.

45 H. M. Kristensen and M. Korda, 'Depot In Belarus Shows New Upgrades Possibly For Russian Nuclear Warhead Storage', Strategic Security Blog, FAS, 14 March 2024, <https://bit.ly/4emv0Vo>.

the TPNW, provided that the support provided a ‘significant’ contribution. There were no publicly documented port calls by nuclear-armed submarines to any non-nuclear-armed States in 2025. In the case of logistical and technical support for dual-use delivery vehicles, such as bombers or fighter-bombers, there will normally be no presumption of nuclear involvement. It will therefore be generally unproblematic for States Parties to the TPNW that are allies or partners of nuclear-armed States to continue to host or provide logistical and technical support to those States’ dual-use delivery vehicles. If the purpose of a mission or presence with a nuclear-armed State’s dual-use delivery vehicle is clearly nuclear, the provision of logistical and technical support is likely to contravene the prohibition on assistance to and encouragement of prohibited activities. As discussed above, however, it will typically be difficult to determine if the purpose is nuclear or conventional.

FJ DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, AND MAINTENANCE OF KEY COMPONENTS FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The conduct in 2025 of five umbrella States—Belarus, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Spain—was again not compatible with the TPNW’s prohibition on assistance, because they allow companies within their jurisdiction to be involved in development, production, and maintenance of key components for nuclear weapons.

Belarus continued to assist Russia with development and production of nuclear weapons, through the Belarusian company Volat, which designed and continues to produce the MAZ 7917 transporter-erector-launcher for the Russian Topol-M ICBM. The launch capability in the MAZ 7917 constitutes a key component for the Topol-M ICBM.⁴⁶

Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain continued to assist France with development, production, and possession of nuclear weapons, as a result of Airbus Defence and Space’s activities in the joint venture companies MBDA and ArianeGroup. MBDA produces France’s current nuclear-tipped ASMPA air-launched cruise missiles (ALCMS) and takes part in the production of the next generation of longer-range ASN4G nuclear-tipped ALCMSs.⁴⁷ ArianeGroup is the lead contractor for the ongoing maintenance and the modernization of France’s M51 nuclear-armed, submarine-launched ballistic missiles.⁴⁸

The international responsibility of Germany is engaged because Airbus Defence and Space is headquartered in Germany. The international responsibility of the Netherlands is engaged because Airbus Defence and Space’s parent company, Airbus, is headquartered in the Netherlands. Airbus has itself announced that it considers that the work done by its subsidiaries is indivisible from the group.⁴⁹ The international responsibility of Spain is engaged because Airbus’ International Office is located in Spain.

Italy continued to assist France with the development and production of nuclear weapons, because it allows the Italian company Leonardo (formerly Finmeccanica) to be involved in the MBDA joint venture.⁵⁰

BOX 5: Corporate and State Responsibility

- A company that develops, produces, or maintains key components (such as a ballistic missile) for a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device, or which maintains nuclear weapons, would thereby engage the international responsibility of the State in which it is operating. Such a State Party would be responsible for prohibited assistance under the TPNW (assistance to development, production, or possession, depending on the acts the company was performing).
- Depending on the circumstances, a parent company can also be legally responsible for the acts of its subsidiaries. The general position in domestic law is that a parent company is not liable where its subsidiary acts unlawfully. However, jurisprudence has established a number of exceptions to this general principle, allowing the ‘veil of separate legal status ... to be pierced’. Under international law, contravention of the provisions of a disarmament treaty or of customary disarmament law by a corporation would suffice to render the State or States responsible on whose territory that corporation committed the relevant act or acts.
- In addition, any company that is engaged in a joint venture that develops or produces key components for a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device could thereby be engaging in prohibited assistance even if it does not itself contribute materially to the nuclear-weapon development or production. This is so wherever a company establishes a new body corporate, and is holding shares in that company. Under international law, the States on the territory of which the participating and shareholding companies are incorporated and/or have their headquarters or involved divisions or production facilities would be responsible for the acts of the joint venture where those do not comply with an international treaty or customary law on disarmament.

* C. Murray et al., *The Law and Practice of International Trade*, 12th Edn, Sweet & Maxwell, 2012, §28-009.

46 Volat, ‘Chassis for the Topol’, accessed 12 February 2024, <https://bit.ly/3Sxw1jn>.

47 Pax and ICAN, ‘Risky Returns: Nuclear Weapon Producers and their Financiers’, Report, Utrecht and Geneva, 2022.

48 Ibid.

49 J. Harrison, ‘Letter from John Harrison, General Counsel, Airbus to Susi Snyder, Don’t Bank on the Bomb Project Manager Regarding the Adoption of the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons’, 17 September 2018.

50 Pax and ICAN, ‘Risky Returns: Nuclear Weapon Producers and their Financiers’.

G) OWNERSHIP IN AND OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE NUCLEAR-ARMS INDUSTRY

The conduct in 2025 of four umbrella States—Belarus, Italy, Germany, and Spain—was not compatible with the TPNW’s prohibition on assistance because of their State ownership in companies involved in the development, production, and maintenance of nuclear weapons.

Belarus owns 100% of the company Volat, which provides launch capability for Russia’s Topol-M ICBMs. Germany and Spain both maintain significant ownership shares in Airbus,⁵¹ which, through Airbus Defence and Space, has significant ownership shares in MBDA and the joint venture ArianeGroup.⁵² As mentioned, MBDA and the ArianeGroup develop, produce, and maintain key components for France’s nuclear weapons. Italy has a significant ownership share in Leonardo, which in turn has a significant ownership share in MBDA.⁵³

In late December 2025, the European Commission approved new finance rules, allowing investments in defence companies—including those involved in nuclear weapons—to be classified as compliant with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards. The change is part of the EU’s ‘Defence Readiness Omnibus’, which aims to strengthen the Union’s defence capacity and mobilise up to €800 billion for the defence sector.⁵⁴

Every year since the TPNW entered into force in 2021, however, the number of institutions identified with significant financial exposure to selected nuclear weapons producers has fallen. A February 2025 report by Pax and ICAN had found that, between January 2022 and August 2024, 260 financial institutions—including banks, pension funds, insurance companies, and asset managers—had significant financing or investment relations with one or more of the 24 nuclear weapon producing companies identified by the report. This was down from 287 financial institutions a year earlier. The 24 companies contribute to the nuclear arsenals of China, France, India, the United Kingdom and the United States.⁵⁵

More research is needed on direct State ownership in the above-mentioned companies involved in the nuclear-arms enterprise. Such ownership appears, however, to exist only for nuclear-armed States and certain umbrella States. Also in terms of private financial institutions’ shareholding and in other financial assistance to the nuclear-arms industry, it is in the nuclear-armed States and umbrella States that the greatest activity is seen.

The Ban Monitor calls upon all States Parties to the TPNW to act to prevent and suppress any ownership of and financial assistance to the nuclear-arms industry and to adopt clear national guidance embedded in domestic law for financial sector actors, whether public or private. Financial institutions benefit from guidance provided by governments on the ways to interpret norms and international law.

BOX 6: The TPNW and financing

- All investment in the nuclear-arms enterprise runs counter to the object and purpose of the TPNW – which is to ensure that nuclear weapons are never again used under any circumstances.
- The TPNW does not explicitly prohibit the financing of nuclear-weapon programmes. The ordinary purchase of shares in a company involved in the development, production, or maintenance of nuclear arsenals is therefore not per se an illegal act under the TPNW. The prohibition on assistance in Article 1(e), however, renders unlawful any significant or controlling shareholding in a company involved in the development, production, or maintenance of nuclear weapons.
- It is not possible to define what a significant ownership share is in terms of a fixed percentage of shares or votes, as this varies from market to market and company to company. To determine if a specific shareholder has significant influence on the management of a company, it is necessary to assess the ownership profile of the relevant company and the relevant national rules on corporate decision-making.
- The prohibition on assistance also renders unlawful direct funding of any of the prohibited activities listed in other subparagraphs of Article 1(1). If, for instance, funding in the form of an earmarked loan or credit line is provided to a company for the development, production, or maintenance of nuclear weapons, this is unlawful assistance with the development, production, and possession of nuclear weapons.
- The prohibition on assistance encompasses not only State funding, but also private banks and other financial institutions as well as individuals. Cuba issued a declaration upon joining the TPNW, stating that ‘The financing of any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Treaty is also a prohibited activity according to the provisions of Article 1(e).

51 As of 31 December 2024, the largest shareholders in Airbus were the France at 10.83% of the shares, Germany at 10.82%, and Spain at 4.08%, respectively. The Articles of Association of Airbus prohibit any shareholder from holding an interest of more than 15% of the share capital or voting rights of the Company, acting alone or in concert with others. See: Airbus Annual Report 2024, April 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aEjswH>, pp. 83, 86.

52 Airbus Defence and Space has 37.5% of the shares in MBDA and 50% of the shares in ArianeGroup. See MBDA, ‘About us’, <https://bit.ly/3jrKJEE>; and ArianeGroup, ‘Governance’, <https://bit.ly/3RAKYol>, both accessed 1 March 2025; and A. Spray, ‘MBDA explained – the pan European missile major that sells abroad’, Aerospace Global News, 26 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/4a6A6Fg>.

53 Italy owns 30.2% of the shares in Leonardo. See Leonardo, ‘Shareholders base’, <https://bit.ly/3Y4qja7>. Leonardo, in turn, owns 25% of the shares in MBDA. Spray, ‘MBDA explained – the pan European missile major that sells abroad’.

54 Commission Notice on the application of the sustainable finance framework and the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive to the defence sector, Doc. C/2025/4950, <https://bit.ly/3OaWRPB>; and see OnestopESG, ‘Nuclear weapons are now ESG compliant’, 14 January 2026, <https://bit.ly/4aBlBcy>.

55 Pax and ICAN, ‘At Great Cost: The companies building nuclear weapons and their financiers’, 2025, <https://bit.ly/3P7JNuX>.

ASSISTANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT BY NUCLEAR-ARMED STATES

The United Kingdom and France are engaged in close cooperation on maintenance of nuclear stockpiles, which amounts to prohibited (mutual) assistance with possession and stockpiling under the TPNW.⁵⁶ The two States' cooperation on stockpiling is supported by the 2010 Teutates Treaty to develop technologies for safe and effective maintenance of both States' nuclear stockpiles.⁵⁷ In July 2025, French President Emmanuel Macron and UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer reaffirmed and expanded this cooperation when they signed the Northwood Declaration which established a UK-France Nuclear Steering Group intended to provide political direction and coordinate bilateral work across nuclear policy, capability and operations.⁵⁸

In 2025, for the first time, President Emmanuel Macron allowed UK observers to witness France's Operation Poker exercises to 'deepen' the 'nuclear co-operation and co-ordination' of Western Europe's only two nuclear-armed States. About four times a year the French conduct exercises to demonstrate how, using Rafale B combat aircraft, they would perform a nuclear strike on an enemy. The classified exercises comprise about 40 aircraft, some of which refuel over Brittany before flying to the Mediterranean then returning low and fast over mainland France to simulate a nuclear bombing run.⁵⁹

US-French cooperation is conducted under a 1961 Mutual Defense Agreement, which permits limited cooperation on the operation of nuclear-weapon systems and amounts to (mutual) assistance with possession and stockpiling. Later amendments have enabled enhanced cooperation, notably on issues of safety, security, and reliability.⁶⁰

As discussed in the section on transfer above, the United States transfers to the United Kingdom key components for the latter's nuclear arsenal. The two States continue to engage in close cooperation on the United Kingdom's nuclear-weapons capability, including on the maintenance of Trident II SLBMs. The nature of the cooperation also amounts to US assistance with the United Kingdom's possession and development of nuclear weapons.

Analysis suggests that Russia supported the North Korean nuclear and missile programmes politically, financially, and technologically in 2025.⁶¹

France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Russia all engage on a continuous basis in assistance to and encouragement of a range of prohibited activities by allies, including the hosting of nuclear weapons, participation in nuclear exercises, the maintenance and provision of dual-capable delivery vehicles, and the provision of technical and logistical support for nuclear forces.

ASSISTANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT BY STATES WITH NUCLEAR-FREE DEFENCE POSTURES

The year 2025 saw one State with a nuclear-free defence posture, the Marshall Islands, permit the testing of missiles designed to carry nuclear warheads on its territory. Allowing such testing is not consistent with the TPNW's prohibition on assistance with development and possession of nuclear weapons.

The Marshall Islands hosts a test site that regularly serves as the destination point for US test launches of nuclear-capable long-range missiles. The site in question is the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site at Kwajalein Atoll. The land on which the site is located is leased to the United States through a long-term agreement. It is not the testing site in and of itself that conflicts with the TPNW, but the United States' use of it to maintain and develop missile technology for nuclear weapons.

In 2025, the United States launched unarmed ICBMs towards Kwajalein Atoll in February⁶², May⁶³ and November. The November test flight, known as Glory Trip 254, saw an unarmed Minuteman III ICBM launch from Vandenberg Space Force at 1:35 a.m. Pacific Time on 5 November. As with all ICBMs, the missile briefly left Earth's atmosphere during flight. It travelled a total of 6,760 kilometres west before impacting in a designated range in the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site.⁶⁴ Should the Marshall Islands decide to adhere to the TPNW, such testing would need to stop. With its long history as a testing ground for US nuclear weapons, the Marshall Islands has in other respects been a strong supporter of nuclear disarmament and the campaign to end nuclear testing.

56 See, e.g., P. Ricketts, 'National Security Relations with France after Brexit', Briefing Paper, RUSI, January 2018, <https://bit.ly/3gUNn7e>.

57 See, e.g., Nuclear Information Service, 'UK-France nuclear co-operation: The "Teutates" project. Presentation at Non-Proliferation Treaty PrepCom meeting, 23 April 2013', <https://bit.ly/3oSxxwv>.

58 French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 'New UK-France Nuclear Steering Group Meets in Paris', 22 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/4bEoXMI>.

59 D. Chazan, 'Macron to lure allies away from US nuclear protection', *The Times*, 1 March 2026, <https://bit.ly/4cV3nnS>.

60 See, e.g., C. Mohr, 'U.S. Secretly Helped France Develop Nuclear Weapons, an Expert Writes', *The New York Times*, 28 May 1989, <http://nyti.ms/2lcTB1c>.

61 O. Pietrewicz and M. A. Piotrowski, 'Russia Supports North Korea's Nuclear and Missile Programmes', Polish Institute of International Affairs, 28 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/3ZMgSP7>; W. Pawlus, 'Russia is Now Actively Funding North Korea's Nuclear Programme', Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), London, 24 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/30y32xl>.

62 C. Harter and N. Goldberg, 'Air Force launches unarmed nuclear missile from Vandenberg overnight, lands near Marshall Islands', *Los Angeles Times*, 18 February 2025 (Updated 19 February), <https://bit.ly/4qoJqsM>.

63 S. Losey, 'Air Force Test-Launches Unarmed Minuteman III Missile', *Defense News*, 21 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/4sFmjeW>.

64 B. Tingley, 'US military launches unarmed nuclear missile from Vandenberg Space Force Base', *Space*, 6 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/4r66GwM>.

Kazakhstan, a State Party to the TPNW, hosts the Sary-Shagan test site, which has intermittently been used as an impact area for Russian ICBM test launches. The site was established by the Soviet Union in 1956, and the land on which it is located is now leased by Kazakhstan to Russia under a long-term agreement. Following a Russian ICBM test directed toward Sary-Shagan in April 2024, the Ban Monitor therefore found Kazakhstan to be in non-compliance with the prohibition on assistance in Article 1(1)(e) of the TPNW. No such test using Sary-Shagan as its destination point appears to have taken place in 2025, however, and Kazakhstan—as well as all other States Parties and signatories to the TPNW—were assessed as fully compliant with the treaty in 2025.

Russia has been building a testing base at Severo-Yeniseysky in Krasnoyarsk Krai in south-central Russia, which could serve to avoid testing in Kazakhstan. Major construction at the test site may have been completed by the end of 2024, although it does not appear to have been used yet.⁶⁵

65 H. M. Kristensen, M. Korda, E. Johns, and M. Knight, 'Russian nuclear weapons, 2025', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (2025), 208–37, <https://bit.ly/4dAQYWv>.

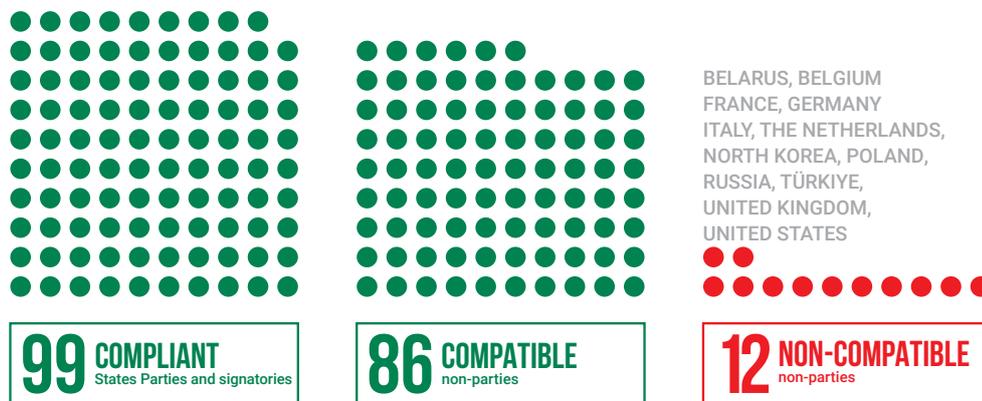


The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Sir Keir Starmer welcomes French President Emmanuel Macron to Downing Street on 10 July 2025, ahead of a three-day United Kingdom-France Summit, where the two States agreed to strengthen their cooperation on nuclear deterrence. Photograph © Dan Kitwood, Pa Photos/NTB

THE PROHIBITION ON SEEKING OR RECEIVING ASSISTANCE

In 2025, 12 States engaged in conduct that was not compatible with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) prohibition on seeking or receiving assistance for acts that are unlawful under the treaty. France, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom all continued to receive various forms of assistance with their ongoing development, production and possession of nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom also received assistance for the deployment of foreign nuclear weapons on its territory, as did Belarus, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Türkiye. Poland again sought, but did not receive, the deployment of US nuclear weapons on its territory. In 2025, North Korea was also added to the list of non-compatible States on this prohibition, after having sought and possibly received support from Russia for its nuclear-weapons programme.

FIGURE 22: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibition on seeking or receiving assistance



RECEIPT OF SUPPORT FROM THE UNITED STATES

The five current NATO host States for United States (US) nuclear weapons—Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Türkiye—each continued to receive US support for the ongoing deployment of its tactical nuclear missiles on their respective territory in 2025. This included new variants of the B61 nuclear bombs that the United States has upgraded.

The United Kingdom received support from the United States for the upgrades that are being made at its Royal Air Force (RAF) Lakenheath base in the eastern English county of Suffolk. This will enable the return to British soil of US nuclear weapons, which has been trailed since 2023. It is still not known whether the stationing has yet occurred. At the time, a UK Ministry of Defence spokesperson said: 'It remains a longstanding UK and NATO policy to neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons at a given location.'¹

¹ PA Media, 'US planning to station nuclear weapons in UK amid threat from Russia – report', *The Guardian*, 27 January 2024, <https://bit.ly/48Zqbh0>.

RECEIPT OF SUPPORT FROM RUSSIA

Belarus continued to receive Russian support for deployment of Russian nuclear-capable missiles on its territory in 2025. According to the Belarus Ministry of Defence, a division of the dual-capable Iskander ballistic missile system and a squadron of dual-capable Su-25 aircraft were put on alert from late 2024. It was reported that 'the whole range of actions, from planning and preparation to strikes with tactical nuclear weapons' would be tested. President Lukashenko has said that 'non-strategic nuclear weapons in Belarus are weapons of deterrence and defence.'²

Analysis suggests that North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes was supported by Russia politically, financially, and technologically in 2025.³

ASSISTANCE WITH DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, AND POSSESSION

France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States all continued to receive various forms of assistance in 2025 with their respective development, production, and possession of nuclear weapons. France, the United Kingdom, and the United States provided each other with such assistance, and France, Russia, and the United States received assistance from a number of non-nuclear-armed States. The relevant cases are described in the section above on the prohibition of assistance with prohibited activities.

SEEKING DEPLOYMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

In Poland, debate continued on hosting US nuclear weapons in the country in response to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the deployment of Russian nuclear weapons in Belarus. In March 2025, President Andrzej Duda repeated his earlier call for the United States to base nuclear weapons in Poland.⁴

ARTICLE 1(1)(f) – INTERPRETATION

Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to 'seek or receive any assistance, in any way, from anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Treaty'.

- In contrast to Article 1(1)(e) of the TPNW, which prohibits States from assisting prohibited acts by others, Article 1(1)(f) prohibits States from seeking or receiving assistance to violate the Treaty themselves. It does not matter whether or not the assistance is actually received.
- This precludes any State party from asking any other State or any natural or legal person (i.e., a company) to help it develop, possess, stockpile, test, produce, use, transfer, or receive nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, including where it is sought that foreign nuclear weapons will be stationed or deployed to their territory.
- A similar prohibition, imposed only on non-nuclear-weapon States, is contained in Article II of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), though it applies only to manufacture: the undertaking is 'not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices'.

2 O. Karach, 'Nuclear weapons in Belarus: What we Know', Blog post, ICAN, 22 November 2024, <https://bit.ly/3Z7Fhhu>.

3 O. Pietrewicz and M. A. Piotrowski, 'Russia Supports North Korea's Nuclear and Missile Programmes', Polish Institute of International Affairs, 28 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/3ZMgSP7>; W. Pawlus, 'Russia is Now Actively Funding North Korea's Nuclear Programme', Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), London, 24 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/3Oy32xl>.

4 J. Bowen, 'Duda: US nuclear weapons in Poland would be "deterrent" for Russia, BBC News, 13 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aqn8SS>.

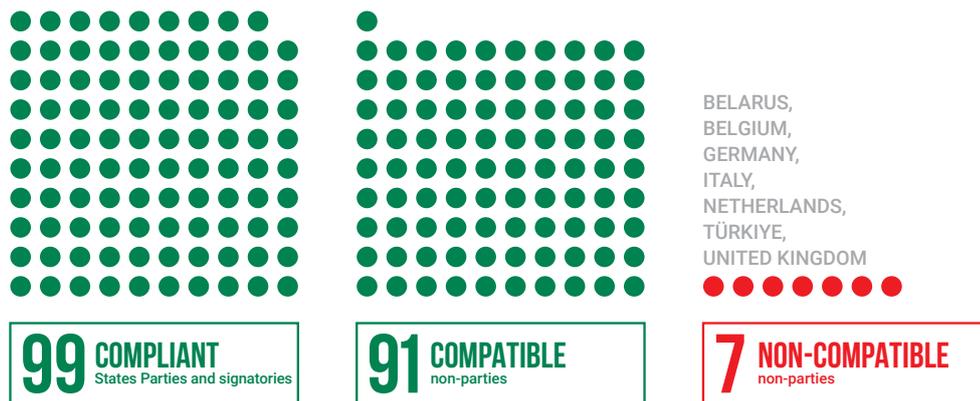


A still image taken from a video made available on 30 December 2025 by the Russian Ministry of Defence press service, which shows a unit equipped with the Russian Oreshnik mobile ground-based missile system that Russia said had begun combat duty in an undisclosed location in Belarus. Photograph © EPA/NTB

THE PROHIBITION ON ALLOWING STATIONING, INSTALLATION, OR DEPLOYMENT

In 2025, seven States engaged in conduct that was not compatible with the prohibition in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on allowing stationing, installation, or deployment of nuclear weapons. While the presence of Russian nuclear warheads on Belarusian territory has still not been confirmed, it is clear that both States have taken significant steps to advance a nuclear-sharing mission. In the United Kingdom, upgrades are being made at the United Kingdom’s Royal Air Force (RAF) Lakenheath base to enable the return of United States (US) nuclear weapons to the United Kingdom, and in 2025 the UK government announced that it would purchase 12 nuclear-capable F-35A aircraft to be based at RAF Marham, which will also eventually be equipped to host US nuclear gravity bombs in the 2030s. Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Türkiye continued to host a total of approximately 100–120 US B61 gravity nuclear bombs for NATO’s nuclear sharing mission.

FIGURE 23: Compliance and compatibility in 2025 with the prohibition on allowing stationing, installation, or deployment

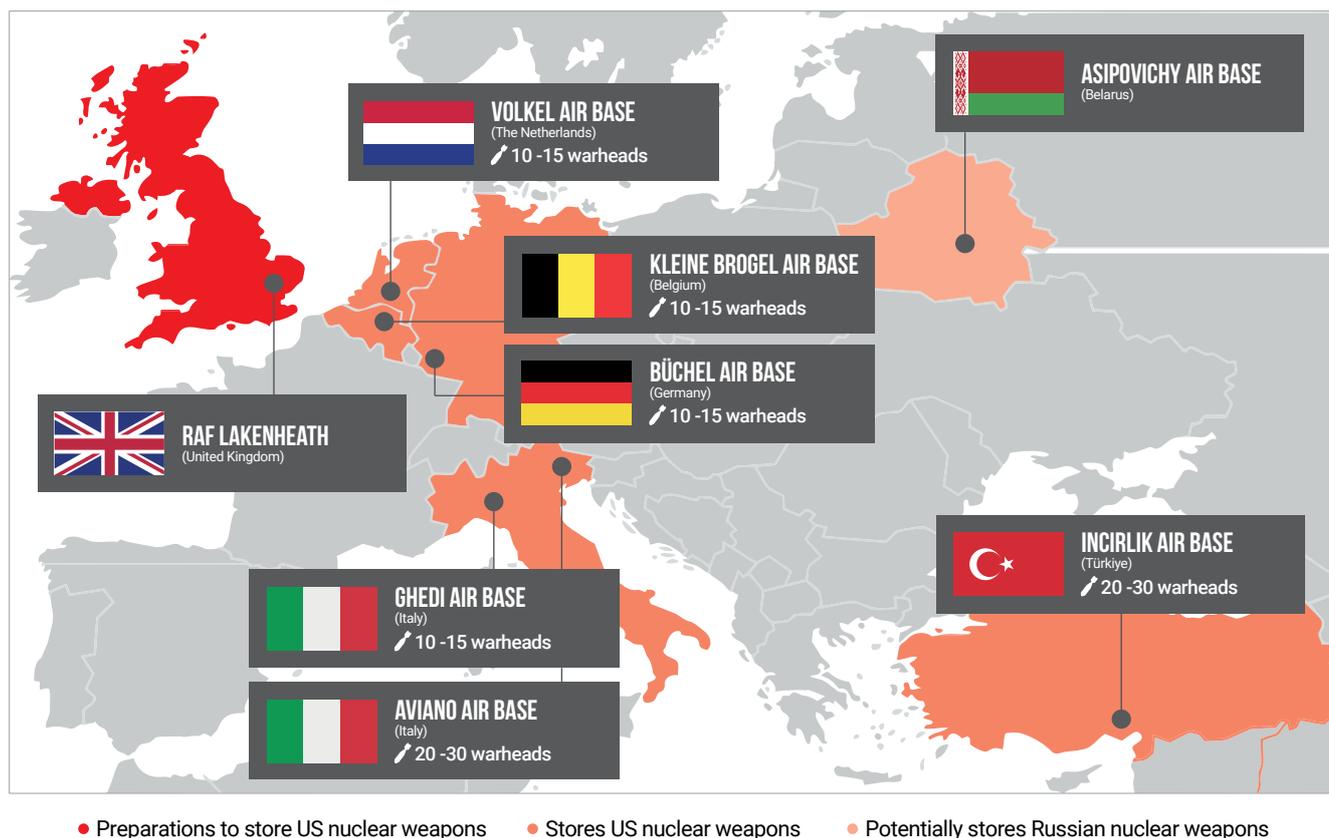


BELGIUM, GERMANY, ITALY, THE NETHERLANDS, AND TÜRKIYE

Forward-deployed US nuclear weapons are currently believed to be located at six air bases in Europe: Kleine Brogel in Belgium, Büchel in Germany, Aviano and Ghedi in Italy, Volkel in the Netherlands, and Incirlik in Türkiye (see Figure 24 overleaf). The nuclear-sharing relationships between the United States and its NATO allies were concluded prior to the adoption of the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1968; however, the legality of these arrangements under the NPT remain a source of international controversy and their deterrence value is often disputed.¹ The respective hosting arrangements are thought to be governed by ‘Service-Level Agreements’ – classified bilateral agreements between the United States and the respective host State. Nuclear weapons are also occasionally transported between locations for deployment, retirement, maintenance, or modification.

¹ W. Alberque, *The NPT and the Origin of NATO’s Nuclear Sharing Arrangements*, IFRI, Paris, 2017, <https://bit.ly/3X4ep1u>.

FIGURE 24: Locations of known and potential foreign-deployed nuclear weapons in Europe, 2026



© Nuclear Information Project and Federation of American Scientists

The B61 bombs hosted under NATO nuclear sharing arrangements in Europe are assumed to have explosive yields ranging from an equivalent of 300 tons to 50 kilotons (kt) of TNT for the B61-12, which recently replaced the older B61-3s and -4s. The bombs are stored in underground vaults at national airbases in the five European host nations and remain under US custody. In a scenario of use, the United States would authorize release of these bombs, and European pilots would be tasked with delivering them to their targets using NATO dual-capable aircraft. The bases where the nuclear weapons are stored are currently being modernized – with upgraded storage vaults; new command, control, and communications systems; and improved security perimeters and arrangements.²

UNITED KINGDOM

In the United Kingdom, upgrades are being made at the United Kingdom’s Royal Air Force (RAF) Lakenheath base to enable the return of United States (US) nuclear weapons to the United Kingdom. There are indications that B61-12 bombs may have been deployed to the base, yet significant security upgrades have yet to be completed. In 2025 the UK government also announced that it would purchase 12 nuclear-capable F-35A aircraft to be based at RAF Marham, which will also eventually be equipped to host US nuclear gravity bombs in the 2030s.

Between 2022 and 2024, Pentagon budget documents indicated that US nuclear weapons would soon return to UK soil for the first time in 15 years. In particular, these documents indicated the return of a ‘potential surety mission’ and ‘upcoming nuclear mission’ at Lakenheath Air Base in Suffolk.³ Coupled with the news that the United Kingdom is planning to join NATO’s nuclear mission, these actions conflict with the NATO Secretary General’s December 2021 statement that ‘we have no plans of stationing any nuclear weapons in any other countries than we already have’, as well as the head of NATO’s Nuclear Policy Directorate, who said in September 2023 that she did not anticipate changes to the nuclear sharing arrangements – ‘certainly not in the short term’.⁴

2 H. M. Kristensen, M. Korda, E. Johns, and M. Knight-Boyle, ‘Nuclear Notebook: The Changing Nuclear Landscape in Europe’, *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 81, No. 6 (2025), pp. 485–505, <https://bit.ly/3Zw38S3>.

3 M. Korda and H. M. Kristensen, ‘Increasing Evidence That The US Air Force’s Nuclear Mission May Be Returning To UK Soil’, *Strategic Security Blog*, Federation of American Scientists (FAS), 28 August 2023, <https://bit.ly/3VSuJm1>; E. Johns and H. Kristensen, ‘Reawakening A Nuclear Legacy: The Potential Return of the US Nuclear Mission to RAF Lakenheath’, FAS, February 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rFyp70>.

4 NATO, ‘Keynote Interview with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at Reuters Next Event’, 1 December 2021, <https://bit.ly/3VKzAPH>; E. Kervinen, ‘Nato’s Head of Nuclear Weapons Policy: The Risk of Using Nuclear Weapons Has Increased, but Russia’s Weapons are Still Largely in a Peacetime Position’, *Helsingin Sanomat*, 30 September 2023, <https://bit.ly/4cmGSF6>.

BELARUS

In late 2023, Russia and Belarus claimed that the forward deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus had been completed.⁵ It appears that this concerns weapons assigned for delivery by Belarusian Su-25 aircraft, dual-capable, road-mobile, short-range Iskander systems, and potentially Russia's new dual-capable Oreshnik intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM), which Russia deployed to Belarus in 2025. In December 2024, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko claimed that Belarus was in possession of 'dozens' of Russian nuclear weapons.⁶

Despite these statements, several unknowns still surround the status and logistical challenges of this deployment, and open sources have not provided conclusive visual evidence to suggest where Russian nuclear warheads and related personnel are deployed in Belarus, if indeed they are in the country at all. The Asipovichy depot is the most likely candidate for nuclear storage given new security features observed at the site via satellite imagery in 2024.⁷ There is no suggestion, however, that Belarus has been given custody of nuclear warheads. On the contrary, Russian spokespersons have insisted that warheads deployed in Belarus will remain under Russian jurisdiction and control, mirroring NATO practices.⁸

NATIONAL DEBATES TO WATCH

There was increasing debate in 2025 in a number of States on potential hosting of US nuclear weapons or participating in other aspects of the nuclear sharing mission.

In 2023, the Prime Minister of Poland announced his nation's intention to pursue more direct participation in NATO's nuclear sharing initiatives, and in 2024, the Polish President ratcheted up the rhetoric by announcing that Poland was 'ready' to accept a deployment of NATO nuclear weapons on its territory.⁹ In 2025, Poland's President clarified that he would be open to deployments of both US and French nuclear weapons, in response to France's enhanced rhetoric about offering a 'European dimension' its deterrent.¹⁰ As discussed in the section above, Poland's pursuit of nuclear weapons deployments amounts to the seeking of assistance that is prohibited under the TPNW.

Similar to the storage of nuclear weapons on UK soil, these actions would also be in conflict with recent NATO statements, as well as with the NATO-Russia Founding Act, which stipulates that NATO has 'no intention, no plan, and no reason to establish nuclear weapon storage sites on the territory of [NATO members who joined the Alliance after 1997], whether through the construction of new nuclear storage facilities or the adaptation of old nuclear storage facilities'.¹¹

In June 2025, Estonia's defence minister told journalists that the country was ready to 'host' nuclear-capable aircraft, and in early 2026, the foreign minister stated that Estonia would not rule out hosting another country's nuclear weapons on its territory.¹²

In March 2025, Lithuanian Minister of Defence Dovile Sakaliene said that Lithuania was encouraged by President Macron's proposal and that it could revisit Article 137 of its constitution that prohibits the deployment of any weapons of mass destruction or foreign military bases on Lithuanian soil if allies 'propose realistic plans for the deployment of nuclear weapons or their components in Lithuania'.¹³

Other European leaders have voiced similar intentions. In 2025, the Danish Prime Minister said that the possibility of hosting nuclear weapons on Danish territory was 'not something we are working on, but you won't get me to stand here and say no to others' ideas. Everything has to be on the table now'.¹⁴ Finnish leaders also echoed these sentiments in 2024 and 2025.¹⁵

In addition, while the future of the evolving UK-France nuclear partnership still remains uncertain, Swedish and German leaders have both since raised the prospect of involving their countries in a cooperative nuclear arrangement. While it is unlikely that these States would host British or French warheads during peacetime, it could include other aspects of nuclear sharing, including the possibility of pilots being involved in delivering nuclear weapons.¹⁶ Germany has thus

5 'Belarus Leader Says Russian Nuclear Weapons Shipments are Completed, Raising Concern in the Region', *Associated Press*, 25 December 2023, <https://bit.ly/4c04NdH>.

6 'Belarus has dozens of Russian nuclear weapons and is ready for its newest missile, its leader says', *Associated Press*, 10 December 2024, <https://bit.ly/4rMHsEk>.

7 H. M. Kristensen, M. Korda, E. Johns, and M. Knight-Boyle, 'Russian nuclear weapons, 2025', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 81, No. 3 (13 May 2025), pp. 208–37, <https://bit.ly/4bdLUUp>.

8 'Belarus has dozens of Russian nuclear weapons and is ready for its newest missile, its leader says', *Associated Press*, 10 December 2024, <https://bit.ly/4kYg3MV>.

9 'Poland's leader says his country is ready to host NATO members' nuclear weapons to counter Russia', *Associated Press*, 22 April 2024, <https://bit.ly/4gMDHt1>.

10 S. Starcevic, 'We want French nukes, Polish president says', *Politico*, 18 April 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rYMT37>.

11 NATO, 'Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between NATO and the Russian Federation Signed in Paris, France', Press release, 27 May 1997, <https://bit.ly/4el6xzN>.

12 Estonia also prepared to host allied aircraft carrying nuclear weapons', *Postimees*, 28 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/41rMKP>; ERR, 'Foreign minister: Estonia's foreign policy is not an academic exercise', 18 February 2026, <https://bit.ly/4aEnUvx>.

13 'Lithuania may need to change Constitution for nuclear weapon deployment – defmin', *The Baltic Times*, 15 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/40igvfl>.

14 L. Kayali, and J. Weizman, 'Poland, Denmark open to Macron's nuclear deterrent proposal', *Politico*, 6 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qVHR65>.

15 Debatten, Spesialsending: Nordens svar på Putins krig, *NRK*, 12 September 2024, <http://bit.ly/3VUGrMy>.

16 'Der Kanzler – Das Interview', Podcast Machtwechsel, 18 February 2026, <https://bit.ly/4shOFFp>; SVT, 'Skilsmässan: Agenda', 25 January 2026, <https://bit.ly/404e0f8>.

considered the possibility of French nuclear-capable aircraft being deployed on its territory.¹⁷ In Belgium, however, Prime Minister Bart de Wever said it is not enough for France to be the only nuclear-armed EU country and called for a pan-European ‘nuclear umbrella’ that would guarantee the security of all EU Member States.¹⁸

In recent years, there has been a strong resurgence of public support in South Korea and Japan for redeployment of US nuclear weapons or even a domestic nuclear weapons programme. Throughout 2025, senior Japanese lawmakers called for a debate on nuclear sharing and a review of Japan’s traditional three non-nuclear principles policy not to possess, manufacture, or host nuclear weapons.¹⁹ It remains unclear, however, whether Japan’s new Prime Minister, Sanae Takaichi, will seek to push for a change to these long-standing defence principles. In a 2025 poll by the South Korean Asan Institute for Policy Studies, while support for acquiring an indigenous nuclear weapons capability increased by 5.3% to reach an all-time high of 76.2%, support for the redeployment of US tactical nuclear weapons also increased, to 66.3%, the second highest since 2013. Corresponding confidence that the United States would use nuclear weapons to defend South Korea was 48.9%, down 4.1% from 2024 (53%).²⁰

ARTICLE 1(1)(g) – INTERPRETATION

Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to: ‘Allow any stationing, installation or deployment of any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in its territory or at any place under its jurisdiction or control.’

- This provision outlaws a particular form of assistance or encouragement of prohibited action: allowing any stationing, installation, or deployment of any foreign nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in a State Party’s territory or at any other place under its jurisdiction or control.
- The TPNW’s prohibition against such hosting of nuclear weapons applies at all times, including during escalating tension or armed conflict.
- The concept of jurisdiction refers primarily to a State’s sovereign territory, while control extends to areas that the State Party occupies or otherwise controls extraterritorially. This is irrespective of the legality of this control under international law.
- Deployment is the broadest of the three types of prohibited conduct. A violation would not require any prolonged duration, agreement, or infrastructure. Thus, although transit of nuclear weapons is not explicitly prohibited by the TPNW, if movement into the sovereign territory of a State Party is not swiftly followed by exit, this might amount to assistance with possession of nuclear weapons as well as a violation of 1(1)(g).
- The duration of stay necessary to constitute deployment would depend on the surrounding circumstances—a shorter stay would suffice at a moment of high tension—but in normal circumstances would probably require at least 72 hours to contravene the prohibition in Article 1(1)(g).
- The NPT does not formally prohibit the stationing of nuclear weapons on the territory of non-nuclear-weapon States by any of the five designated nuclear-weapon States as long as it retains control over their use at all times. Many States consider nuclear sharing to pose a significant challenge to broader nuclear non-proliferation efforts.

17 T. Newdick, ‘France Eyeing Deployment Of Nuclear-Armed Rafale Fighters To Germany: Report’, TWZ, 25 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/3ZVeZQL>.

18 E. Stoanova, ‘Belgian Prime Minister: It is not enough for France to be the only nuclear power in the EU’, Fakti, 14 March 2025, <https://bit.ly/4aJ2jRm>.

19 T. Kelly, J. Geddie, J. Park, J. Lee, J. Smith, and D. Lague, ‘Trump shock spurs Japan to think about the unthinkable: nuclear arms’, *Reuters*, 19 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/46XAunm>.

20 ‘Asan Poll: “South Koreans and Their Neighbors 2025”. Record 76.2% Public Support for Nuclear Armament’, Asan Institute, 28 April 2025, <https://bit.ly/30p3T3r>.



Lanterns are floated down the river in Hiroshima on 6 August 2025 in remembrance of those who died in the nuclear bombing eighty years ago. Photo © The Asahi Shimbun via Getty Images

COMPLIANCE AND COMPATIBILITY IN 2025 WITH THE POSITIVE OBLIGATIONS OF THE TPNW

In addition to its comprehensive prohibitions, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) obligates its States Parties to take a set of positive measures to implement the treaty. In the sections that follow, these positive obligations are set out and explained and the level of compliance by States Parties is assessed. Where relevant, the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor also reviews global observance by other States of the norms the TPNW's positive obligations seek to promote or establish in order to prevent and remediate harm inflicted by nuclear weapons.

Positive obligations are key elements of all disarmament treaties. The parallel positive obligations in the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) have significantly enhanced their humanitarian impact. While much work remains to be done, the obligations in those treaties have led to a dramatic reduction in the stockpiles of banned weapons, clearance of wide swathes of contaminated land, vital support for victims, and an increase in international assistance from States Parties as well as States not party. The positive obligations of the TPNW will similarly advance the Treaty's broader humanitarian and developmental goals.

Most of the positive obligations in the TPNW do not set out specific deadlines or criteria for the States Parties to meet, but are rather long-term goals to work towards in good faith. Implementation is therefore in its early stages. Certain of the TPNW's positive obligations apply only to nuclear-armed States or States with foreign nuclear weapons on their territory, none of which has yet adhered to the treaty.

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TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS
ARTICLE 2 DECLARATION- THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

The Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary General of the United Nations and has the honour to forward herewith copy of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Declaration signed by the Acting Foreign Minister of the Republic of Sierra Leone pursuant to Article 2 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Sierra Leone State Party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, Sierra Leone hereby declares that:

- I. The Republic of Sierra Leone has never owned, possessed or controlled nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices
 - II. The Republic of Sierra Leone does not own, possess or control any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices
 - III. The Republic of Sierra Leone, does not have any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in its territory or in any other place under its jurisdiction or control that are owned, possessed or controlled by another State.
- The Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretary-General of the United Nations the assurance of its highest consideration

The Secretary-General
THE UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS
NEW YORK

22 January 2025



THE OBLIGATION TO SUBMIT A DECLARATION

The UN Secretary-General received three Article 2 declarations during the course of 2025: from Indonesia, Sierra Leone, and Solomon Islands, each of which had a deadline of 22 January 2025 to submit the declaration required by the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), and all met their deadline.

The Solomon Islands submitted its Article 2 declaration on 9 January 2025. Indonesia submitted its Article 2 declaration in English and Indonesian on 21 January 2025. Sierra Leone submitted its Article 2 declaration on 22 January 2025, the same day as its treaty-mandated deadline. The declarations of the three States confirmed that they have never owned, possessed, or controlled nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and that foreign nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices are not located in their territory or in any other place under their jurisdiction or control.

The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) receives the declarations on behalf of the UN Secretary General and transmits them to the other States Parties. It also posts the declarations on its website, at: <https://bit.ly/4ayh75u>.

The online State profiles of the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor also record the dates the declarations are received by the UN, or indicate that a State Party has not yet submitted its requisite declaration.

The TPNW does not prescribe a standard form or format for the declarations, but the UNODA website for the Treaty contains model declarations in English, French, and Spanish prepared by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

ARTICLE 2 – INTERPRETATION

- Article 2 of the TPNW imposes a duty on each State to submit a declaration to the UN Secretary-General within 30 days of becoming party to the Treaty. The declaration must clarify whether the State Party has ever owned, possessed, or controlled nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. If it has, it must further declare whether it has already eliminated its nuclear-weapon programme, including by destroying or irreversibly converting all nuclear-weapons-related facilities, or whether it still owns, possesses, or controls any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.
- The declaration must also stipulate whether foreign nuclear weapons or devices are located (stockpiled, stationed, deployed, or installed) either in the State Party's territory or in any other place under its jurisdiction or control.
- The overwhelming majority of potential States Parties are not nuclear-armed. Once the requisite Article 2 declaration has been submitted by a non-nuclear-armed State Party, the only other reporting duties under the TPNW will be those to which it may commit under an action plan adopted by a Meeting of States Parties.
- For potential States Parties that formerly possessed or which currently possess nuclear weapons and for States that have foreign nuclear weapons on their territory or in any other place under their jurisdiction or control, Article 4 of the TPNW imposes a duty to submit a report to each Meeting of States Parties and each Review Conference on progress towards the implementation of its obligations under that article. This obligation persists until the obligations under Article 4 are fulfilled.



سایانی که به سازش
آمریکار

حاصل خودباوری
شهید فریدون عباسی

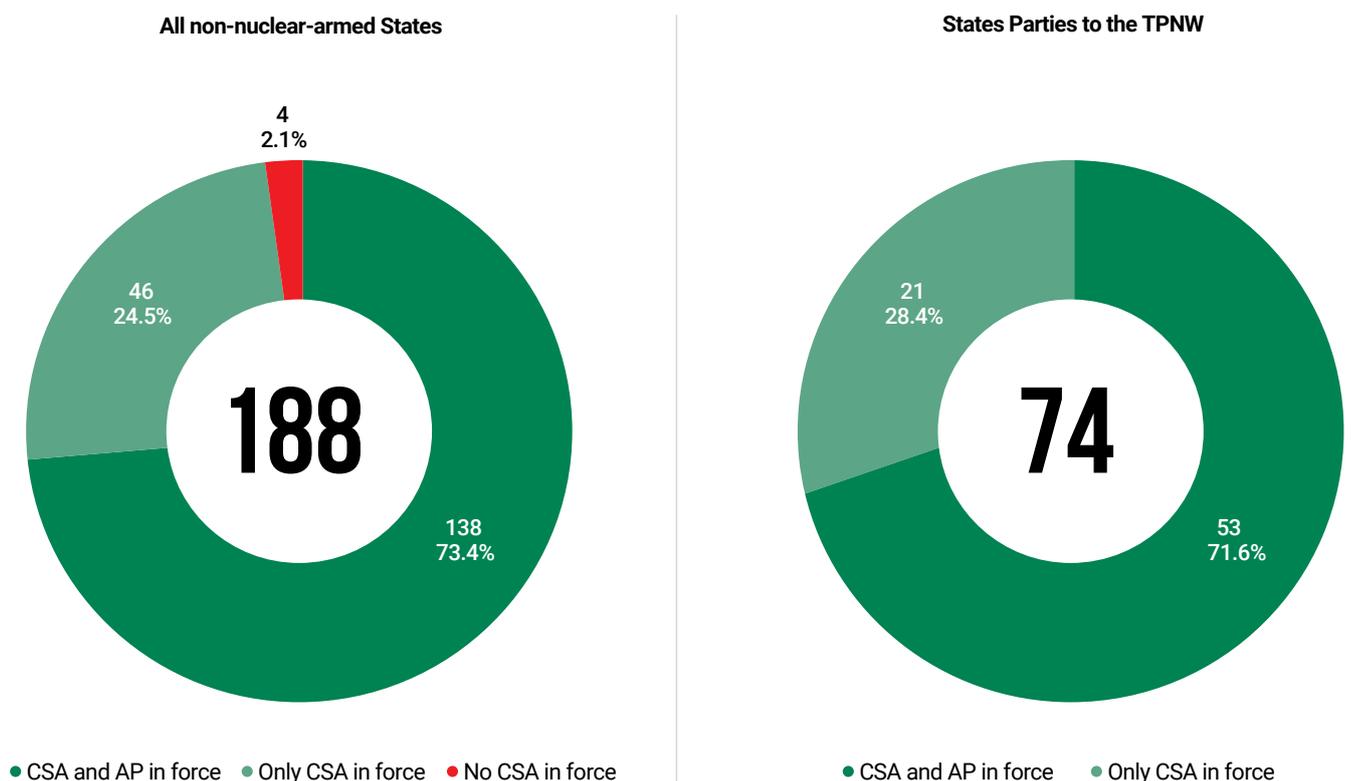
An Iranian cleric sits next to models of Iranian ballistic missiles and centrifuges after participating in an anti-United States and anti-Israeli rally on 4 November 2025, marking the forty-sixth anniversary of the 1979 occupation of the US embassy in Tehran. Photograph © Morteza Nikoubazi/NurPhoto/Shutterstock/NTB

THE OBLIGATION TO HAVE A SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENT AND ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL WITH THE IAEA

On 20 May 2025, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines brought into force an Additional Protocol with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As a result, the number of non-nuclear-armed States with a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) in force but not yet an Additional Protocol decreased to 46. At the close of 2025, 138 non-nuclear-armed States—almost three quarters of the global total of 188—had brought into force both a CSA and an Additional Protocol, thus committing to the current ‘gold standard’ of safeguards.

It is a continuing concern that not all of the world’s non-nuclear-armed States have yet brought into force both a CSA and an Additional Protocol. That said, twelve States (Algeria, Belarus, Guinea, Iran, Kiribati, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nauru, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, and Zambia) have already signed an Additional Protocol and need only to bring it into force. In addition, the IAEA Board approved Additional Protocols for both Equatorial Guinea and Somalia on 10 June 2025, and for Sri Lanka in 2018.

FIGURE 25: Status of safeguards agreements in non-nuclear-armed States, as of 31.12.2025



The number of States without a CSA in force (and therefore also not an Additional Protocol) remained at four in 2025: Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Somalia, and South Sudan. On 10 June 2025, the IAEA Board also approved CSAs for Equatorial Guinea and Somalia. Guinea signed a CSA already in 2011 and needs only to bring it into force. The only non-nuclear-armed State in the world that has not yet taken any steps towards concluding a CSA is South Sudan.

Figure 25 above and Table H opposite summarise the status at the end of 2025 of safeguards agreements among the world's 188 non-nuclear-armed States as a whole and among the current 74 States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).¹ To support further progress in universalization of CSAs and Additional Protocols, the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor's State profiles on <https://www.banmonitor.org> contain information on all States' respective safeguards agreements or lack thereof, as well as recommended actions. States that have not brought into force both a CSA and an Additional Protocol should do so as a matter of urgency. Furthermore, States that maintain an operative original Small Quantities Protocol (SQP) to their CSA should amend it to conform to the revised SQP, or in those cases that no longer meet the criteria for scaled down safeguards, rescind it.

Apart from South Sudan, all non-nuclear-armed States that remain outliers either on the Additional Protocol or on both the CSA and the Additional Protocol are States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). They therefore have a pre-existing obligation under that treaty to conclude and bring into force a CSA,² which, as mentioned above, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, and Somalia have not yet fulfilled. The 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences also recommended the conclusion and bringing into force of an Additional Protocol as soon as possible,³ a recommendation that likewise remains unimplemented by too many States.

The TPNW has now become an additional forum where diplomats, civil society, and the IAEA can advocate for universal application of both a CSA and an Additional Protocol. Since the adoption of the TPNW in 2017 and through to the end of 2025, a total of ten Additional Protocols and six CSAs had been brought into force with the IAEA by States that are either a signatory or a party to the Treaty: Benin, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, and Timor-Leste have brought into force both a CSA and an Additional Protocol; Bolivia, Honduras, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Thailand, and Zimbabwe have each brought into force an Additional Protocol, and Palestine has brought into force a CSA.

ARTICLE 3(2) DEADLINE

Under the TPNW, it is mandatory for all non-nuclear-armed States Parties to have a CSA. If a non-nuclear-armed State has not brought into force a CSA upon adhering to the TPNW, the Treaty's Article 3(2) stipulates that it must do so within a deadline of 18 months. Since the entry into force of the TPNW, this important deadline has thus far been triggered for three States Parties: Guinea-Bissau, Palestine, and Timor-Leste. All three have duly brought into force their CSAs. In addition, Benin, Cabo Verde, and Sao Tome and Principe brought into force a CSA after signing but before ratifying the TPNW, thus satisfying the Article 3(2) requirement before the Treaty entered into force for them. Article 3(2) of the TPNW has therefore directly contributed to reducing the number of outliers on the CSA by six, to only four at the end of 2025.

If any of the remaining four CSA outliers (Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Somalia, and South Sudan) becomes a State Party to the TPNW, that State would likewise have to comply with the 18-month deadline. Although South Sudan is not yet a State Party to the NPT and therefore has no CSA obligation under that treaty, adherence to the TPNW would independently trigger a binding requirement for South Sudan to bring a CSA into force within 18 months.

NUCLEAR FACILITIES

It is in States with nuclear facilities⁴ that it is most critical to have a strengthened safeguards system through both a CSA and an Additional Protocol.⁵ Information about whether or not a State has nuclear facilities is indicated in the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor's online State profiles. A total of 64 non-nuclear-armed States currently have nuclear facilities,⁶ and of these, ten have not yet brought into force an Additional Protocol with the IAEA. Two of these ten States are Parties to the TPNW (Malaysia and Venezuela), and two others (Algeria and Brazil) are signatories. The other six are Argentina, Belarus, Egypt, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. The ten States are indicated in bold in Table H. Algeria, Belarus, Iran, and Malaysia have already signed an Additional Protocol and need only to bring it into force. Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Venezuela have not yet taken any steps towards an Additional Protocol and should do so urgently.

1 The Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor's methodology is to track the status of each of the 197 States that under the 'all States' formula can become Parties to most global treaties, including the NPT and the TPNW. In some cases, the total figures presented by the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor in this section may differ from those of the IAEA, because they include South Sudan (which is not a party to the NPT); the Cook Islands and Niue (which have not adhered to the NPT in their own right but remain bound by its provisions through New Zealand's ratification of the Treaty); and DPR Korea (where the IAEA no longer implements in-country verification activities).

2 See Art. III, NPT. All of the five regional nuclear-weapon-free-zone (NWFZ) treaties also obligate their States Parties to conclude CSAs with the IAEA. The Central Asian NWFZ Treaty goes one step further than any other existing treaty and also requires its States Parties to adopt an Additional Protocol with the IAEA.

3 '2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Final Document', Action 28, <https://bit.ly/34mNQwb>.

4 The IAEA Nuclear Safety and Security Glossary defines a 'nuclear facility' as a facility (including associated buildings and equipment) in which nuclear material is produced, processed, used, handled, stored or disposed of. See, 'IAEA Nuclear Safety and Security Glossary', 2022 (Interim) Edition, <https://bit.ly/3Dvysfw>.

5 J. Carlson, 'The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and the Safeguards Standard', Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2 December 2021, <https://bit.ly/3RsdxJj>.

6 See Tables A42 (a) and (b) of IAEA, 'The Annual Report for 2024, Annex Information', The data are through to the end of 2024.

SMALL QUANTITIES PROTOCOLS

At the close of 2025, 101 of the 188 non-nuclear-armed States had an operative SQP, which suspends some of the provisions of their CSA.⁷ Of these, 88 were revised SQPs and 13 were original SQPs.

In the course of 2025, two TPNW States Parties (Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and two signatories (Kyrgyzstan and Zambia) amended their respective SQP to reflect the revised SQP.⁸ The remaining 13 States with original SQPs are Barbados, Bhutan, Cook Islands, Dominica, Guyana, Kiribati, Myanmar, Nepal, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, and Yemen. They should amend or rescind them as soon as possible.

In 2025, the IAEA also approved new SQPs for Equatorial Guinea and Somalia.⁹

TABLE H: Status of safeguards agreements in non-nuclear-armed States, as of 31.12.2025

138 STATES WITH CSA AND ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL IN FORCE	
Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Angola, <u>Antigua and Barbuda</u> , Armenia, Australia, <u>Austria</u> , Azerbaijan, Bahrain, <u>Bangladesh</u> , Belgium, <u>Benin</u> , <u>Bolivia</u> , Bosnia and Herzegovina, <u>Botswana</u> , Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, <u>Cabo Verde</u> , <u>Cambodia</u> , Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, <u>Chile</u> , Colombia, <u>Comoros</u> , <u>Congo</u> , <u>Costa Rica</u> , <u>Côte d'Ivoire</u> , Croatia, <u>Cuba</u> , Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, <u>Dominican Republic</u> , <u>DR Congo</u> , <u>Ecuador</u> , <u>El Salvador</u> , Eritrea, Estonia, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, <u>Gambia</u> , Georgia, Germany, <u>Ghana</u> , Greece, <u>Guatemala</u> , <u>Guinea-Bissau</u> , Haiti, <u>Holy See</u> , <u>Honduras</u> , Hungary, Iceland, <u>Indonesia</u> , Iraq, <u>Ireland</u> , Italy, <u>Jamaica</u> , Japan, Jordan, <u>Kazakhstan</u> , Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, <u>Lesotho</u> , Liberia, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, <u>Malawi</u> , Mali, <u>Malta</u> , Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, <u>Mexico</u> , Moldova, Monaco, <u>Mongolia</u> , Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, <u>Namibia</u> , Netherlands, <u>New Zealand</u> , <u>Nicaragua</u> , Niger, <u>Nigeria</u> , North Macedonia, Norway, <u>Palau</u> , <u>Panama</u> , <u>Paraguay</u> , <u>Peru</u> , <u>Philippines</u> , Poland, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, <u>Saint Kitts and Nevis</u> , <u>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</u> , <u>Sao Tome and Principe</u> , Senegal, Serbia, <u>Seychelles</u> , Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, <u>South Africa</u> , South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tanzania, <u>Thailand</u> , <u>Timor-Leste</u> , Togo, Türkiye, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, <u>Uruguay</u> , Uzbekistan, <u>Vanuatu</u> , <u>Viet Nam</u> , Zimbabwe.	
46 STATES WITH ONLY CSA IN FORCE	
CSA in force, Additional Protocol signed (11 States)	Algeria , Belarus , Iran , Kiribati, Lao PDR, Malaysia , Myanmar, <u>Nauru</u> , <u>Sierra Leone</u> , Tunisia, Zambia.
CSA in force, Additional Protocol approved (1 State)	<u>Sri Lanka</u> .
CSA in force, no steps towards Additional Protocol (34 States)	Argentina, Bahamas, Barbados, <u>Belize</u> , Bhutan, Brazil , Brunei, <u>Cook Islands</u> ,* Dominica, Egypt, <u>Grenada</u> , <u>Guyana</u> , Lebanon, <u>Maldives</u> , Micronesia, Nepal, <u>Niue</u> ,* Oman, <u>Palestine</u> , Papua New Guinea, Qatar, <u>Saint Lucia</u> , <u>Samoa</u> , <u>San Marino</u> , Saudi Arabia , <u>Solomon Islands</u> , Sudan, Suriname, Syria, Tonga, <u>Trinidad and Tobago</u> , <u>Tuvalu</u> , Venezuela , Yemen.
4 STATES WITH NO CSA IN FORCE	
CSA signed, Additional Protocol signed (1 States)	Guinea.
CSA approved, Additional Protocol approved (2 States)	Equatorial Guinea, Somalia.
No steps towards CSA or Additional Protocol (1 States)	South Sudan.

Source: IAEA, 'Conclusion of Safeguards Agreements, Additional Protocols and Small Quantities Protocols, Status as of 31 December 2025', <https://bit.ly/3OnH6F5>

* New Zealand's CSA and Original SQP also apply to Cook Islands and Niue. Amendments to the SQP entered into force only for New Zealand on 24 February 2014.

States that are Parties to the TPNW are underlined. States shown in bold have nuclear facilities but have not brought into force an Additional Protocol with the IAEA.

⁷ IAEA, 'Conclusion of Safeguards Agreements, Additional Protocols and Small Quantities Protocols, Status as of 31 December 2025', <https://bit.ly/3OnH6F5>.

⁸ IAEA, 'Status List. Amendment to Small Quantities Protocols,' as of 31 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/40sww2o>

⁹ Ibid.

SAFEGUARDS AGREEMENTS IN NUCLEAR-ARMED STATES

The NPT's five nuclear-weapon States (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) have concluded 'voluntary offer' safeguards agreements, based on the CSA model, which involve safeguards only on certain nuclear material and facilities in their nuclear fuel cycle. They have also concluded limited Additional Protocols to their voluntary offer agreements. Three nuclear-armed States not party to the NPT (India, Israel, and Pakistan) have concluded item-specific safeguards agreements, which prohibit the use of specified items under safeguards for military purposes or the manufacture of nuclear explosive devices. India has concluded a limited Additional Protocol to its item-specific agreement. North Korea had originally brought into force a CSA, but the IAEA's in-country verification activities ended in 2009.

Upon adherence to the TPNW nuclear-armed States will have to, as a minimum, upgrade their existing safeguards agreements to a full CSA over all nuclear material and upgrade to, or conclude and bring into force, a full Additional Protocol.

ARTICLES 3(1), 3(2), 4(1), AND 4(3) – INTERPRETATION

- It is mandatory for all non-nuclear-armed States Parties to the TPNW to maintain in force or to conclude and bring into force (and thereafter maintain) a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the IAEA. The TPNW specifies that the CSA must be based on the most recent CSA model in IAEA, doc. INFCIRC 153 (Corrected). If a non-nuclear-armed State has not brought into force a CSA upon adhering to the TPNW, Article 3(2) stipulates that it must do so within a deadline of 18 months from the date of entry into force of the TPNW for the State in question.
- An Additional Protocol in force (or an instrument of equivalent or higher standard) is similarly required for all non-nuclear-armed States Parties that had one in force upon the entry into force of the TPNW on 22 January 2021.
- These are only minimum requirements, and the TPNW implicitly encourages States Parties to adhere to the highest standard of safeguards. At present, this is the above-mentioned CSA and an Additional Protocol.
- If a nuclear-armed State eliminates its nuclear-weapons programme and then adheres to the TPNW it will be obliged to conclude a safeguards agreement that provides 'credible assurance of the non-diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful nuclear activities and of the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activities in that State Party as a whole'. (Article 4(1)). This formulation equates to, at least, a CSA and a full Additional Protocol. This means that the State in question will have to upgrade its existing safeguards agreement to a CSA and the requisite Additional Protocol. Negotiations on these safeguards must start within 180 days, with the resultant treaty entering into force within 18 months of the TPNW's entry into force for the State in question. Such States must maintain, as a minimum, these safeguards, but may adopt more far-reaching safeguards in the future.
- If a nuclear-armed State adheres to the TPNW before eliminating its nuclear-weapons programme it will also be obliged to conclude a safeguards agreement that provides 'credible assurance of the non-diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful nuclear activities and of the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activities in the State as a whole'. (Article 4(3)). Again, this formulation equates to, at least, a CSA and an Additional Protocol. Negotiations on these safeguards are mandated to start no later than the completion of nuclear elimination, with the resultant treaty entering into force within 18 months. These States must maintain, as a minimum, these safeguards but may adopt further safeguards in the future. The TPNW does not specify safeguards that should be applied between entry into force and the completion of nuclear elimination for these States, but these may be agreed in the legally-binding, time-bound plan for the verified and irreversible elimination of these States' nuclear-weapons programmes that is required, and which includes the elimination or irreversible conversion of all nuclear-weapons-related facilities.



Russian President Vladimir Putin, and US President Donald Trump photographed during a joint press statement following the US-Russian Summit meeting at Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska on 15 August 2025. Photograph © Daniel Torok/White House Photo/Alamy Live News

THE OBLIGATION TO ELIMINATE NUCLEAR WEAPONS

In 2025, the action of all nuclear-armed States remained incompatible with the obligation to eliminate nuclear weapons under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). While all nuclear-armed States have expressed support for the principle of nuclear disarmament, they have not taken concrete steps towards achieving this goal. Addressing a special session of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva in February 2025, António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), said that the nuclear option, is ‘a one-way road to annihilation’ and urged all States ‘to avoid this dead-end at all costs’.¹

The only forum where nuclear-armed States continue to discuss issues related to nuclear disarmament is the P5 group of nuclear-weapon States designated under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In 2025, the group was reported to have discussed how to improve internal communications as well as a number of risk reduction measures.² The participants have not, however, announced the conclusion of any agreements nor have they reported progress towards the establishment of dedicated communication channels in situations of crisis. At the same time, the earlier discussion among the P5 of a ballistic missile launch notification regime may have contributed to China’s decision to notify other States of a launch it conducted in September 2024.³

DISMANTLEMENT RATES

As shown in Table E on page 36, the global nuclear stockpile at the beginning of 2026 comprised an estimated 12,187 nuclear warheads. This is a significant decrease from the peak of more than 70,000 weapons in the middle of the 1980s. Most of the reductions, however, were completed in the 1990s, when the United States dismantled about 1,400 weapons annually⁴ and Russia was dismantling its weapons at a comparable rate.⁵ The total number of nuclear weapons in the world is still slowly decreasing each year, but the reduction rate has slowed down significantly in recent years and is achieved entirely by the dismantlement of decommissioned US and Russian weapons.

Russia and the United States still have a considerable backlog of retired nuclear weapons. According to the most recent official data on the dismantlement rate, the United States eliminated about 200 weapons annually in the years preceding 2022. In 2022–24, however, the rate of dismantlement slowed, with 122 warheads dismantled in 2022 and only 69 in 2023.⁶ The United States did not release an inventory transparency report in 2025 that would have covered 2024 nor, at the time of writing, one in 2026 that would have covered 2025. The Federation of American Scientists estimates that at the beginning of 2026, the United States had 1,020 nuclear warheads awaiting dismantlement. At the same time, in 2025, the United States continued to modernize its nuclear arsenal and modify some of its existing nuclear weapons. For example, in 2025, the United States completed the modernization of the W88 warhead for its submarine-launched Trident II ICBMs and began production of the B61-13 modification of the B61 gravity bomb.⁷

1 V. Mishra, ‘Nuclear Weapons Are ‘One-Way Road to Annihilation’ Warns Guterres’, *UN News*, 24 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/3YN9675>.

2 ‘China’s Arms Control, Disarmament, and Nonproliferation in the New Era’, The State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, November 2025, <https://bit.ly/3LRgoUw>; ‘Statement by Ambassador Camille Petit, Head of the French Delegation. Third NPT Preparatory Committee. Pillar I: Nuclear Disarmament’, 2 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/4jWgQQ>.

3 ‘China’s Arms Control, Disarmament, and Nonproliferation in the New Era’.

4 ‘Transparency in the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Stockpile’, US Department of Energy, 22 June 2024, <https://bit.ly/4bFvB5u>.

5 M. Kütt and Z. Mian, ‘Setting the Deadline for Nuclear Weapon Destruction under the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons’, *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2019), 410–30, <https://bit.ly/49wp8sc>.

6 US Department of Energy, ‘Transparency in the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Stockpile’.

7 ‘NNSA Completes Last Production Unit of W88 Nuclear Warhead Upgrade’, Energy.Gov, 16 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/4jXzt3Z>; ‘NNSA Completes Assembly of the First B61-13 Nuclear Gravity Bomb Ahead of Schedule’, Energy.Gov, 19 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/4sOuxCx>.

Russia has never published data on its nuclear weapon stockpile. According to some estimates, it was dismantling as many as 2,000 warheads a year in the early 1990s. It was further estimated that the net reduction rate in the Russian stockpile was 200–300 warheads a year in the late 2000s.⁸ The Federation of American Scientists estimates that 1,020 weapons remained in its dismantlement queue as of early 2026, down by 130 from a year earlier.

The United Kingdom and France completed reductions of their nuclear arsenals in the 2000s. Neither State has made any additional commitment regarding reductions of their arsenals. Indeed, the UK government in 2021 announced a significant increase to the upper limit of its warhead inventory – from 180 to 260 warheads.⁹ In March 2026, President Emmanuel Macron also announced that France would increase its nuclear warhead stockpile as part of a shift in its deterrence posture.¹⁰ China is in the process of increasing the size of its nuclear stockpile. Russia, while continuing to dismantle retired warheads, appears to be increasing the number of weapons available for use. India, North Korea, and Pakistan are also believed to be adding weapons to their arsenals, albeit at a much lower rate. Since 2017, this has brought about a steady increase in the global number of nuclear warheads available for use, a pattern that is expected to continue.

All this suggests that the gradual decrease of the total number of nuclear weapons in stockpiles and available for use combined, which was supported primarily by dismantling the Cold War arsenals in Russia and the United States, could be reversed in the upcoming years.

ARMS CONTROL

The system of arms control agreements that for a long time constrained the growth of nuclear arsenals and facilitated nuclear disarmament has come under considerable stress. Efforts to develop and reinforce agreements to control nuclear weapons continued to flounder in 2025. After Russia formally suspended its participation in New START in February 2023, Russia and the United States have not engaged in a dialogue to replace it. Russia has rejected the offer to begin consultations ‘without preconditions’ that was made in 2023 by the Biden administration. Since then, the dialogue has not resumed with the Trump administration. Both Russia and the United States declared an interest in discussing strategic arms control at a summit meeting in Anchorage in August 2025, but the meeting did not produce any tangible results on this issue.¹¹ The possibility of an engagement was also mentioned in the 28-point plan to end the war in Ukraine that was discussed in November 2025, but this also did not lead to a resumption of the dialogue.¹²

As a result of the inability of the United States and Russia to resume the arms control dialogue, New START, the US-Russian nuclear arms control treaty that limited the number of deployed strategic weapons and delivery vehicles, expired on 5 February 2026. In September 2025, Russia proposed to continue to abide by the treaty limits for a further year, and potentially longer, provided the United States agrees.¹³ The US government has not responded to the initiative, which means that since 5 February 2026, the two States have had no legally binding obligation to limit the size of their strategic nuclear arsenals.

The United States and its allies have emphasized the importance of bringing China into the arms control process. China, however, has refrained from entering formal discussions on arms control or transparency measures. It has stated that it maintains its nuclear capabilities at a minimum level and that transparency should take full account of national conditions.¹⁴

Another arms control setback in 2025 was the formal withdrawal by Russia of its proposal to establish a moratorium on the deployment of intermediate-range missiles in Europe.¹⁵ The proposal, made in October 2020, was rejected by the United States and its allies, and arguably, Russia did not fully comply with the moratorium in the course of the war in Ukraine. Nevertheless, it provided a theoretical opportunity to prevent the deployment of intermediate-range systems, some of which can be nuclear-armed.

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT VERIFICATION

Even though the nuclear arms control and disarmament process has stalled, efforts to develop a framework for the verified elimination of nuclear weapons have continued. Following the conclusion of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on nuclear disarmament in 2023, a group of States, led by Norway and Brazil, advocated the

8 *Global Fissile Material Report 2007: Developing the Technical Basis for Policy Initiatives to Secure and Irreversibly Reduce Stocks of Nuclear Weapons and Fissile Materials*, International Panel on Fissile Materials, 2007, <https://bit.ly/4jPm2mK>, p. 62.

9 H. Kristensen and M. Korda, ‘British Defense Review Ends Nuclear Reductions Era’, Federation of American Scientists, 17 March 2021, <https://bit.ly/4r77KjT>.

10 ‘Speech by the President of the Republic on France’s nuclear deterrence’, 2 March 2026, <https://bit.ly/4uzA5Sa>.

11 X. Liang, ‘Trump, Putin Signal Arms Control Interest’, Arms Control Today, September 2025, <https://bit.ly/4pLeZwu>.

12 P. Sonne *et al.*, ‘What Is Trump’s 28-Point Plan to End Russia’s War in Ukraine?’, *The New York Times*, 22 November 2025, <https://bit.ly/3ZjvAN9>.

13 ‘Meeting with Permanent Members of the Security Council’, President of Russia, 22 September 2025, <https://bit.ly/3YOGCKh>.

14 ‘China’s Arms Control, Disarmament, and Nonproliferation in the New Era’.

15 ‘Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the Moratorium on the Deployment of Ground-Launched Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles’, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Russian Federation, 4 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/3NttIUX>.

establishment of a Group of Scientific and Technical Experts (GSTE). In 2025, the UN Secretary-General released a report that summarized the views of Member States on the GSTE.¹⁶ In December 2025, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that formally established the Group and requested it to 'identify and consider technical challenges in and possible approaches to nuclear disarmament verification in terms of tools, techniques, processes and procedures.'¹⁷ The GSTE was set to begin its work in January 2027.

Although the group is not asked to examine nuclear disarmament in the TPNW context, it is likely to follow the guidance of the Group of Governmental Experts, which concluded that verification measures will be determined by the specific obligations in any nuclear disarmament agreement. This conclusion is compatible with the understanding that TPNW verification arrangements can differ significantly from those of the disarmament agreements developed in an adversarial context.¹⁸

This aspect of TPNW verification was further explored in the report of the Scientific Advisory Group to the Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW (2MSP).¹⁹ The report acknowledged the work on technical aspects of verification that has been undertaken by nuclear-weapon States, often in cooperation with non-nuclear-weapon States. At the same time, it underscored the importance of developing approaches to verification that could take advantage of the unique nature of the TPNW. Any adhering State with nuclear weapons makes a formal legally binding commitment to full elimination of its nuclear weapon programme and a high degree of cooperation with the verification process can therefore be expected. On 6 August 2025, the TPNW Scientific Advisory Group issued a statement in which it called on the global scientific community to cease work on nuclear weapons and instead lend their expertise to disarmament and risk reduction.²⁰

The work on traditional verification approaches contributes to the framework for nuclear disarmament verification in several different ways. First, it develops tools and technologies that can potentially be used in the TPNW context. Second, it provides nuclear-weapon States with an opportunity to be involved in a disarmament verification process and to work together with non-nuclear-weapon States. One multilateral initiative in this area, the International Partnership on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), held a working meeting in 2025.²¹ It is not, however, clear whether the United States, one of the key members, will continue to participate in the initiative. It is also uncertain if it will continue to participate in the work of another intergovernmental group—QUAD—which brings together Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Another multinational effort on nuclear disarmament verification, the non-governmental Expert Panel on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (EXPAND), supported by the Government of Germany, began its work in 2025.²²

A separate area of verification-related research that has continued to receive considerable attention is the irreversibility of nuclear disarmament. Attention to this issue was drawn by an initiative by the governments of Norway and the United Kingdom that was introduced at the 2022 NPT Review Conference.²³ The commitment to research on the irreversibility of nuclear disarmament was reiterated by a number of States in their statements at the 2025 NPT Preparatory Committee.²⁴ While most of the work in this area has been done in the context of the traditional arms control and non-proliferation approaches to verification, irreversibility is an important concept for the TPNW as well, since the Treaty requires irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapon programmes. Some of the work has already contributed to a better understanding of irreversibility in the TPNW context.²⁵

INFORMAL WORKING GROUP ON TPNW ARTICLE 4

A number of decisions regarding nuclear disarmament verification were taken by the Third Meeting of States Parties of the TPNW in March 2025. The meeting adopted an intersessional report of the Informal Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament Verification with respect to Article 4 of the treaty. The report considered a range of issues related to disarmament verification, such as the conceptual approach to disarmament, the availability of verification tools and techniques, and the issue of sensitive information. There is general agreement among experts that 'the verification of irreversible nuclear disarmament is possible, ... it could be implemented using today's systems, tools and expertise, ...[and] it would not require States Parties to the Treaty and their representatives to gain access to sensitive nuclear weapons information and data.'²⁶

16 'Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification. Report of the Secretary-General', UN General Assembly, UN doc. A/80/93, 18 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/4a1ncrP>.

17 'Establishment of the Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification', UN General Assembly, UN doc. A/80/53, 5 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/3YMDAWY>.

18 S. Philippe and Z. Mian, 'The TPNW and Nuclear Disarmament Verification: Shifting the Paradigm', in P. Podvig (ed.), *Verifying Disarmament in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, UNIDIR, Geneva, 2022, <https://bit.ly/3LUxLDV>.

19 'Report of the Scientific Advisory Group on the Status and Developments Regarding Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear Weapon Risks, the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear Disarmament and Related Issues', 2MSP, 27 October 2023, <https://bit.ly/4qua84h>.

20 'Statement on the 80th Anniversary of the Development, Use, and Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons', Scientific Advisory Group for the TPNW, 6 August 2025, <https://bit.ly/3LHtVOr>.

21 'IPNDV Working Meeting -- Oslo, Norway', International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament, 6 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/4qvKWdD>.

22 'EXPAND: Expert Panel on Nuclear Disarmament Verification', December 2025, <https://bit.ly/49v2IHY>.

23 'Irreversibility in the Context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Recommendations for the Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty', Working Paper submitted by Norway and the United Kingdom, 8 November 2021, <https://bit.ly/4r6NLSI>.

24 'Joint Statement on the Principle of Irreversibility in Nuclear Disarmament', NPT PrepCom III, April 2025, <https://bit.ly/45hrk4I>.

25 N. Ritchie, 'Irreversibility and Nuclear Disarmament: Unmaking Nuclear Weapon Complexes', *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (2023), 218–43, <https://bit.ly/4sLHQU7>.

26 'Report of the Co-Chairs of the Informal Working Group on the Implementation of Article 4 (Malaysia and New Zealand)', 3MSP, 14 January 2025, <https://bit.ly/49lpxqd>.

The report outlined a programme for future work that will include analysis of past disarmament and verification, engaging existing organizations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), and building capacity in verification. States Parties renewed and expanded the mandate of the group, to be chaired by Malaysia and the Philippines. States Parties will further explore options for the composition of the competent international authority that would develop and oversee implementation of a time-bound disarmament plan and for cooperation with the IAEA.

ARTICLE 4(1), (2), AND (6) – INTERPRETATION

- Under Article 4(6) of the TPNW, States Parties are obligated to designate a ‘competent international authority or authorities’ to negotiate and verify the irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons programmes.
- The TPNW provides two pathways to the future adherence of nuclear-armed States: one for destroy-and-join States (‘Article 4(1) States’) and a second for join-and-destroy States (‘Article 4(2) States’).
- Article 4(1) obligates each nuclear-armed State that destroys its nuclear weapons and eliminates its nuclear-weapons programme before adhering to the TPNW to cooperate with the ‘competent international authority’ that States Parties will designate to verify nuclear disarmament, in order to ascertain that its nuclear-weapon programme has been irreversibly eliminated.
- Article 4(2) obligates those nuclear-armed States that decide to adhere to the Treaty before completing nuclear disarmament to immediately remove the weapons or devices from operational status, and to destroy them as soon as possible but not later than the deadline of ten years set by the First Meeting of States Parties in 2022. The process of destruction must be detailed in a legally-binding, time-bound plan that provides for verified and irreversible elimination of the nuclear-weapons programme, including elimination or irreversible conversion of all nuclear-weapons-related facilities. The State must submit a draft plan to the other States Parties or to the competent international authority within 60 days of becoming a party. The plan must then be negotiated with this authority and submitted for approval to the next Meeting of States Parties or Review Conference, whichever comes first.
- Article VI of the NPT requires that States Parties to that treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States Parties ‘pursue negotiations in good faith’ on nuclear disarmament. The TPNW is one avenue by which any nuclear-armed State can effectively pursue nuclear disarmament.



Belgian civil society organizations demanding the removal of nuclear weapons from Belgium and other States in Europe on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 21 January 2021. Photograph © Pax Christi Vlaanderen

THE OBLIGATION TO REMOVE FOREIGN NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Within 90 days of becoming a State Party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), Belarus, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom would each be obliged to ensure the removal of any foreign nuclear weapons that they host on their territory at that time.

Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Türkiye have a remaining total of approximately 100 United States (US) nuclear bombs stationed in US Air Force bases on their territories. In the United Kingdom, the return of US nuclear weapons, possibly on a short-term basis, has been expected for some time. In the case of Belarus, Russian nuclear-capable missiles are certainly deployed on its territory – possibly along with nuclear warheads.

Nuclear weapons owned by either the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom are believed to have previously been hosted by and withdrawn from a total of at least 19 further States, in some cases even without their knowledge.¹ Over the years, European policymakers have made several attempts to have the remaining nuclear weapons taken out of their respective territory. Numerous non-governmental organizations have advocated for removal in Belgium, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands, while several political initiatives, including through parliamentary debates and motions, have also sought to achieve the removal of nuclear weapons. At the NATO summit in 2023, however, the allies collectively reaffirmed that NATO's deterrence posture 'relies on the United States' nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe and the capabilities and infrastructure provided by Allies concerned.'²

Interventions by NATO members, including Belgium and Germany, in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), have claimed the compatibility of nuclear sharing with the provisions of the NPT and their support for NATO's nuclear deterrence arrangements.³ Until 2022, public pressure calling for the United States to remove its nuclear weapons from Europe was growing, particularly following the adoption and entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in 2017 and 2021, respectively. Polls then consistently showed clear support in four of the five NATO host nations—with the exception of Türkiye—for the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from their territory.⁴ Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, polling in Germany and the Netherlands has indicated that support in these States for the withdrawal of nuclear weapons has declined.⁵

BELARUS

With the adoption of a new constitution by public referendum in 2022, Belarus controversially voted to abolish the nuclear weapons-free status that the country had adopted after the previous removal of Soviet nuclear weapons from Belarusian territory.⁶ The referendum, which was accompanied by a crackdown on civil society, was not recognized as legal by the Belarusian opposition, the United States, the European Union, and a number of other States.⁷ The Belarusian opposition has heavily criticised the transfer of nuclear weapons to Belarus. In 2023, exiled opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya warned of the danger of transferring nuclear weapons from Russia into 'the hands of a crazy dictator' in Belarus. Ms Tikhanovskaya stated, 'Belarus is our country and we don't want nuclear weapons'.⁸

1 Canada, Czechoslovakia, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark (Greenland), France, East Germany and West Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Mongolia, Morocco, the Philippines, Poland, South Korea, Singapore, Spain, and Taiwan. The figure does not include territories that during the relevant period were under the direct jurisdiction or administration of the nuclear-armed State that stationed the nuclear weapons there (Guam, Okinawa, and the Marshall Islands). H. M. Kristensen, 'Where the Bombs Are', Federation of American Scientists, 9 November 2006; M. Furmann and T. S. Sechser, 'Appendices for "Signalling Alliance Commitments"', 6 April 2014; R. S. Norris, W. M. Arkin, and W. Burr, 'Where they Were', *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 55, No. 6 (1999); E. N. Rózsa and A. Péczelli, 'Nuclear Attitudes in Central Europe', EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, No. 42 (2015).

2 NATO, 'Vilnius Summit Declaration', 13 July 2023, <https://bit.ly/3CdxwPm>.

3 Belgium, 'Statement in the General Debate, Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)', 2024, <https://bit.ly/3DKzGX9>; and Germany, '2nd NPT PrepCom 2024 – General Statement Germany', 2024, <https://bit.ly/4gQcoh8>.

4 See, e.g., ICAN, 'Polls: Public Opinion in EU Host States Firmly Opposes Nuclear Weapons', News release, 25 October 2020, <https://bit.ly/3nVmEeN>.

5 M. Onderco, M. Smetana, and T. W. Etienne, 'Hawks in the making? European public views on nuclear weapons post-Ukraine', *Global Policy*, 2023, <https://bit.ly/3WjyvV5>.

6 O. Karach, 'Nuclear weapons in Belarus: What we know', ICAN, 22 November 2024, <https://bit.ly/3Z7Fhhu>.

7 D. Sabbagh, S. Jones, and J. Borger, 'Russia accused of taking Belarus "nuclear hostage" with deal to station missiles there', *The Guardian*, 26 March 2023, <https://bit.ly/4fS9dnZ>.

8 'Russian nuclear weapons "in hands of Belarus dictator", warns opposition leader', *BBC*, 14 June 2023, <https://bit.ly/4058AKY>.

A December 2024 treaty between Russia and Belarus included the possible use of Russian tactical nuclear weapons deployed to Belarus in response to any aggression.⁹

THE NETHERLANDS

In the past, the Dutch parliament has been vocal in its support of the removal of the US nuclear weapons on its territory and has adopted several motions explicitly calling on the government to do so.¹⁰ Between 2012 and 2022, the Dutch parliament voted 44 times on nuclear-weapons-related motions, including calls for more transparency about the deployment of nuclear weapons in the Netherlands and motions to withdraw nuclear weapons.¹¹ However, as a public opinion poll in the Netherlands and Germany suggests, public support for withdrawal of US nuclear weapons has declined since the war in Ukraine, although a majority are still in favour of removing nuclear weapons as part of an arms control agreement between the United States and Russia.¹²

BELGIUM

The Belgian Senate in 2005 unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the removal of nuclear weapons from Belgium.¹³ In 2010, two former prime ministers, Jean-Luc Dehaene and Guy Verhofstadt, together with former foreign minister Louis Michel and Willy Claes (a former NATO secretary general) pleaded for the removal of all nuclear bombs from Europe.¹⁴ In 2017, Willy Claes together with former prime minister Yves Leterme reiterated the call to remove all nuclear weapons from Belgium.¹⁵ Despite this long-standing and high-level opposition, a motion in the Belgian parliament to withdraw nuclear weapons from Belgian territory and sign the TPNW was rejected in a narrow majority in a vote in January 2020.¹⁶

GERMANY

In Germany, 2009 saw the governing coalition of CDU and FDP commit to withdrawing all US nuclear weapons still stationed in Germany. Then Foreign Minister, Guido Westerwelle, enthusiastically promoted the initiative for some time, but the United States responded negatively, and the initiative was shelved in 2010.¹⁷ The national debate on nuclear sharing, has not, however, subsided. The importance and purpose of stationing US weapons in Germany was called into question, particularly in the run-up to the 2021 federal elections. The debate even prompted NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg to publish an opinion editorial in the German newspaper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, reiterating the importance of Germany's support for nuclear sharing for transatlantic peace and security.¹⁸ After the elections, in November 2021, Stoltenberg sought to put pressure on the coalition party negotiations, stating that he counted 'on Germany to remain committed to NATO's nuclear sharing. It is our ultimate security guarantee.' Stoltenberg also said that if Germany opts out of nuclear sharing, States in Eastern Europe could take over this role.¹⁹

The 2021 coalition agreement between the Social Democrat SPD, the Green Party, and the Liberal Party contained no plans for the removal of nuclear weapons from Germany, but rather a strong commitment to NATO and the importance of being part of 'strategic discussions and planning processes' within the alliance.²⁰ To underpin this commitment, the German government announced the purchase of F-35 combat aircraft in 2022 to secure Germany's long-term participation in nuclear sharing.²¹ These developments took place against the backdrop of a change in public opinion. Almost all surveys prior to 2022 showed a clear majority of Germans opposing the stationing of US nuclear weapons on German territory.²² In 2010, 85% of those polled supported the removal of nuclear weapons from Germany.²³ However, public opposition to nuclear sharing has decreased markedly since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As is the case in the Netherlands, a majority of Germans are still in favour of removing nuclear weapons when such a removal is part of an arms control agreement between the United States and Russia.²⁴ The chances of such an agreement, however, appeared slim at the time of writing. Moreover, on the night of his election on 23 February 2025, incoming Chancellor Friedrich Merz said he wanted to see Europe achieve 'gradually true independence' from the United States.²⁵

9 'Putin signs security treaty with Belarus including possible use of nuclear weapons,' Euronews, 7 December 2024, <https://bit.ly/4h76Lei>.

10 See all motions in the Dutch Parliament regarding nuclear disarmament here: Pax No Nukes 'Overview motions on nuclear disarmament adopted by the Dutch parliament since 2010', Last updated 29 November 2021, <https://bit.ly/3tY0vjV>.

11 M. Onderco and R. Joosen, 'Nuclear Weapons in the Tweede Kamer: Analysis of Nuclear Motions in the Dutch House of Representatives in Times of Contestation', *Global Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (July 2022).

12 Onderco, Smetana and Etienne, 'Hawks in the making? European public views on nuclear weapons post-Ukraine'.

13 Nuclear Threat Initiative, 'Belgian Senate Calls for Removal of U.S. Nukes', 22 April 2005, <https://bit.ly/2NH12Bl>.

14 VRT NWS, 'Top politicians promote a nuclear-free Europe', 19 February 2010, <https://bit.ly/4aIEC16>.

15 'Haal die bommen weg, hier en in heel de wereld', *De Standaard*, 11 December 2017, <https://bit.ly/4fXkT93>.

16 Belgian Chamber of Representatives, Plenary Session, 16 January 2020, <https://bit.ly/3nX5GMV>.

17 M. Skjønsberg, 'NATO and US Armed Forces in Europe' (Nato og amerikanske kjernevåpen i Europa), *Internasjonal Politikk*, Vol. 75, No. 2 (2017), 187–88.

18 'Germany: SPD call to withdraw US nuclear arms stokes debate', *Deutsche Welle*, 2 May 2020, bit.ly/2PGWpQm; J. Stoltenberg, 'Germany's Support for Nuclear Sharing is Vital to Protect Peace and Freedom', NATO, 11 May 2020, <https://bit.ly/3H6Duhk>.

19 J. Stoltenberg, 'Speech. NATO Secretary Jens Stoltenberg at the German Atlantic Association "NATO Talk" Conference 2021', NATO, 19 November 2021, <https://bit.ly/3nYyWDg>.

20 SPD, 'Embracing Progress. Coalition for Freedom, Justice and Sustainability. Coalition Agreement Between the SPD, the Green Party and the Liberal Party', 24 November 2021, <https://bit.ly/3KH21g7>.

21 Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 'Sondervermögen: Bundeswehr kann 35 F-35A für rund 8,3 Milliarden Euro kaufen', 12 December 2022, <https://bit.ly/4akG43N>.

22 See, e.g., ICAN, 'Polls: Public Opinion in EU Host States Firmly Opposes Nuclear Weapons', 25 October 2020, <https://bit.ly/3nVmEeN>; Greenpeace, 'Nuclear Weapons in Europe: Survey Results in Six European Countries', 25 May 2008, <https://bit.ly/4hdYogX>.

23 IPPNW, 'Meinungen zu Atomwaffen, forsa-Umfrage', 21 March 2016, <https://bit.ly/4gP50>.

24 See, e.g., 'For the First Time, Majority in Favour of Keeping Nuclear Weapons', *Tagesschau*, 2 June 2022, <https://bit.ly/3RjYqSq>; see also Onderco, Smetana and Etienne, 'Hawks in the making? European public views on nuclear weapons post-Ukraine'.

25 'Europe must become 'independent' of United States, says victorious Merz', *The Brussels Times*, 24 February 2025, <https://bit.ly/40g67Vi>.

ITALY

The Italian parliament in September 2017 passed a motion to explore ‘the possibility of adhering to the legally binding [ban] treaty’ but ‘in a way compatible with [Italy’s] NATO obligations and with the positioning of allied States.’²⁶ A similar resolution obliging the government to ‘continue to assess ... possible measures to approach the contents of the TPNW’ was adopted in May 2022 by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies and reaffirmed in 2023.²⁷ While Italian civil society organizations have been very active in promoting nuclear disarmament and the TPNW,²⁸ the government has not taken any action to move closer to the treaty and away from nuclear sharing.

TÜRKIYE

Türkiye is firm in its support for upholding current NATO nuclear-sharing arrangements. There has been no perceptible support for removal of US nuclear weapons deployed on Turkish territory or for the TPNW within society or political Parties. This is so, except for former Turkish defence minister, Hikmet Sami Türk, who signed the ICAN open letter in support of the TPNW in 2020.²⁹

UNITED KINGDOM

While there is broad support for the UK nuclear deterrent among the public, there is also a strong minority opposing the stationing of US nuclear weapons at RAF Lakenheath (or elsewhere). On 26 April, peace activists blockaded the Lakenheath base for several hours protesting against proposals for US nuclear weapons to be stored there.³⁰

ARTICLE 4(4) – INTERPRETATION

Under Article 4(4) of the TPNW, any State Party with foreign nuclear weapons in its territory or in any other place under its jurisdiction or control is obligated to ensure their prompt removal as soon as possible but not later than a deadline to be determined by the First Meeting of States Parties.

- The First Meeting of States Parties in 2022 agreed upon a deadline of a maximum of 90 days for removal, which is a binding rule upon all TPNW States Parties.
- Upon removal, the territorial State Party is required to submit a declaration of full compliance to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

26 Italian Parliament, High Chamber, ‘Mozione 1-01699’, [Motion 1-0169], <https://bit.ly/3IAmXDH>.

27 Italian Chamber of Deputies, ‘Resolution No. 7-00766 Boldrini: On Italy’s Commitment to Nuclear Disarmament’, 18 May 2022, <https://bit.ly/3RHV07r>; Rete Pace Disarmo, ‘Nuclear Weapons, House Foreign Affairs Committee Passes Resolution for Global Disarmament’, 18 May 2022, <https://bit.ly/3Rlrxpa>; Rete Pace Disarmo, ‘With the Resolution passed in the Parliament, Italy has the opportunity to take concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament’, July 13, 2023, <https://bit.ly/45mNvEY>.

28 See, e.g., ICAN [@nuclearban], ‘It’s #SupportingSunday! A massive shoutout today to our Italian partner @senzatomica! Through the #ItaliaRipensaci campaign which they coordinate with @RetePaceDisarmo they have been raising awareness on the urgency to eliminate nuclear weapons all across Italy. (1/2)’, 20 June 2021, <https://bit.ly/3AIsipD>.

29 ICAN, ‘56 former leaders and ministers of US allies urge States to join the nuclear weapon ban treaty’, 21 September 2020, <https://bit.ly/334uV8U>.

30 J. Scott, ‘No US nukes in Britain: activists blockade Lakenheath base’, Counterfire, 27 April 2025, <https://bit.ly/4se0aET>.



A sniffer dog from Japanese customs searches for suspicious substances in cargo during a Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) exercise at a port in Tokyo on 3 December 2025. Photograph © Kazuhiro Nogi/AFP/NTB

THE OBLIGATION TO ADOPT NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

States Parties to the TPNW have in force a wide range of national laws, as well as constitutional provisions, prohibiting nuclear weapons domestically. Two States Parties to the TPNW (Ireland and Niue), have adopted national legislation specifically to meet their obligations under Article 5 of the Treaty. For at least 20 other States Parties, the obligations set forth in the treaty automatically became domestic law upon ratification.¹ Other States Parties have legislation predating the TPNW that covers certain of their Article 5 obligations. But for a number of States, it may be necessary or appropriate to adopt new legislation to address legal gaps in the domestic implementation of the TPNW.

Most non-nuclear-armed States are already today implementing most of the core prohibitions of the TPNW. This is because they pursue nuclear-weapon-free defence postures and are Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and the nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) treaties, and because they have brought into force Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements (CSAs) and Additional Protocols (APs) with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Typically, they already have in place appropriate national measures, including legislation that addresses most or at least some of the core obligations under the TPNW.

There may, however, be gaps in a State's existing legislation, including incomplete prohibitions on various nuclear weapons-related activities (e.g. testing or assisting a prohibited activity) and lack of penal sanctions for legal persons or individuals under their jurisdiction. The following review of the national legislation of the current 74 States Parties to the TPNW is intended to facilitate the identification of such gaps. It is not a definitive assessment, and the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor welcomes all clarifications and corrections.

Each State Party is encouraged to develop detailed legislation either specific to the TPNW or which includes its prohibitions in a broader law. In particular, new national legislation should be adopted by each State Party that does not yet have in place laws to criminalize all of the conduct prohibited by the TPNW and, where necessary, to implement its positive obligations. Crucially, all States Parties have to establish whether their existing national laws would make it illegal for a national or any other person under their jurisdiction or control to develop, test, produce, possess, control, transfer, or use nuclear weapons, or to assist any other person or entity to do so, and whether they could prosecute them. If the answer is a clear yes, they have the required national legislation.

LAWS SPECIFIC TO THE TPNW

Only two States Parties have adopted national legislation specifically to implement the TPNW. Ireland adopted its Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Act in 2019, and Niue in 2021.

¹ The following States Parties have a clause in their constitution, or have otherwise an established monist approach to international law, that automatically incorporates the TPNW into domestic law: Austria, Benin, Bolivia, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Malawi, Mongolia, Paraguay, Peru, San Marino, Timor Leste, and Venezuela.

Ireland's Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Act in 2019 makes it an offence for a person within Ireland or otherwise under its jurisdiction (such as at sea or in the air) to develop, produce, manufacture, acquire, possess, transfer, receive, use, threaten to use, station, install or deploy a nuclear weapon or nuclear explosive device. Anyone who assists, encourages or induces the commission of an offence is also criminally responsible, as is a person who seeks or receives assistance to commit an offence. A person, including a legal person, found guilty of any offence is liable to a fine, imprisonment for life, or a lesser term of imprisonment.² The Act does not address testing which was already prohibited under legislation passed to implement the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.³

Niue's Act includes all the prohibitions in Article 1 of the TPNW, which are applied to any natural or legal person in Niue or otherwise under Niue jurisdiction. The penalty for committing any of those acts, in the case of a natural person, is imprisonment for up to 10 years, a fine, or both. In the case of a body corporate, the penalty is a fine, and where it is proven that the offence was the result of consent, connivance, or negligence by a director, manager or other similar officer, that person is also guilty of the offence.⁴

EXISTING LEGISLATION SPECIFIC TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS

At least five other States Parties have existing legislation that covers most, though not all, of the prohibitions in Article 1 of the TPNW. **Botswana**, which did not become a State Party until 2021, passed a law in 2018 to bring into domestic law Botswana's commitments to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Nevertheless, the Nuclear Weapons (Prohibition) Act is worded in such a way as to meet most of the requirements of the TPNW. The maximum penalty for any violations is life imprisonment, a fine, or both.⁵

Mongolia declared itself a nuclear weapon-free zone in 1992. The Law implementing this status in 2000 prohibits the development, manufacture, acquisition, possession, or control of nuclear weapons, as well as stationing, transportation, testing or use of nuclear weapons anywhere on Mongolian territory. The prohibitions apply to natural and legal persons in Mongolia, as well as to foreign States. Penalties for violations are 'according to the criminal code of Mongolia'.⁶

That code sets a prison sentence of between five and eight years for acquisition or producing nuclear weapons, and a sentence of 15–20 years for use.⁷

The 1999 Federal Constitutional Act for a Non-Nuclear **Austria** States that 'nuclear weapons must not be manufactured, stored, transported, tested or used in Austria.' The Act also prohibits the setting up of facilities for stationing nuclear weapons. In this case, all Article 1 prohibitions are explicitly covered apart from the threat to use, receipt of control, or seeking of assistance. The penalty is up to 10 years in prison for anyone convicted of manufacturing, processing, developing, importing, exporting, acquiring, possessing, transferring or procuring a nuclear weapon.⁸ The Austrian criminal code further penalizes 'inducement' and 'rendering aid' as equivalent to committing the crime.⁹ The prohibitions against testing and stationing of nuclear weapons are prohibited under the Constitutional Act.

Cambodia, which already outlawed the manufacture, possession and use of nuclear weapons under a 2007 Law on Counter Terrorism,¹⁰ adopted the Law on Chemical, Nuclear, Biological and Radiological Weapons in 2009, the stated purpose of which was to 'absolutely prohibit the production, processing, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling, transportation and use of chemical, nuclear, biological and radiological weapons and other chemical substances.'¹¹ Cambodia's law prohibits the production, processing, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling, transportation and use of nuclear weapons. The penalty for any of the above is up to life in prison. The 2009 law applies to legal as well as natural persons.¹²

New Zealand's Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act of 1987 prohibits the manufacture, acquisition, possession, or taking control of any nuclear explosive device. Testing, stationing, stockpiling and deployment of a nuclear weapon is also prohibited, as is assistance, defined as 'aiding, abetting or procuring' any person to do any of the above activities. Penalties include up to 10 years in prison or a fine or both.¹³ While the New Zealand Act does not explicitly prohibit 'use' of a nuclear weapon, the subsequent 1999 Nuclear Test Ban Act does.

² The Act stipulates that where an offence is committed by a company ('body corporate') and where an officer of the company consented to or was guilty of wilful neglect, both the human and legal person is guilty of an offence. S. 6(1), Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Act 2019, <https://bit.ly/46wDs1Z>.

³ That Act, however, does not explicitly prohibit 'assisting, encouraging or inducing' someone else to carry out a nuclear test, nor does it explicitly penalize directors, managers or other officers of a body corporate who might be convicted of a prohibited act. Nuclear Test Ban Act of 2008, <https://bit.ly/4bbpe90>.

⁴ Niue Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Act 2021, Act No. 353 of 2021, <https://bit.ly/4aGJyPY>.

⁵ Botswana Nuclear Weapons (Prohibition) Act, <https://bit.ly/4r50aps>.

⁶ Law of Mongolia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Status, <https://bit.ly/3N8QoVc>.

⁷ Arts 35.6, 299.2, and 300.1, Criminal Code of Mongolia, <https://bit.ly/4sf7RKR>.

⁸ S. 177a, Austrian Criminal Code, 5 February 2020, <https://bit.ly/4rNzr1W>.

⁹ Ss 26 and 27, *ibid*.

¹⁰ Art. 45, Part 4, 2007 Law on Counter Terrorism, <https://bit.ly/4tYPhYX>.

¹¹ 2009 Law on Chemical, Nuclear, Biological and Radiological Weapons, <https://bit.ly/4aXgWRk>.

¹² Art. 24, *ibid*.

¹³ New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control Act of 1987, <https://bit.ly/4rEvlSy>.

LEGISLATION ON THE CONTROL AND REGULATION OF WEAPONS

Other States Parties to the TPNW have existing legislation that prohibits certain activities in relation to weapons and explosives in general. The constitution of the **Dominican Republic** prohibits ‘the introduction, development, production, tenancy, commercialization, transportation, storage, and use of chemical, biological, nuclear, and agro-chemical weapons’.¹⁴ The law on the Control and Regulation of Weapons sets a penalty of 10 to 20 years in prison for manufacturing any of the proscribed weapons, including a nuclear weapon.¹⁵

In **Bolivia**, the Law on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials of 2013 defines nuclear weapons as a form of ‘non-conventional weapon’ and prohibits their manufacture, import, export, transit, possession, marketing or use. The penalty is 30 years’ imprisonment.¹⁶

Kazakhstan criminalizes in its penal code production, acquisition, sale or use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. The penalty is 15–20 years in prison or the death penalty for use of a nuclear weapon, and 5–10 years in prison for production, acquisition, or sale.¹⁷

Sri Lanka announced regulations in 2017 relating to its United Nations Act of 1968. The regulations prohibit the manufacture, acquisition, possession, development, transfer, or use of a nuclear weapon by any person or entity. The penalty is 20 years in prison and/or a fine of 5 million rupees. ‘Participating in’ any of the above activities carries a penalty of five years in prison and/or a 1 million rupee fine.¹⁸

Other States Parties with laws that broadly prohibit certain types of weapons, including nuclear weapons, include **El Salvador**,¹⁹ **Honduras**,²⁰ **Nicaragua**,²¹ and **Venezuela**.²²

ANTI-TERRORISM LEGISLATION

Almost all States Parties to the TPNW have in place national legislation designed to prevent terrorists from obtaining or using a nuclear weapon. Some of these laws define terrorism as, among other things, taking part in nuclear weapons-related activities. In those cases, taking part in nuclear weapons-related activities is illegal, regardless of whether the person involved is already defined as a terrorist.

Guyana, for instance, has anti-terrorism legislation that prohibits any person possessing, transferring, altering, disposing of, using or threatening to use a nuclear weapon (regardless of whether that person is already considered a ‘terrorist’). If the activity causes any deaths, the penalty is death. Otherwise it is 10-15 years in prison and up to \$3 million fine.²³

Other States Parties whose anti-terrorism legislation defines nuclear weapons-related activities as terrorism, and therefore proscribed and penalised, include **Benin**,²⁴ **The Gambia**,²⁵ **Namibia**,²⁶ **Nigeria**,²⁷ **Maldives**²⁸ and **Vanuatu**.²⁹ Anti-terrorism legislation prohibiting terrorists from engaging in nuclear weapon-related activities—defining terrorists and terrorist organizations as having the purpose of ‘advancing a political, religious or ideological cause—exists in **Antigua** and **Barbuda**,³⁰ **Indonesia**,³¹ **Kiribati**,³² and **St. Kitts and Nevis**.³³

14 Art. 67(2), Constitution of the Dominican Republic, <https://bit.ly/30HKIC4>. The same language appears in the Constitution of Ecuador, with similar wording in the constitutions of Bolivia, Cambodia, Cuba, Mexico, Palau, Paraguay, the Philippines, and Venezuela.

15 Art. 75, Law No. 631-16, of 2016, for the Control and Regulation of Weapons, Ammunition and Related Materials, <https://bit.ly/3MLKFVI>.

16 Arts. 5(II), 17(II)e, 51(I)b, 56 (II) I and II, Law No. 400 of 2013 on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials, <https://bit.ly/4r0cil2>.

17 Ss. 162 and 163, Criminal Code (2014), <https://bit.ly/4sgboZd>.

18 Art. 3(1) and (2), United Nations (Sanctions relating to Proliferation of Nuclear, Chemical or Biological Weapons) Regulations of 2017, <https://bit.ly/4rQACgT>.

19 Art. 58, 1999 Decree on Firearms and Other Weapons, <https://bit.ly/4shBH5y>.

20 Art. 160, Criminal Code, as revised by Decree No. 130 of 2017, <https://bit.ly/4l0gvKr>.

21 Art. 147, Special Law on Firearms No. 510, <https://bit.ly/4rK97FQ>.

22 Arts. 4(1)f and 52, Act Against Organized Crime and Terrorism, <https://bit.ly/30wFzNj>.

23 Ss. 23 and 25, Anti-Terrorism and Terrorist Activities Act 2015, <https://bit.ly/3N5JvEc>.

24 Art. 216, Benin Penal Code, <https://bit.ly/4cQMfj5>.

25 S. 2(c)(vi), Anti-Terrorism Act, <https://bit.ly/3P86vTu>.

26 S. 3, Prevention and Combating of Terrorist and Proliferation Activities 2014, <https://bit.ly/40zIGHT>.

27 Arts 1 (2c)v and 33(1a), Terrorism Prevention Act of 2011, <https://bit.ly/4cRd3jd>.

28 S. 2e, Prevention of Terrorism Act of 1990, <https://bit.ly/402vBpd>.

29 Art. 32, Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act 2005 (as amended), <https://bit.ly/3MZr2sK>.

30 The Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2005 criminalizes possession of, involvement in the development of, transferring or transporting a nuclear weapon, or knowingly financing its manufacture, production, development, acquisition, retention, transfer or transportation for persons intent on ‘committing a terrorist act’ or being a ‘member of a terrorist group.’ The text of the Act is available at: <https://bit.ly/3ZXAMH4>.

31 The Counter-Terrorism Law of 2018 prohibits the import, production, receiving, obtention, controlling, holding, stockpiling, handing over, possessing, storing, transporting, and trading in nuclear weapons ‘with the intent to commit the crime of terrorism’.

32 Arts. 34 and 35, Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organised Crime Act of 2005.

33 The Anti-Terrorism Act of 2002, as amended, prohibits making, using, stockpiling, or possessing a nuclear weapon but only in connection with a terrorist act or carried out by a terrorist group. The text of the Act is available at: <https://bit.ly/4aFoNEa>.

Other States Parties with domestic legislation that clearly prohibits one or more of the prohibitions of the TPNW include **Cabo Verde**,³⁴ **Costa Rica**,³⁵ **Côte d'Ivoire**,³⁶ **Chile**,³⁷ **Cook Islands**,³⁸ **Cuba**,³⁹ **Jamaica**,⁴⁰ **Lesotho**,⁴¹ **Panama**,⁴² **Paraguay**,⁴³ **Sao Tome**,⁴⁴ **Thailand**,⁴⁵ **Timor-Leste**,⁴⁶ **Uruguay**,⁴⁷ and **Viet Nam**.⁴⁸ Although other States Parties have relevant prohibitions on their statute books, these prohibitions can all be overridden if authorized, licensed, or permitted.⁴⁹

Table I opposite summarizes the prohibitions in Article 1 of the TPNW that have been applied through domestic legislation in each of the States Parties to the TPNW as of 31 December 2025.

ARTICLE 5 – INTERPRETATION

Article 5 of the TPNW obligates each State Party to take ‘the necessary measures’ to implement its obligations under the Treaty.

- Paragraph 2 of Article 5 stipulates that the duty to implement the Treaty nationally includes the taking of ‘all appropriate legal, administrative and other measures, including the imposition of penal sanctions, to prevent and suppress’ any prohibited activity. It concerns any such prohibited activity whether it is undertaken by natural or legal persons under its jurisdiction or control or on territory under its jurisdiction or control.
- Appropriate criminal legislation should cover at the least all of the core prohibitions set forth in Article 1 of the Treaty.
- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has developed and published a model law for common-law States which can serve as a valuable basis for States Parties to the TPNW to draft and enact such legislation (<http://bit.ly/3faEDXV>).
- The CTBT and the CWC also require national implementation measures, but there is no such obligation in the NPT or the NWFZ treaties.

34 Manufacturing, possessing, stockpiling, selling, or transporting ‘prohibited’ weapons is an offence under Article 294 of the Criminal Code, <https://bit.ly/40l1efr>.

35 Art. 250 *ter* of the Penal Code (<https://bit.ly/3MNTnLY>) prohibits the manufacture or possession of a nuclear explosive device.

36 The Weapons and Ammunition Regulations Act in Côte d'Ivoire (<https://bit.ly/46Syzkb>) prohibits all manufacture, acquisition, possession, transfer, and stockpiling of bombs and missiles of any kind, with a penalty of 10 to 20 years in prison plus a fine of 5 to 10 million Francs.

37 Art. 3, Decree 400 of 1977 on arms control (<https://bit.ly/4u0P9lm>) prohibits possession of a nuclear weapon.

38 Cook Islands bans the testing and use of nuclear weapons, as well as the causing and encouraging of the same, through its 2007 Nuclear Test Ban Act, <https://bit.ly/405CK8i>.

39 Article 10 of the Counter-Terrorism Act (<https://bit.ly/4lb7fDt>) lays down 10 to 30 years in prison for manufacturing, facilitating, supplying, selling, transporting, sending, introducing, or possessing an ‘explosive or deadly device’.

40 Jamaica’s Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection Act, (<https://bit.ly/4u0p3oP>) prohibits developing, producing, otherwise acquiring, stockpiling, transferring, or retaining nuclear material ‘for the purpose of producing a weapon’. The penalty is a fine of up to \$5 million and/or up to 25 years in prison.

41 Article 96c (vi) of the Lesotho Penal Code (<https://bit.ly/4sC3VUD>) prohibits the manufacture, possession, acquisition, transporting, supply, and use of nuclear weapons.

42 Panama prohibits both natural and legal persons from ‘carrying’ or using nuclear weapons through Arts 11, 14, and 91.1 of Law No. 57 on Firearms, Munitions and Related Materials, 2011, <https://bit.ly/4aVjvDw>.

43 The Constitution of Paraguay prohibits the manufacture, assembly, importation, commercialization, possession or use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

44 Arts. 320, 324, 325 of the Criminal Code (<https://bit.ly/3MCmdFT>) set the penalty for causing a nuclear explosion at between two and eight years in prison. Manufacture, importation, or acquisition of a nuclear device is punishable with up to three years in prison.

45 Thailand’s 2016 Nuclear Energy for Peace Act (<https://bit.ly/4snoXGp>), provides for strict oversight and control over nuclear-related activities, and does not limit this to unauthorized personnel. The Act prohibits all testing, production, possession and use of an ‘explosive device containing radioactive material or nuclear material’. The penalty is a fine or up to 20 years in prison.

46 Art. 211, Penal Code, prohibits possession or use of a nuclear weapon, punishable by two years in prison or a fine. At: <https://bit.ly/4rEWRpQ>.

47 Uruguay prohibits the use of any Weapon of Mass Destruction. Art. 46, Law No. 18.026, <https://bit.ly/4r1RoZg>.

48 In Viet Nam, the Law on Atomic Energy (<https://bit.ly/4u31fAD>) prohibits research, development, manufacturing, owning, selling, possessing, storing, developing, transporting, selling, providing, transferring, technology transferring, importing, exporting, transporting, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons. A 2019 government decree, ‘On Preventing and Countering Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction’, further defining the policies of Vietnam in relation to these activities.

49 These include laws in Bangladesh, Dominica, Ecuador, Ghana, Grenada, Laos, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Nauru, Palau, the Philippines, Samoa, the Seychelles, the Solomon Islands, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago, and Tuvalu.

TABLE I: Summary of the prohibitions in Article 1 of the TPNW applied through domestic legislation in the States Parties, as of 31.12.2025

X = prohibited (X) = partially prohibited * = prohibited only if terrorist or unauthorized ✓ = yes

State Party	Develop/ Produce/ Acquire	Test	Possess/ Stockpile	Transfer	Receive transfer	Use	Threaten to use	Assist/ Encourage/ Induce	Seek assistance	Station/ Install/ Deploy	Penalties defined	Legal persons
Antigua and Barbuda	*		*	*		X	X	(X)			✓	✓
Austria	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	(✓)	✓
Bangladesh	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	✓	
Barbados	*		*			*		*			✓	
Belize						(X)	(X)					✓
Benin	X		X	X		X		X			✓	
Bolivia	X		X			X					✓	
Botswana	X		X	X		X		(X)	X		✓	
Cabo Verde	X		X			?					✓	✓
Cambodia	X		X	X		X					✓	
Chile	X		X	X		X		X				
Comoros						(X)					(✓)	
Congo												
Cook Islands		X				X		X			✓	
Costa Rica	X		X	*		X	X	X			✓	
Côte d'Ivoire	X		X	X	X	?					✓	✓
Cuba	X		X	X	X	X					✓	✓
Dominica	*		*			*	*				✓	
Dominican Republic	X		X	X		X					(✓)	
DRC Congo	*		*		*							✓
Ecuador	*		*	*		*		*			✓	✓
El Salvador	X		X	(X)	(X)	X	X	X			✓	✓
Fiji	*		*			X					✓	
Gambia	X		X			X	X	X			✓	
Ghana	X		X	X		*			X		(✓)	
Grenada	*		*	*	*	*	*	*		*	✓	
Guatemala	*		*	*	*	?					(✓)	
Guinea-Bissau						?						
Guyana	X		X	X		X	X	X			✓	
Holy See												
Honduras	X		X		X						✓	
Indonesia	*		*	*	*	*		*			✓	✓
Ireland	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓
Jamaica	*		*	*	*	*	*	*			✓	

TABLE I (CONTINUED): Summary of the prohibitions in Article 1 of the TPNW applied through domestic legislation in the States Parties, as of 31.12.2025

X = prohibited (X) = partially prohibited * = prohibited only if terrorist or unauthorized ✓ = yes

State Party	Develop/ Produce/ Acquire	Test	Possess/ Stockpile	Transfer	Receive transfer	Use	Threaten to use	Assist/ Encourage/ Induce	Seek assistance	Station/ Install/ Deploy	Penalties defined	Legal persons
Kazakhstan	X		X	X		X					✓	
Kiribati	*		*	*		*		*			✓	
Laos			*			*		(*)				
Lesotho	X		X	X		X		X				
Malawi	X					X		X			✓	
Malaysia	*		*			*					(✓)	
Maldives	X		X	X		X		X				
Malta	*	*	*	*		(X)		*			✓	
Mexico	*		*	*		X					✓	
Mongolia	X	X	X		X	X		X		X	✓	✓
Namibia	X		X	X		X		X			✓	✓
Nauru	*		*	*		*		*			✓	
New Zealand	X	X	X	(X)	X	X	X	X		X	✓	
Nicaragua	X		X	X		X					✓	
Nigeria	X		X			X					✓	
Niue	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓
Palau	*		*	*	*	*				*	✓	✓
Palestine												
Panama			X			X					✓	✓
Paraguay	X		X			X					✓	
Peru						X					✓	
Philippines	*		*	*		*						
Saint Kitts and Nevis	*		*			*						
Saint Lucia												
St Vincent & Grenadines												
Samoa	*		*	*		*						
San Marino			*	*		*					✓	
Sao Tome and Principe	X		X			X					✓	
Seychelles	*		*								✓	
Solomon Islands	*		*			*						
South Africa	*		*	*		*					✓	
Sri Lanka	X		X	X		X		X			✓	✓
Thailand	X	X	X	X		X		X			✓	✓

TABLE I (CONTINUED): Summary of the prohibitions in Article 1 of the TPNW applied through domestic legislation in the States Parties, as of 31.12.2025

X = prohibited (X) = partially prohibited * = prohibited only if terrorist or unauthorized ✓ = yes

State Party	Develop/ Produce/ Acquire	Test	Possess/ Stockpile	Transfer	Receive transfer	Use	Threaten to use	Assist/ Encourage/ Induce	Seek assistance	Station/ Install/ Deploy	Penalties defined	Legal persons
Timor-Leste	*		X	*		X					✓	
Trinidad and Tobago	*		*			*	*				✓	
Tuvalu			*	*		*	*				✓	
Uruguay	*					X		(X)				
Vanuatu	X		X	X		X	X				✓	
Venezuela	X		X	X		X					✓	✓
Viet Nam	X		X	X		X		X			✓	

Table based on information provided directly to the Nuclear Weapons Ban Monitor and/or information submitted to the 1540 Committee of the UN Security Council and to the CTBTO in partial fulfilment of obligations under Security Council Resolution 1540 and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.



Hinamoeura Morgant-Cross with the youngest of her two sons photographed in Papeete, Tahiti, on 2 May 2024. An anti-nuclear activist and politician, Ms Morgant-Cross was diagnosed with cancer in 2013. Photograph © Adam Ferguson/The New York Times/NTB

THE OBLIGATION TO ASSIST VICTIMS AND REMEDIATE AFFECTED TERRITORY

Although concrete progress continues to be slow to occur, States Parties and civil society again met frequently in 2025 to advance implementation of the obligations in Article 6 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) to provide assistance to individuals affected by nuclear-weapons use and testing and to remediate contaminated environments. The Third Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW, held on 3–7 March 2025 at United Nations Headquarters in New York, reconfirmed Kazakhstan and Kiribati as co-chairs of the informal working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation, international cooperation and assistance.

DECISIONS AT 3MSP

The Third Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW (3MSP) reconfirmed Kazakhstan and Kiribati as co-chairs of the informal working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance, taking the working group through to the First Review Conference in November–December 2026.¹ Another decision concerned the possible future creation of an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation (see next section).

The Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW had adopted a voluntary reporting format and reporting guidelines for use by States Parties on victim assistance, environmental remediation, and international cooperation and assistance. There has, however, been some use the voluntary reporting format thus far, notably by Kazakhstan and New Zealand.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Notwithstanding the slow progress in assisting the victims of nuclear weapon use and testing during 2025, in November a new report detailed the state of knowledge in nuclear victim assistance. Elaborated over the course of two years under the aegis of Norwegian People's Aid, the report entitled *Is it Safe? A Framework for Assessing and Addressing the Ongoing Humanitarian and Environmental Consequences of Nuclear Testing*, concluded that the harm caused by nuclear testing is 'under-estimated, under-communicated, and under-addressed, leaving most affected communities—especially Indigenous Peoples—without adequate support.'² It further concluded:

Most communities affected by nuclear testing struggle to access appropriate healthcare, and the limited services that do exist are grossly inadequate. Oncological services are often expensive and rarely available in the economically marginalized zones where nuclear testing occurred. For example, individuals with cancer in the Marshall Islands must travel to Hawaii, the Philippines, or Taiwan to get treatment. Unless they have supplemental insurance or other resources, they can bring only one support person with them and there is a cost cap on their care. This removes them from family and community sources of support and means they do not receive care in the Marshallese language. Given the marginalization of many communities affected by nuclear testing, resources for psychological support are often insufficient.³

1 Report of the third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, TPNW doc. TPNW/MSP/2025/11/Rev.1, 6 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rj2jj5> (Report of 3MSP), Decision 1 (a)(ii).

2 *Is it Safe? A Framework for Assessing and Addressing the Ongoing Humanitarian and Environmental Consequences of Nuclear Testing*, Norwegian People's Aid, Oslo, November 2025, p. 16, <https://bit.ly/4rP5T33>.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17.

Victim assistance demands the provision of healthcare based on careful, individualized assessment. Those diagnosed with potentially radiogenic diseases should receive care in spaces where they feel most comfortable, in languages they understand, and while surrounded by their community support systems. When locally foraged or fished food is no longer considered safe for consumption due to radioactive contamination, people turn to preserved and processed foods that are often high in sodium and saturated fat and low in many micronutrients and fibre, and which can contribute to increased prevalence of heart disease, obesity, and diabetes. As a result, victim assistance should be designed to support broad-based improvement of healthcare for communities particularly affected by nuclear weapons, recognizing their multiple impacts.⁴

A total of 15 States are directly impacted by nuclear testing as Figure 26 illustrates. Of these, nine are directly impacted by atmospheric nuclear testing (and in some cases also by underground nuclear testing): Algeria, Australia, China, France (not on metropolitan territory but in French Polynesia – Mā'ohi Nui), Kazakhstan, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Russia (in particular in Novaya Zemlya above the Arctic Circle), and the United States (including Alaska and the Johnston Atoll). The remaining six are directly impacted by underground nuclear testing only: North Korea, India, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

There was also some legislative progress in 2025 for the victims of nuclear testing. In the United States, the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA), a federal programme that provides a small amount of compensation to some of the communities that were exposed to radiation from US nuclear weapons activities, RECA was reinstated and significantly expanded in July 2025. A congressional source estimated that 125,000 people who were originally left out of RECA will now receive compensation, representing the largest programme expansion in history.⁵

ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION

The NPA report also criticized the lack of efforts to remediate affected territories. It found that further efforts are needed to conduct a comprehensive, field-based global assessment of the ongoing needs for environmental remediation (and victim assistance) resulting from nuclear testing. Yet, it noted,

such an overview is not a prerequisite for action. It is already evident which territories and peoples bear the heaviest burdens. Accordingly, it is also clear where the international community must urgently focus its support – and where nuclear-testing States have responsibilities that must be acknowledged and fulfilled. While the scale of the impact from nuclear testing may appear overwhelming, effective prioritization is both essential and possible.⁶

Environmental remediation of sites contaminated by nuclear testing can involve containment or other forms of treatment. If done properly, containment prevents the problem from spreading and denies people as well as animals access to the site. It can include capping, land encapsulation, and the creation of physical and cryogenic barriers. Contaminants can be contained at the site of origin or moved elsewhere for extended storage. Treatment of radioactive contamination can take numerous forms. It can stabilize contaminants or separate them from soil, water, or air. Methods include applying chemical agents, changing temperatures, using plants or microorganisms, or relying on nature. Treatments to reduce the contamination of land and water can complement restrictions on using certain areas for farming or grazing.⁷

THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

In the UN General Assembly, Resolution 79/60—'Addressing the legacy of nuclear weapons: providing victim assistance and environmental remediation to Member States affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons'—was adopted in December 2024 under the leadership of Kiribati and Kazakhstan. The resolution requests the UN Secretary-General to convene a one-day international meeting on victim assistance and environmental remediation 'at an appropriate time' in 2026, with the participation of Member States, observers, and civil society representatives from ECOSOC-accredited organizations. UN Member States will be invited to 'share their relevant experience' and participants are encouraged to produce a set of recommendations based on the discussions, on which the Secretary-General is requested to report to Member States.⁸

4 Ibid., pp. 129-30.

5 L. Adams, 'After Decades, Relief for Some Harmed by the Nuclear Weapons Industry', *The Equation*, Union of Concerned Scientists, 6 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4cAkfQS>.

6 Ibid., p. 21.

7 B. Docherty and M. Sichel, 'Environmental Remediation', Chap 11 in *ibid.*, pp. 122–23, citing Harvard Law School International Human Rights Clinic (IHRC) and Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS), 'Facing Fallout: Principles for Environmental Remediation of Nuclear Weapons Contamination', Report, Cambridge, June 2022, <https://bit.ly/4ew3B3G>, pp. 47–49.

8 UN General Assembly Resolution 79/60; adopted on 2 December 2024 by 174 votes to 4 (France, North Korea, Russia, and the United Kingdom), with 6 abstentions (China, India, Israel, Pakistan, Poland, and the United States), operative para. 4.

ARTICLE 6 – INTERPRETATION

- To address the ongoing suffering inflicted by the use and testing of nuclear weapons, Article 6(1) of the TPNW obligates each State Party to provide ‘adequate’ assistance to individuals under its jurisdiction who are affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons. Article 6(2) obligates States Parties to take ‘necessary and appropriate measures’ towards the remediation of any areas in territory under their jurisdiction or control that have been contaminated as a result of activities related to the testing or use of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.
- Article 6 should be read in tandem with Article 7 which requires all States Parties to cooperate on implementation of the treaty, and all States Parties in a position to do so to ‘provide technical, material and financial assistance’ to affected States Parties, which will help them fulfil their victim assistance and environmental remediation obligations.

ARTICLE 6(1) – VICTIM ASSISTANCE

- Assistance includes, but is not limited to, medical care, rehabilitation, and psychological support, as well as support for social and economic inclusion. It is not required that the harm be caused by the State under whose jurisdiction they fall or that it occurred within that territory.
- Assistance under Article 6(1) must be provided in accordance with international human rights and humanitarian law. The paragraph requires that assistance in all cases must be age- and gender-sensitive and provided to all on the basis of need ‘without discrimination’. The duty of non-discrimination ensures that States Parties do not adversely distinguish among recipients based on the basis of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion, or other status identified in international human rights law.
- Given that the task of addressing the human impacts of nuclear weapons is complex and long-term, the TPNW facilitates the process by creating a framework of shared responsibility for victim assistance (as well as environmental remediation). The framework enables those who are willing to start addressing these issues to act together now. Affected States Parties bear the primary responsibility for implementation as this protects their sovereignty and follows the precedent of international human rights law and humanitarian disarmament law. But other States Parties in a position to do so are required to provide international cooperation and assistance to help affected States Parties meet their victim assistance (and environmental remediation) obligations.
- To make victim assistance more manageable, Article 6(1) can also be understood to allow affected States Parties to realise some of their obligations, particularly those related to economic, social, and cultural rights, progressively. International human rights law requires a State to take steps to achieve those rights ‘to the maximum of its available resources’, while recognizing that full realization may be a gradual process. (See Art. 2(1), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights).

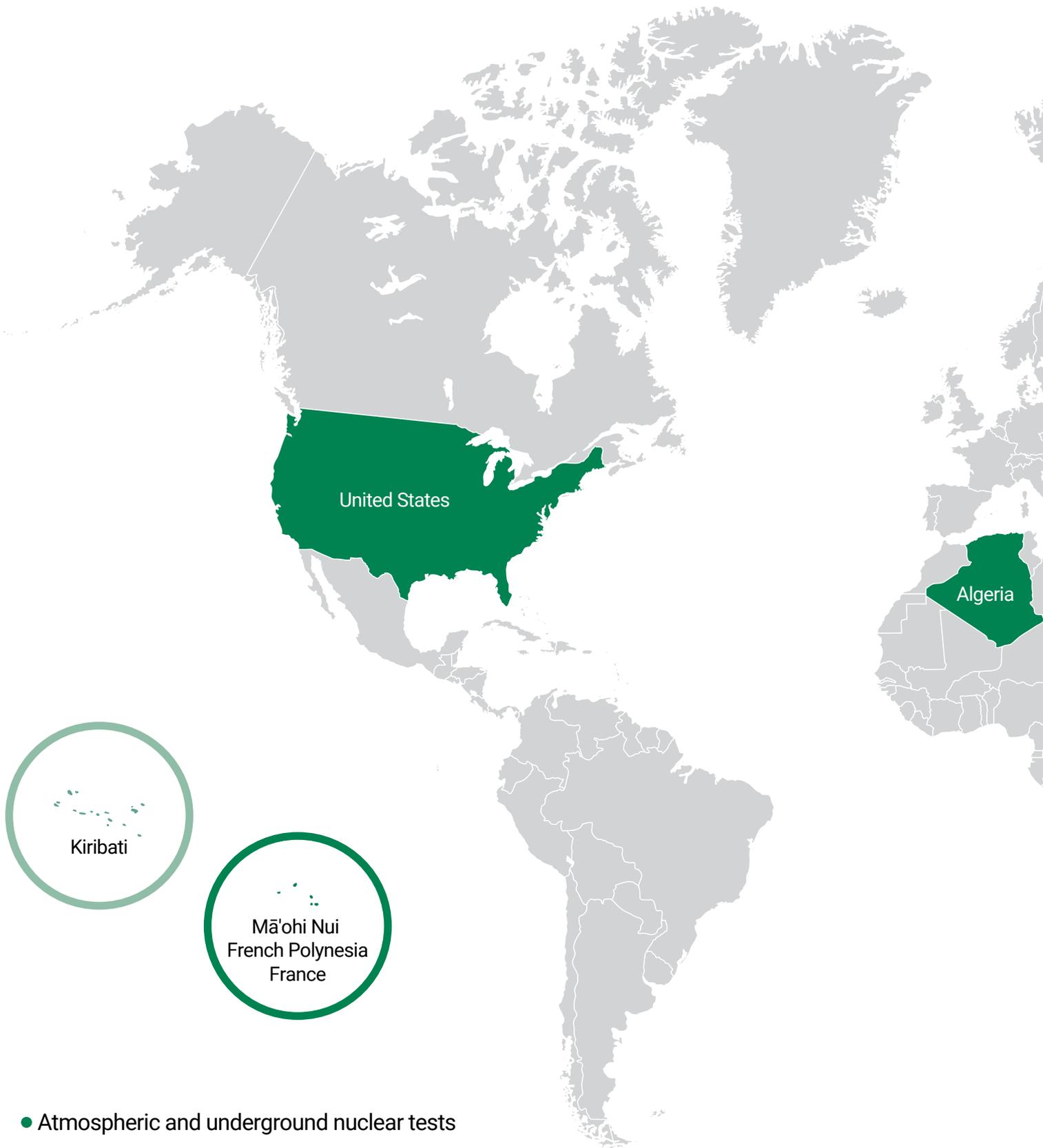
ARTICLE 6(2) - ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDIATION

- Given that nuclear fallout causes significant levels of contamination that spread across time and space, the TPNW recognizes that environmental remediation is a long-term commitment. It is typically difficult, and often impossible, to return areas affected by nuclear weapons to their pre-detonation condition. Accordingly, Article 6(2) requires affected States Parties to take ‘necessary and appropriate measures towards the environmental remediation of [contaminated] areas’. Although remediation may never be completed, they must work in good faith towards that goal.
- Certain interim activities, such as risk education, marking of contaminated areas, and national planning, can be accomplished in the near term. An essential step in each case is for a State Party to conduct an environmental remediation needs assessment.

ARTICLE 6(3)

- Article 6(3) makes clear that the TPNW’s victim assistance and environmental remediation obligations do not preclude affected States Parties or individuals from seeking redress or assistance through other means, such as judicial measures or bilateral treaties with States not party.

FIGURE 26: A global map depicting the 15 States directly affected by nuclear weapons testing



- Atmospheric and underground nuclear tests
- Atmospheric nuclear tests
- Underground nuclear tests





The Third Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW. Photograph © ICRC

THE OBLIGATION TO COOPERATE WITH AND ASSIST STATES PARTIES

The Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was held on 3–7 March 2025 at United Nations Headquarters in New York. The duty to cooperate with, and assist, other States Parties was one of the treaty obligations that received particular attention. The meeting did not decide to establish an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation as the Co-Chairs of the informal working group had hoped. Instead, the decision taken was only to continue discussing the ‘feasibility and potential establishment’ of such a fund – one that is ‘viable, effective and sustainable’. Greater international support for victim assistance and environmental remediation is needed both by States Parties and by States not party to the TPNW.

One of the decisions of the Third Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW (3MSP) was to hold ‘further focused discussions’ under the informal working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance ‘regarding the possible guidelines, technical provisions and/or terms of reference for the establishment of an international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation from the consequences of nuclear use and testing that is viable, effective and sustainable’.¹ The discussions will take into account, among other documents, the report of the Co-Chairs of the informal working group, that is to say, Kazakhstan and Kiribati.²

In their report, the Co-Chairs discussed the need and precedent for, as well as benefits and feasibility of, an international trust fund and recommended guiding principles for its design. The Co-Chairs considered that given ‘the current state of communities affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons, the lack of any institutionalized mechanism or international framework and the needs of affected States and communities’, the establishment of an international trust fund was ‘an urgent matter’.³ The proposed trust fund, the Co-Chairs affirmed, could serve the following ‘key functions’:

- Provide humanitarian assistance to victims
- Provide support to work towards environmental remediation
- Help States Parties to advance the implementation of Articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty
- Support Articles 6 and 7 and promote universalization of the Treaty.⁴

The report did not, however, persuade the other States Parties—yet—of the need for and feasibility of such a trust fund. Rather, they decided that the Co-Chairs will submit a stand-alone report by July 2026, in advance of the first Review Conference of the TPNW, after ‘wide and inclusive consultations among States Parties’ and containing ‘recommendations’ for consideration by States Parties on possible way forward, ‘with the aim of establishing, if feasible, such a trust fund at the first Review Conference’.⁵

1 Report of the third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, TPNW doc. TPNW/MSP/2025/11/Rev.1, 6 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/4rj2ji5> (Report of 3MSP), Decision 3(a).

2 Ibid.

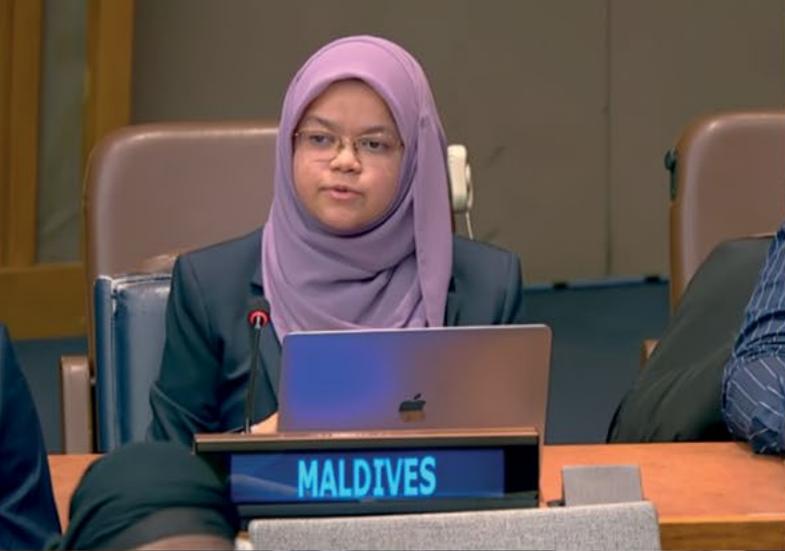
3 Report of the Co-Chairs of the informal working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance (Kazakhstan and Kiribati), TPNW doc. TPNW/MSP/2025/4, 5 February 2025, para. 9.

4 Ibid., paras. 10–15.

5 Report of 3MSP, Decision 3(b).

ARTICLE 7 – INTERPRETATION

- The obligations in the TPNW's Article 6 to assist victims and remediate the environment should be read in conjunction with Article 7 of the Treaty. Assistance can come in a variety of forms, such as through technical support by the provision of medical, scientific, or environmental expertise; material support, such as health care or remediation equipment; or financial support to fund affected States' victim assistance and environmental remediation programmes. Assistance can also come in the form of the release of official information and documents regarding nuclear testing and fallout monitoring.
- Article 7(1) obligates each State Party to the TPNW to cooperate with other States Parties to 'facilitate the implementation' of the Treaty, and Article 7(2) grants all States Parties 'the right to seek and receive assistance, where feasible'. In addition, under paragraph 3 of Article 7 each State Party 'in a position to do so' is required to provide technical, material, and financial assistance to States Parties affected by nuclear-weapon use or testing.
- Article 7(6) of the TPNW provides that any State Party that has used or tested nuclear weapons or any other nuclear explosive devices 'shall have a responsibility to provide adequate assistance' to affected States Parties for victim assistance and environmental remediation. This responsibility is without prejudice to any other duty or obligation the State may have under international law. This provision was especially important to affected States during the drafting of the Treaty; they argued that user and testing States should be both legally and morally responsible for their actions.
- International and non-governmental organizations also have a role to play. As referenced in Article 7(5) of the TPNW, assistance may be provided through the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, civil society groups, or other organizations.
- While most of Article 7 is directed at supporting victim assistance and environmental remediation, assistance can also be provided in relation to other obligations of the Treaty, such as the development of national implementation legislation or the destruction of nuclear-weapons.



Some of the many government representatives who, on behalf of their States, promoted universal adherence to the TPNW at various meetings in the United Nations and other multilateral forums in 2025.

THE OBLIGATION TO PROMOTE UNIVERSAL ADHERENCE TO THE TREATY

Through their words and actions, States Parties continued to demonstrate in 2025 a strong commitment to the goal of universalizing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). In September 2025, Ghana ratified the TPNW while Kyrgyzstan signed the treaty.

States Parties to the TPNW continued to pursue universalization of the Treaty in 2025, undertaking a range of actions to implement their obligation under Article 12 to encourage States to sign, ratify, or accede to it ‘with the goal of universal adherence’. In the declaration adopted at the Third Meeting of States Parties (3MSP) in March 2025, they thus reaffirmed their commitment to universalizing the Treaty and called upon ‘all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty or accede to it without delay’.¹

The States Parties also expressed confidence ‘that the effective implementation and universalization of the Treaty will ensure that nuclear weapons are never used, tested, or threatened to be used again’, emphasizing that: ‘The challenges before us can and will be overcome as we progress in bringing every State to join the Treaty, dismantling every warhead, providing justice to all affected communities, and ending the era of nuclear weapons forever’.²

WORKING GROUP

Also at 3MSP, States Parties renewed the mandate of the TPNW’s informal working group on universalization, expanding it to include the development of potential new actions to further promote adherence to the Treaty, taking into account the recommendations of the Austrian-led consultative process on the security concerns of States Parties.³ The current co-chairs of the working group are Austria, New Zealand, and Uruguay.

Following 3MSP, States Parties and signatories to the TPNW issued two joint statements promoting adherence to the Treaty and its underlying norms. The first was at the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Preparatory Committee meeting in New York in April 2025, where they pledged to work relentlessly ‘to unite and mobilize the international community towards eliminating the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons’, describing the TPNW as ‘a vital element in advancing nuclear disarmament’.⁴ The second joint statement was in the First Committee of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in October 2025, where they welcomed ‘the latest States that have signed and ratified the TPNW, taking the total combined number of States Parties and signatories to 99 States, thus demonstrating the determination of a global majority to eliminate nuclear weapons’.⁵

STRONG APPEALS

At these and other major disarmament meetings throughout the year, including the high-level commemorative event at the UN headquarters on 26 September to mark the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, many States Parties made strong appeals in their national statements for universalization of the TPNW. (See the national profiles section of the Ban Monitor website for details.) Certain regional groupings also called for TPNW universalization. In the First Committee, for example, the African Group—which represents more than a quarter of the UN membership—urged ‘all members of the international community, especially nuclear-weapon States and those

1 Declaration of the third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in ‘Report of the third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons’, UN Doc. TPNW/MSP/2025/11/Rev.1, 6 May 2025, <https://bit.ly/3NjmVYv>, Annex 1, para. 10.

2 Ibid, para. 40.

3 Ibid, Annex 2, Decision 1.

4 Joint Statement by TPNW States Parties and Signatory States to the NPT PrepCom, New York, 28 April 2025, delivered by South Africa, <https://bit.ly/49y3YZD>.

5 Joint Statement by TPNW States Parties and Signatory States for the Cluster 1 Debate: Nuclear weapons session of the First Committee of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 17 October 2025, delivered by South Africa, <https://bit.ly/3NAGCLo>.

under the so-called “nuclear umbrella”, to seize the opportunity to sign and ratify the Treaty at an early date.⁶ The Caribbean Community, representing 14 UN Member States, ‘commend[ed] all States that have acceded to or ratified the Treaty and urge[d] those yet to do so to join without delay.’⁷

A number of meetings were held in 2025 to highlight ‘the value of the Treaty and the political, legal, and practical importance of signature and ratification’. This is in line with Action 3 of the Vienna Action Plan of 2022.⁸ In October 2025, for example, Austria, New Zealand, and Uruguay, in partnership with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), organized a side event in the margins of the First Committee to ‘share information on the ongoing work to grow the TPNW’s membership’ and ‘provide information on the legal and technical steps required to join the TPNW’.⁹

ICAN has found that media coverage of nuclear risks increased in 2025, a reflection of the prevailing circumstances as well as heightened pick-up resulting from the eightieth anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. The year 2025 also saw more than 90 cities join its Cities Appeal, in which they undertake to push their national governments to join the TPNW. New adherents include the Greek capital, Athens; Perth in Australia; Marseille in France, Sinop in Türkiye, and La Conner, Washington state, in the United States.¹⁰

VIENNA ACTION PLAN

Four States Parties (Austria, Indonesia, Samoa, and South Africa) and one signatory (Djibouti) used the UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review process in 2025 to make formal recommendations to particular States to sign and ratify or accede to the TPNW.¹¹

In fulfilling their obligations under Article 12 of the Treaty, States Parties continued to be guided by the Vienna Action Plan, which lists 14 actions to advance universalization, including diplomatic *démarches* and outreach visits to the capitals of non-Parties as well as the provision of technical support for States to complete domestic ratification processes.¹²

ANNUAL RESOLUTION

At the 80th session of the UN General Assembly in 2025, 53 States Parties, along with 11 signatories and 5 non-signatories, co-sponsored the annual resolution on the TPNW, which called upon ‘all States that have not yet done so to sign, ratify, accept, approve, or accede to the Treaty at the earliest possible date’ and ‘those States in a position to do so to promote adherence to the Treaty and its norms and underlying rationale through bilateral, subregional, regional, and multilateral contacts, outreach, and other means’.¹³ The resolution was adopted in December 2025 with the positive vote of 119 States.¹⁴

PROGRESS

The progress achieved in 2025 towards universalizing the TPNW can be linked to recent activities by States Parties to promote ‘universal adherence’ to the Treaty. For example, Kyrgyzstan’s signature in September 2025 was seemingly influenced by various initiatives of Kazakhstan, including in its capacity as president of 3MSP, to encourage other States in Central Asia to join the Treaty,¹⁵ and Ghana’s ratification in September 2025 was spurred by the African Conference on the Universalization and Implementation of the TPNW held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, one year earlier, with South Africa as a co-organizer.¹⁶ Moreover, the regular promotion of the TPNW by States Parties at general conferences of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean has prompted Colombia to pursue ratification of the Treaty. In June 2025, its Congress approved a bill towards that end.¹⁷

6 African Group Statement, delivered by Guinea-Bissau, at the General Debate of the First Committee of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 8 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4quK7p>.

7 Caribbean Community Statement, delivered by Belize, in the Cluster 1 Debate: Nuclear weapons session of the First Committee of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 21 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4sNPcXc>.

8 Action 3 of the Vienna Action Plan, Annex 2 in the Report of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (1MSP), UN Doc. TPNW/MSP/2022/6, 21 July 2022, <https://bit.ly/3ZhVRvg>.

9 Side-event on the Universalization of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in the margins of the First Committee of the 80th session of the UN General Assembly, New York, 17 October 2025, <https://bit.ly/4jk86u1>.

10 Email from Florian Eblenkamp, Advocacy Coordinator, ICAN, 11 March 2026.

11 The recommendations were made to Armenia, Belarus, Italy, the Marshall Islands, and Türkiye.

12 Vienna Action Plan, Annex 2 in the Report of 1MSP.

13 UN General Assembly Resolution 80/54: ‘Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons’, New York, 1 December 2025, <https://bit.ly/3Z5ODL7>.

14 Forty-five States voted against the adoption of the resolution and twelve abstained. Of the 119 States that voted yes, 63 were TPNW States Parties, 20 were signatories, and 36 were non-signatories (including Iran and most other States in the Middle East). Eleven States Parties and four signatories did not participate in the vote for various reasons, such as their ineligibility. No State party voted against the resolution; one signatory, the Central African Republic, did so, possibly in error (it voted yes on the draft resolution in the First Committee). No State party or signatory abstained. Kyrgyzstan, which signed the TPNW on 26 September 2025, voted in favour of the resolution for the first time, having abstained in previous years.

15 See the ‘Implementation’ section of ‘Kazakhstan’, ICAN website, <https://bit.ly/4k9Rnke>.

16 ‘African Union Members Convene to Discuss UN Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty’, ICAN website, 10 September 2024, <https://bit.ly/4rpN8U7>.

17 ‘Colombia Reitera su Compromiso con la Paz al Ratificar el Tratado sobre la Prohibición de las Armas Nucleares’, Presidency of Colombia, 17 June 2025, <https://bit.ly/49YLbH2>.

Several signatory States reported that their domestic ratification processes were at an advanced stage, and some non-signatories initiated domestic processes to assess whether or not to join the Treaty. In July 2025, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, proposed at a Cabinet meeting that the government explore the possibility of acceding to the TPNW.¹⁸ In July 2025, Eswatini convened a national consultative workshop to examine the TPNW.¹⁹ These and other actions suggest the potential for further significant progress on universalization in the lead-up to the first Review Conference in November and December 2026.

ARTICLE 12 – INTERPRETATION

- This provision obligates each State Party to encourage States not party to sign, ratify, or accede to the TPNW, ‘with the goal of universal adherence’.
- The manner and frequency of the actions to be taken are not set out in the provision and are therefore left to the discretion of the State Party. That said, any State Party that sought to discourage adherence to the TPNW by a State not party would be in violation of this obligation.

¹⁸ ‘Turkmenistan May Join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons’, *Orient*, 18 July 2025, <https://bit.ly/490FuN5>.

¹⁹ ‘Eswatini’, ICAN website, <https://bit.ly/4k58HGS>. Bis as rehente mperum audae volupta tiorit laborum et re nos autem. Nam aut ullore sum expe doluptatest quis essit elendigene autest

ANNEX 1: THE TEXT OF THE TPNW

TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

The States Parties to this Treaty,

Determined to contribute to the realization of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations,

Deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from any use of nuclear weapons, and recognizing the consequent need to completely eliminate such weapons, which remains the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons are never used again under any circumstances,

Mindful of the risks posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons, including from any nuclear-weapon detonation by accident, miscalculation or design, and emphasizing that these risks concern the security of all humanity, and that all States share the responsibility to prevent any use of nuclear weapons,

Cognizant that the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons cannot be adequately addressed, transcend national borders, pose grave implications for human survival, the environment, socioeconomic development, the global economy, food security and the health of current and future generations, and have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, including as a result of ionizing radiation,

Acknowledging the ethical imperatives for nuclear disarmament and the urgency of achieving and maintaining a nuclear-weapon-free world, which is a global public good of the highest order, serving both national and collective security interests,

Mindful of the unacceptable suffering of and harm caused to the victims of the use of nuclear weapons (hibakusha), as well as of those affected by the testing of nuclear weapons,

Recognizing the disproportionate impact of nuclear-weapon activities on indigenous peoples,

Reaffirming the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law,

Basing themselves on the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, in particular the principle that the right of Parties to an armed conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited, the rule of distinction, the prohibition against indiscriminate attacks, the rules on proportionality and precautions in attack, the prohibition on the use of weapons of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering, and the rules for the protection of the natural environment,

Considering that any use of nuclear weapons would be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, in particular the principles and rules of international humanitarian law,

Reaffirming that any use of nuclear weapons would also be abhorrent to the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience,

Recalling that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations, and that the establishment and maintenance of international peace and security are to be promoted with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources,

Recalling also the first resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations, adopted on 24 January 1946, and subsequent resolutions which call for the elimination of nuclear weapons,

Concerned by the slow pace of nuclear disarmament, the continued reliance on nuclear weapons in military and security concepts, doctrines and policies, and the waste of economic and human resources on programmes for the production, maintenance and modernization of nuclear weapons,

Recognizing that a legally binding prohibition of nuclear weapons constitutes an important contribution towards the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons, including the irreversible, verifiable and transparent elimination of nuclear weapons, and determined to act towards that end,

Determined to act with a view to achieving effective progress towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control,

Reaffirming that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control,

Reaffirming also that the full and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which serves as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, has a vital role to play in promoting international peace and security,

Recognizing the vital importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and its verification regime as a core element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime,

Reaffirming the conviction that the establishment of the internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned enhances global and regional peace and security, strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime and contributes towards realizing the objective of nuclear disarmament,

Emphasizing that nothing in this Treaty shall be interpreted as affecting the inalienable right of its States Parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination,

Recognizing that the equal, full and effective participation of both women and men is an essential factor for the promotion and attainment of sustainable peace and security, and committed to supporting and strengthening the effective participation of women in nuclear disarmament,

Recognizing also the importance of peace and disarmament education in all its aspects and of raising awareness of the risks and consequences of nuclear weapons for current and future generations, and committed to the dissemination of the principles and norms of this Treaty,

Stressing the role of public conscience in the furthering of the principles of humanity as evidenced by the call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and recognizing the efforts to that end undertaken by the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, other international and regional organizations, non-governmental organizations, religious leaders, parliamentarians, academics and the hibakusha,

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE 1 PROHIBITIONS

1. Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to:
 - (a) Develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;
 - (b) Transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly or indirectly; Receive the transfer of or control over nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices directly or indirectly;
 - (c) Use or threaten to use nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;
 - (d) Assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Treaty;
 - (e) Seek or receive any assistance, in any way, from anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Treaty;
 - (f) Allow any stationing, installation or deployment of any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in its territory or at any place under its jurisdiction or control.

ARTICLE 2 DECLARATIONS

1. Each State Party shall submit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, not later than 30 days after this Treaty enters into force for that State Party, a declaration in which it shall:
 - (a) Declare whether it owned, possessed or controlled nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices and eliminated its nuclear-weapon programme, including the elimination or irreversible conversion of all nuclear-weapons-related facilities, prior to the entry into force of this Treaty for that State Party;
 - (b) Notwithstanding Article 1 (a), declare whether it owns, possesses or controls any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;
 - (c) Notwithstanding Article 1 (g), declare whether there are any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in its territory or in any place under its jurisdiction or control that are owned, possessed or controlled by another State.
2. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall transmit all such declarations received to the States Parties.

ARTICLE 3 SAFEGUARDS

1. Each State Party to which Article 4, paragraph 1 or 2, does not apply shall, at a minimum, maintain its International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards obligations in force at the time of entry into force of this Treaty, without prejudice to any additional relevant instruments that it may adopt in the future.
2. Each State Party to which Article 4, paragraph 1 or 2, does not apply that has not yet done so shall conclude with the International Atomic Energy Agency and bring into force a comprehensive safeguards agreement (INFCIRC/153 (Corrected)). Negotiation of such agreement shall commence within 180 days from the entry into force of this Treaty for that State Party. The agreement shall enter into force no later than 18 months from the entry into force of this Treaty for that State Party. Each State Party shall thereafter maintain such obligations, without prejudice to any additional relevant instruments that it may adopt in the future.

ARTICLE 4 TOWARDS THE TOTAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

1. Each State Party that after 7 July 2017 owned, possessed or controlled nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and eliminated its nuclear-weapon programme, including the elimination or irreversible conversion of all nuclear-weapons-related facilities, prior to the entry into force of this Treaty for it, shall cooperate with the competent international authority designated pursuant to paragraph 6 of this Article for the purpose of verifying the irreversible elimination of its nuclear-weapon programme. The competent international authority shall report to the States Parties. Such a State Party shall conclude a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency sufficient to provide credible assurance of the non-diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful nuclear activities and of the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activities in that State Party as a whole. Negotiation of such agreement shall commence within 180 days from the entry into force of this Treaty for that State Party. The agreement shall enter into force no later than 18 months from the entry into force of this Treaty for that State Party. That State Party shall thereafter, at a minimum, maintain these safeguards obligations, without prejudice to any additional relevant instruments that it may adopt in the future.
2. Notwithstanding Article 1 (a), each State Party that owns, possesses or controls nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices shall immediately remove them from operational status, and destroy them as soon as possible but not later than a deadline to be determined by the first meeting of States Parties, in accordance with a legally binding, time-bound plan for the verified and irreversible elimination of that State Party's nuclear-weapon programme, including the elimination or irreversible conversion of all nuclear-weapons-related facilities. The State Party, no later than 60 days after the entry into force of this Treaty for that State Party, shall submit this plan to the States Parties or to a competent international authority designated by the States Parties. The plan shall then be negotiated with the competent international authority, which shall submit it to the subsequent meeting of States Parties or review conference, whichever comes first, for approval in accordance with its rules of procedure.
3. A State Party to which paragraph 2 above applies shall conclude a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency sufficient to provide credible assurance of the non-diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful nuclear activities and of the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activities in the State as a whole. Negotiation of such agreement shall commence no later than the date upon which implementation of the plan referred to in paragraph 2 is completed. The agreement shall enter into force no later than 18 months after the date of initiation of negotiations. That State Party shall thereafter, at a minimum, maintain these safeguards obligations, without prejudice to any additional relevant instruments that it may adopt in the future. Following the entry into force of the agreement referred to in this paragraph, the State Party shall submit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations a final declaration that it has fulfilled its obligations under this Article.
4. Notwithstanding Article 1 (b) and (g), each State Party that has any nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices in its territory or in any place under its jurisdiction or control that are owned, possessed or controlled by another State shall ensure the prompt removal of such weapons, as soon as possible but not later than a deadline to be determined by the first meeting of States Parties. Upon the removal of such weapons or other explosive devices, that State Party shall submit to the Secretary-General of the United Nations a declaration that it has fulfilled its obligations under this Article.

5. Each State Party to which this Article applies shall submit a report to each meeting of States Parties and each review conference on the progress made towards the implementation of its obligations under this Article, until such time as they are fulfilled.
6. The States Parties shall designate a competent international authority or authorities to negotiate and verify the irreversible elimination of nuclear-weapons programmes, including the elimination or irreversible conversion of all nuclear-weapons-related facilities in accordance with paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 of this Article. In the event that such a designation has not been made prior to the entry into force of this Treaty for a State Party to which paragraph 1 or 2 of this Article applies, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall convene an extraordinary meeting of States Parties to take any decision that may be required.

ARTICLE 5 NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

1. Each State Party shall adopt the necessary measures to implement its obligations under this Treaty.
2. Each State Party shall take all appropriate legal, administrative and other measures, including the imposition of penal sanctions, to prevent and suppress any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Treaty undertaken by persons or on territory under its jurisdiction or control.

ARTICLE 6 VICTIM ASSISTANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMEDiation

1. Each State Party shall, with respect to individuals under its jurisdiction who are affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons, in accordance with applicable international humanitarian and human rights law, adequately provide age- and gender-sensitive assistance, without discrimination, including medical care, rehabilitation and psychological support, as well as provide for their social and economic inclusion.
2. Each State Party, with respect to areas under its jurisdiction or control contaminated as a result of activities related to the testing or use of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, shall take necessary and appropriate measures towards the environmental remediation of areas so contaminated.
3. The obligations under paragraphs 1 and 2 above shall be without prejudice to the duties and obligations of any other States under international law or bilateral agreements.

ARTICLE 7 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

1. Each State Party shall cooperate with other States Parties to facilitate the implementation of this Treaty.
2. In fulfilling its obligations under this Treaty, each State Party shall have the right to seek and receive assistance, where feasible, from other States Parties.
3. Each State Party in a position to do so shall provide technical, material and financial assistance to States Parties affected by nuclear-weapons use or testing, to further the implementation of this Treaty.
4. Each State Party in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the victims of the use or testing of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.
5. Assistance under this Article may be provided, inter alia, through the United Nations system, international, regional or national organizations or institutions, non-governmental organizations or

institutions, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, or national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, or on a bilateral basis.

6. Without prejudice to any other duty or obligation that it may have under international law, a State Party that has used or tested nuclear weapons or any other nuclear explosive devices shall have a responsibility to provide adequate assistance to affected States Parties, for the purpose of victim assistance and environmental remediation.

ARTICLE 8 MEETING OF STATES PARTIES

1. The States Parties shall meet regularly in order to consider and, where necessary, take decisions in respect of any matter with regard to the application or implementation of this Treaty, in accordance with its relevant provisions, and on further measures for nuclear disarmament, including:
 - (a) The implementation and status of this Treaty;
 - (b) Measures for the verified, time-bound and irreversible additional protocols to this Treaty;
 - (c) Any other matters pursuant to and consistent with the provisions of this Treaty.
2. The first meeting of States Parties shall be convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations within one year of the entry into force of this Treaty. Further meetings of States Parties shall be convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on a biennial basis, unless otherwise agreed by the States Parties. The meeting of States Parties shall adopt its rules of procedure at its first session. Pending their adoption, the rules of procedure of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, shall apply.
3. Extraordinary meetings of States Parties shall be convened, as may be deemed necessary, by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, at the written request of any State Party provided that this request is supported by at least one third of the State Parties.
4. After a period of five years following the entry into force of this Treaty, the Secretary-General of the United Nations shall convene a conference to review the operation of the Treaty and the progress in achieving the purposes of the Treaty. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall convene further review conferences at intervals of six years with the same objective, unless otherwise agreed by the States Parties.
5. States not party to this Treaty, as well as the relevant entities of the United Nations system, other relevant international organizations or institutions, regional organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and relevant non-governmental organizations, shall be invited to attend the meetings of States Parties and the review conferences as observers.

ARTICLE 9 COSTS

1. The costs of the meetings of States Parties, the review conferences and the extraordinary meetings of States Parties shall be borne by the States Parties and States not party to this Treaty participating therein as observers, in accordance with the United Nations scale of assessment adjusted appropriately.
2. The costs incurred by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the circulation of declarations under Article 2, reports under Article 4 and proposed amendments under Article 10 of this Treaty shall be borne by the States Parties in accordance with the United Nations scale of assessment adjusted appropriately.

3. The cost related to the implementation of verification measures required under Article 4 as well as the costs related to the destruction of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and the elimination of nuclear-weapon programmes, including the elimination or conversion of all nuclear-weapon-related facilities, should be borne by the States Parties to which they apply.

ARTICLE 10 AMENDMENTS

1. At any time after the entry into force of this Treaty, any State Party may propose amendments to the Treaty. The text of a proposed amendment shall be communicated to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall circulate it to all States Parties and shall seek their views on whether to consider the proposal. If a majority of the States Parties notify the Secretary-General of the United Nations no later than 90 days after its circulation that they support further consideration of the proposal, the proposal shall be considered at the next meeting of States Parties or review conference, whichever comes first.
2. A meeting of States Parties or a review conference may agree upon amendments which shall be adopted by a positive vote of a majority of two thirds of the States Parties. The Depositary shall communicate any adopted amendment to all States Parties.
3. The amendment shall enter into force for each State Party that deposits its instrument of ratification or acceptance of the amendment 90 days following the deposit of such instruments of ratification or acceptance by a majority of the States Parties at the time of adoption. Thereafter, it shall enter into force for any other State Party 90 days following the deposit of its instrument of ratification or acceptance of the amendment.

ARTICLE 11 SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

1. When a dispute arises between two or more States Parties relating to the interpretation or application of this Treaty, the Parties concerned shall consult together with a view to the settlement of the dispute by negotiation or by other peaceful means of the Parties' choice in accordance with Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations.
2. The meeting of States Parties may contribute to the settlement of the dispute, including by offering its good offices, calling upon the States Parties concerned to start the settlement procedure of their choice and recommending a time limit for any agreed procedure, in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Treaty and the Charter of the United Nations.

ARTICLE 12 UNIVERSALITY

Each State Party shall encourage States not party to this Treaty to sign, ratify, accept, approve or accede to the Treaty, with the goal of universal adherence of all States to the Treaty.

ARTICLE 13 SIGNATURE

This Treaty shall be open for signature to all States at United Nations Headquarters in New York as from 20 September 2017.

ARTICLE 14 RATIFICATION, ACCEPTANCE, APPROVAL OR ACCESSION

This Treaty shall be subject to ratification, acceptance or approval by signatory States. The Treaty shall be open for accession.

ARTICLE 15 ENTRY INTO FORCE

1. This Treaty shall enter into force 90 days after the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession has been deposited.
2. For any State that deposits its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession after the date of the deposit of the fiftieth instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, this Treaty shall enter into force 90 days after the date on which that State has deposited its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

ARTICLE 16 RESERVATIONS

The Articles of this Treaty shall not be subject to reservations.

ARTICLE 17 DURATION AND WITHDRAWAL

1. This Treaty shall be of unlimited duration.
2. Each State Party shall, in exercising its national sovereignty, have the right to withdraw from this Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events related to the subject matter of the Treaty have jeopardized the supreme interests of its country. It shall give notice of such withdrawal to the Depositary. Such notice shall include a statement of the extraordinary events that it regards as having jeopardized its supreme interests.
3. Such withdrawal shall only take effect 12 months after the date of the receipt of the notification of withdrawal by the Depositary. If, however, on the expiry of that 12-month period, the withdrawing State Party is a party to an armed conflict, the State Party shall continue to be bound by the obligations of this Treaty and of any additional protocols until it is no longer party to an armed conflict.

ARTICLE 18 RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER AGREEMENTS

The implementation of this Treaty shall not prejudice obligations undertaken by States Parties with regard to existing international agreements, to which they are party, where those obligations are consistent with the Treaty.

ARTICLE 19 DEPOSITARY

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is hereby designated as the Depositary of this Treaty.

ARTICLE 20 AUTHENTIC TEXTS

The Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts of this Treaty shall be equally authentic.

DONE at New York, this seventh day of July, two thousand and seventeen.

ANNEX 2: ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

1MSP	First Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW	kt	kiloton
2MSP	Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW	LACM	Land-attack cruise missile
3MSP	Third Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW	Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic
ALCM	Air-launched cruise missile	MIRV	Multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle
APMBC	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention	MRBM	Medium-range ballistic missile
BWC	Biological Weapons Convention	Mt	megaton
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions	NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
CSA	Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement	NAS	US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine
CSNO	Conventional support to nuclear operations	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organization	NNSA	National Nuclear Security Administration (United States)
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty	NPG	Nuclear Planning Group
CTBTO	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization	NPT	Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention	NWFZ	Nuclear-weapon-free zone
DCA	Dual-capable aircraft	P5	The five permanent (and nuclear-armed) members of the UN Security Council
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)	Pu	Plutonium
DR Congo	Democratic Republic of the Congo	SAM	Surface-to-air missile
FAS	Federation of American Scientists	SLBM	Submarine-launched ballistic missile
HEU	Highly enriched uranium	SLCM	Submarine-launched cruise missile
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency	SQP	Small Quantities Protocol
ICAN	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons	SSBN	Submersible ship, ballistic missile, nuclear-powered
ICBM	Intercontinental ballistic missile	START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	TNT	Trinitrotoluene
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development	TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
INFCIRC	Information Circular	UK	United Kingdom
IPFM	International Panel on Fissile Materials	UN	United Nations
IRBM	Intermediate-range ballistic missile	UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
ISR	Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance	US	United States
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action	Wh	Warheads
kg	kilogram	WMD	Weapon of mass destruction

NUCLEAR WEAPONS **BAN** MONITOR 2026

TRACKING PROGRESS TOWARDS A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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