

Challenging Nuclear weapons in Europe

IPB Campaign 2019-2020

After the collapse of the INF Treaty that occurred in August 2019, IPB launched a campaign associating European and international partners to alert on the growing dangers of the nuclear tensions in Europe and explore common actions.

Indeed, the tensions between nuclear weapons possessors states have worsen dramatically these last months, and Europe is at the centre of the storm. The suspension of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty with Russia has directly exposed Europe to a new nuclear arms race and there is no indication that a successor to the US-Russian New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) will be negotiated before the February 2021 deadline. NATO states are much too silent, worse, French President Macron suggested that France's nuclear weapons could become a European "deterrent".

IPB, together with the Russel Foundation, the International Trade Unions Confederation, Abolition 2000, IPPNW and INES organized a first meeting in Brussels, hosted by the friends of Vrede, on September 14th, 2019: "Nuclear security after the collapse of the INF Treaty. A whole range of groups attended from 10 countries, such as Greenpeace, ICAN and several members of the network No to war-No to NATO.

The presentations and debates drew a common political space where social and environmental issues are converging with peace issues to express the need of improving people's security everywhere. Rethinking security seems more than ever an urgent work for the peace movements! New concepts deriving from Olof Palme ideas around collective security are emerging like the creation of "safe operating spaces for living" building from local to global.

The renewal of the US nuclear weapons in Europe—B61—remains a key issue to mobilize the peoples in the countries where they are based, building on the opposition of the majority of their citizens. The representatives of these countries decided to launch a working group and common days of action around the US bases.

Building on the success of this meeting where a common appeal was launched, a next step took place in the form of a webinar, on April 27th. Instead of the side event that IPB had planned during the NPT session that was postponed, the webinar gathered several actors of the peace and social movement as well as Members of Parliaments from UK and France. The strong collaboration with Russian activists in this process is well appreciated and more activists from Eastern Europe are welcome.

The second part of this webinar was dedicated to actions and the campaigning toward the implementation of the TPNW remains the central part of the common work towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. New arguments are building up, like the immorality of these weapons, encouraging financial institutions to stop funding them, with Don't Bank on the Bomb Campaign. IPB campaign on reducing military spending, where nuclear weapons are major drivers was also promoted, as well as the terrible environmental impact of a nuclear war, convincing environmental movements to join this fight.

IPB will to keep on developing the contacts between all the different actors willing to improve the security in Europe and wishes to strengthen this global approach campaign in the coming months and years.

As wished by many participants a new meeting will take place before the end of 2020 in Brussels. The covid-19 crisis has underlined how urgent is to turn the focus and the means on people's security and fight together our major common threats to health, environment and peace.