

Abolition 2000 Annual General Meeting, May 23, 2020

PROPOSAL : International Fast 2020

Dominique Lalanne (Abolition des Armes Nucléaires – Maison de Vigilance)
Marc Morgan (Trident Ploughshares and CND)

Why such a proposal ?

The International fast traces its origins all the way back to the Fast for Life of 1983, when 12 peace campaigners from five different countries fasted for 40 days in protest at the deployment of Cruise Missiles and SS20s in Europe.

Inspired by this example, campaigners in France and Germany launched the annual Hiroshima to Nagasaki International fast in 1984; it has been held in those two countries every year since, and in recent years has progressively grown to encompass 6 different countries, now including the UK, the US, Ivory Coast, and New Zealand. The organisers in the different countries work closely together, and are united in emphasising that the fast is both a commemoration and a call to action and to awareness.

Last year the fast was followed by over 150 people worldwide, accompanied as always by different forms of non-violent direct action.

Every year the organisers of the fast and regular fast participants sign an Appeal of the International fasters, a common statement of our purpose. The key message is always the same: the urgency of the abolition and prohibition of nuclear weapons, the need for civil society to make its voice heard. It is modulated each year according to the realities of the political situation worldwide: the focus in recent years has been on the TPNW, and increasingly also on the links between militarization and Climate Change. This year of course the Appeal, which we attach, is focused on the Coronavirus epidemic and the need for a change of course embracing all humankind.

The fast has the support of ICAN, and of numerous organizations including the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and Trident Ploughshares (UK), Abolition des Armes Nucléaires – Maison de Vigilance (AAN-MdV, France), local Peace groups in Gau-Algesheim, Mainz and Büchel (Germany), several Quaker groups, and Lovarchy in the US. It is one of the most widespread internationally coordinated forms of protest against nuclear weapons regularly taking place at the initiative of grassroots campaigners in existence.

With the explicit support of Trident Ploughshares and AAN-MdV, many of whose members will be fasting, we call on this year's AGM of Abolition 2000 to support the fast, and to help us in promoting it and publicising it across the Abolition 2000 network.

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The Proposal :

Call of the international groups of fasters

We demand nuclear disarmament!

We are groups of fasters who have decided to forego nourishment for at least 4 days, from August 6th, 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima, until August 9th, anniversary of the bombing of Nagasaki, to express our total opposition to nuclear weapons, and to call for their complete abolition.

This year will go down in history as the year when a major calamity struck all nations of the world with equal force. Exposing as it has the fragility and interdependency of the human race, the COVID-19 pandemic will lead to calls for radical change – changes in the governance of the world, changes in our priorities, an end to the devastation wreaked on our planet.

The world spends \$2,000,000,000,000 a year on weapons; a significant proportion of this goes into the maintenance and development by just 9 nuclear-armed states of the world's 14,000 nuclear weapons, a small fraction of which would be sufficient to destroy the planet several times over. Citing the nuclear threat and climate change, the Atomic Scientists who monitor the clock of the Apocalypse have again brought it forward, to just 100 hundred seconds before midnight.

This situation has to stop. We cannot continue to let a small minority of nations hold the rest of the world to ransom, and squander vast sums of money on these terrifying weapons. Speaking in Nagasaki in November 2019, Pope Francis unambiguously denounced the immorality not just of the threatened use of nuclear weapons, but also of their possession and development.

His plea echoes the terms of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, approved by 122 nations at the United Nations in July 2017, and since signed by over 80 nations and ratified by over 35. When 50 nations will have ratified it, this will come into force as a component of International Law. This is just a matter of time, of the pressure of public opinion, and of the determination of the overwhelming majority of civil society organizations, and ordinary citizens, who resolutely oppose the folly of nuclear weapons.

The possession, production and threatened use of nuclear weapons must be prohibited. The United Nations Treaty, along with all other anti-nuclear treaties, must be upheld, and enforced!

We, the undersigned groups of fasters, call on each and every person to join us in expressing this urgent call:

Nuclear disarmament must happen NOW ! Join the Fast ! Demand that your country signs the Treaty !

Groups of Fasters in:

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More than ever this year, in the light of the Coronavirus pandemic and its devastating consequences, we are aware that our freely taken decision to fast highlights the fact that we are not amongst the many millions threatened by malnutrition or famine. We will keep this in mind, and recommend that participants in the Fast donate the money they would be spending on food to organizations or charities helping to feed the destitute.