

City of Winnipeg Says Yes to the Nuclear Ban

Today, Winnipeg City Council voted in favour of a resolution supporting the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (TPNW) following a youth-led initiative advocating for the *International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*' (ICAN) *Cities Appeal*. Winnipeg joins Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax, Victoria, Montréal and nine other Canadian municipalities in endorsing the *ICAN Cities Appeal*.

"Acknowledging the weight of taking on these discussions, it can be daunting to talk about nuclear weapons. But that anxiety cannot and should not get in the way of doing the humane thing. As youth leaders, a future free of nuclear weapons is a future we believe in and one that we encourage all, no matter how young or old, to work towards. It is in our hands that we take action to better our future." Said Rooj Ali, a grade 11 student who led the campaign.

Cities have been and will continue to be targets in the event of a nuclear strike. In 2018, the Cities Appeal was launched by ICAN (2017 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate) to allow municipalities to not only speak up, but to take meaningful action such as through educating residents.

On 7 July 2017, 122 countries voted to adopt the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (TPNW). Upon receiving 50 state ratifications on 22 January, 2021, nuclear weapons became illegal under international law for ratifying states only. This treaty is the most comprehensive of its kind - banning the use, threat of use, development, testing, production, manufacturing, acquisition, possession or stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

The TPNW represents the beginning of a global movement that puts pressure on nuclear armed states and creates a new international norm that these weapons are unacceptable. An international coalition of cities and civil society can play a game-changing role in breaking the status quo.

"Talking about nuclear weapons are not easy conversations to have. But more of it needs to happen so we can move beyond the point of awareness and towards a point of action and lead a tide of change - one city at a time. It can be incredibly scary knowing that our generation will one day inherit a world still full of nuclear weapons and the catastrophic consequences they pose. We refuse to stay silent as this happens." Said Avinashpall Singh, who is enrolled into the University of Manitoba and also led the campaign.

Collaborative efforts between civil society is key to ensuring the success of this movement. Winnipeg is the first city among the prairie provinces to take action on this initiative, and serves as a leading example to neighboring municipalities to foster a better future for all generations.

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Text of The Appeal:

“The City of Winnipeg is deeply concerned about the grave threat that nuclear weapons pose to communities throughout the world. We firmly believe that our residents have the right to live in a world free from this threat.

Any use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, would have catastrophic, far-reaching and long-lasting consequences for people and the environment. Therefore, we support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and call on our governments to sign and ratify it.”

All endorsing cities have signed this exact statement.

Endorsing Organizations (as of June 22, 2021)

Throughout our campaign, we sought endorsements from prominent organizations and networks. Endorsing organizations listed below support the City of Winnipeg’s immediate entry into the ICAN Cities Appeal. All logos and statements are used with permission, any mention of them must be within the context of the ICAN Cities Appeal and their support of our campaign.

- Canadian Environmental Law Association
- Canadian Museum for Human Rights
- Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
- Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (Manitoba)
- International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
- International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War Canada
- Kurdish Initiative for Refugees
- Manitoba Association for Rights & Liberties
- Manitoba Eco-Network
- Manitoba Youth for Climate Action
- Mennonite Central Committee (Manitoba)
- Reverse the Trend: Save Our People, Save Our Planet
- Rotary Club of Winnipeg
- Soka Gakkai International Association of Canada
- Youth Nuclear Peace Summit

In addition to these organizations, the Hon. Marilou McPhedran has personally supported us.



Statements Of Support

“Before commencing any nuclear project, it should be demonstrable that the proliferation risks posed by the technology and obligations within international non-proliferation treaty commitments have been publicly considered, and align with the public interest of all Canadians. As CELA endorsed as part of the Winnipeg Nuclear Declaration 2018, “Every individual has the right to nuclear peace and freedom from the fear, and threat, of nuclear weapons and nuclear warfare.”

(Kerrie Blaise) Canadian Environmental Law Association

“Clearly, it is so much easier to get attention and outcomes from local governments for issues that are not part of provincial or federal party policies or platforms. Municipal governments have no lawmaking jurisdiction respecting relevant law-making or Treaties and international law. But what cities have is proximity and jurisdiction and relationships respecting everyday matters affecting residents including their water supply and safety, fire, policing, parks and paramedics and public libraries for example. Just as Hiroshima and Nagasaki were each destroyed by an atomic bomb perforce Winnipeg and much more can be destroyed today even as collateral damage from attacks on Grand Forks atomic missile launch sites.”

(David Newman Q.C) Rotary District 5550

“The Rotary Club of Winnipeg supports this youth-led campaign.”

Rotary Club of Winnipeg

“We endorse the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and the Cities Appeal Campaign that calls on the City of Winnipeg to support the international Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Humanity faces many great challenges, such as global warming, increased income inequalities and overconsumption. There is a dire need to end the threat of ecological devastation and mass destruction from nuclear weapons and redirect the funds from global military budgets to focus on achieving our sustainable development goals.”

Manitoba Eco-Network

“We support the city of Winnipeg in signing onto the ICAN Cities Appeal to ensure a safe community for all. Nuclear weapons affect all persons in Canada and around the world. An intersectional, intergenerational lens is required to understand the true effects of such weapons on all persons. The consequences of nuclear weapons affect our communities, populations, and environments leaving lasting effects for generations to come. By supporting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, we are fighting for everyone, in Canada and abroad, to be able to live freely from the threats of such weapons.”

(Shayne Wong) Provincial Coordinator: Canadian Voice of Women for Peace

About Us

Rooj Ali and Avinashpall Singh are two highly engaged activists and students attending River East Collegiate. They were youth co-chairs of the first-ever Youth Nuclear Peace Summit, which was held at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights in 2019. They are concerned about the ongoing proliferation of nuclear weapons and would like to see Canada change its stance and support for total disarmament. Taking the connections and experience they've gained from the summit, the projects they've launched, and the conferences they've attended, Rooj and Avinash led the campaign to have the City of Winnipeg officially endorse the ICAN Cities Appeal.

Timeline

March 1 - June 1: Sought formal endorsements from organizations that supported our campaign.

March 12: Presentation to the Subcommittee on Accessibility and Inclusion

- Unanimous vote including a strong recommendation by the Standing Committee Chair to proceed.

April 17: Presentation to the Mayor's Youth Advisory Council

- Majority support; Mayor Brian Bowman signalled personal support of our campaign.
- This presentation was given by YAC member Shiven Srivastava on our behalf.

May 28: Presentation to City Councillor Brian Mayes (St. Vital)

May 30: Presentation to City Councillor Jeff Browaty (North Kildonan)

June 1: Presentation to City Councillor Sherri Rollins (Fort-Rouge East Fort Garry)

June 2: Presentation to City Councillor Ross Eadie (Mynarski)

June 3: Presentation to City Councillor Markus Chambers (St. Norbert - Seine River)

June 4: Presentation to City Councillor Janice Lukes (Waverley West)

June 9: Human Rights Committee on Council Officially Recommends

June 10: Presentation to City Councillor Shawn Nason (Transcona)

June 16: Executive Policy Committee Votes

- Unanimous decision, advances to Full Council Meeting

June 18: Presentation to City Councillor Devi Sharma (Old Kildonan)

June 18: Presentation to City Councillor Cindy Gilroy (Daniel McIntyre)

June 22: Presentation to City Councillor John Orlikow (River Heights - Fort Garry)

June 24: Full Council Meeting: City of Winnipeg formally endorses the ICAN Cities Appeal