



THE MEETING OF AJECL & PARTNERS IN TPNW ADVOCACY, on 25th May 2023.

KIGALI – RWANDA



The participants	Organisation
1. Albert Baudouin	Pax Press
2. Roger NIYIGENA	Ejo Youth Echo (EYE)
3. TUMUSONERE Jesus	La Galope Rwanda
4. NDAYAMBAJE Patrick	Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle
5. Fr. IYAKAREMYE Theogene	AJECL
6. TUYISHIMIRE Jean Pierre	AJECL



Introduction

The meeting took place at the CENTRE IGICUMBI CY'AMAHORO, at AJECL Headquarter. All partners in TPNW Advocacy in Rwanda were represented: Pax Press Rwanda, Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle, La Galope Rwanda, Ejo Youth Echo, and AJECL.

The purpose of this initial meeting was to foster a deeper understanding among partners and engage in detailed discussions on how to collaboratively work towards Rwanda's participation in TPNW as soon as possible.

The following topics were on the agenda:

1. In-depth mutual knowledge
2. TPNW & Rwanda
3. The MoU signed between the partners
4. Recommendations from the meeting held at Ste Famille Hotel on 3rd February 2023
5. Discussion on expediting Rwanda's participation in TPNW
6. Conclusions and recommendations

The meeting commenced with a prayer and welcoming remarks by Father IYAKAREMYE Theogene.

1. In-depth mutual knowledge

Participants introduced themselves and provided a brief overview of the organization they represented. For more detailed information about each organization, you can refer to the AJECL website, where you will find a summary of each organization.

2. THE TPNW AND RWANDA

During the meeting held at Ste Famille Hotel on 3rd February 2023, Seth Shelden from ICAN delivered a presentation that provided the participants with valuable updates. The presentation covered crucial aspects such as the significant dates related to the TPNW, the countries that have already signed and/or ratified the treaty, the reasons behind the negotiation of the TPNW, and Rwanda's stance regarding the treaty. Seth's presentation offered important insights on these matters.



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- TPNW was negotiated throughout 2017
 - TPNW was adopted on 7 July 2017 (with votes in favor from 122 countries, including 42 Africa countries)
 - TPNW was opened for signature in September 2017
 - ICAN was awarded Nobel Peace Prize in December 2017
 - 50th country (Honduras) deposited ratification 20 October 2020
 - TPNW entered into force on 22 January 2021
 - First meeting of States Parties last June 2022, in Vienna
 - Second meeting of States Parties this November 2023, in New York
 - The TPNW establishes:

(1) the first-ever comprehensive, global, treaty-based ban on nuclear weapons;

(2) a legal framework for eliminating nuclear-weapon programs;

(3) the first-ever legal framework for assisting victims of, and remediating environments affected by, the use and testing of nuclear weapons.

THE STATUS OF TPNW GLOBALLY:

- 68 States have ratified or acceded to the TPNW.
- 92 States have signed the TPNW.
- 140 States, including Rwanda, have registered their support for the treaty at the UN General Assembly, including through the UN General Assembly resolution since 2018 that calls upon “all states that have not yet done so to sign, ratify, accept, approve, or accede to the treaty at the earliest possible date”.
- 4 more signatures or accessions will mean that half the world’s states have taken TPNW treaty actions.

THE STATUS OF TPNW IN AFRICA:



33 AU States have signed or ratified the TPNW, comprised of:

- **States Parties: 15 states have signed and ratified:** Benin, Botswana, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Seychelles, South Africa.
- **Signatories: 18 states have signed but not yet ratified:** Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Libya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Niger, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Zambia, Zimbabwe.
- **21 states have neither signed nor ratified (non-signatories):** Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, **Rwanda**, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Tunisia, Uganda.

WHY THE TPNW WAS NEGOTIATED:

- To address **humanitarian concerns**
- To fill a **gap in international law**
- To build **pressure for disarmament**

TO ADDRESS THE HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS

- Any use of nuclear weapons has devastating, inter-generational impact, disproportionately affecting women and girls, and indigenous communities.
- There can be no adequate response to any use of nuclear weapons.
- The transboundary impact of nuclear weapons would cause devastating harm, even in areas far away from regions of conflict, including because of effects on climate change, radioactive fallout, economic instability, refugee crises, and decreased food supply.
- The risk of use is at an all-time high.
- Deterrence does not prevent use.
- The only way to mitigate against use is to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.

TO FILL A LEGAL GAP



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- Prior to the adoption of the TPNW in 2017, nuclear weapons were the only weapons of mass destruction not subject to a categorical global ban.
 - **Biological weapons** were banned under the Biological Weapons Convention in 1972.
 - **Chemical weapons** were banned under the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1993.
 - The **Non-Proliferation Treaty** of 1968 does not establish a categorical ban on nuclear weapons.
 - It does not prohibit all of its states parties from manufacturing nuclear weapons.
 - It does not prohibit the use, threatened use or testing of nuclear weapons.
 - It does not prohibit its states parties from hosting another state's nuclear weapons in their territory.
 - **Nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties** prohibit a wide range of activities related to nuclear weapons, but are limited in their application to specific geographical regions.
 - The **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty** of 1996 prohibits the testing of nuclear weapons, but not the possession of such weapons or their use in war.

TO BUILD PRESSURE FOR DISARMAMENT

- Precedent demonstrates that the prohibition of a particular type of weapon delegitimizes and stigmatizes it, serving as a powerful stimulus for progress towards its elimination.
- Weapon prohibition treaties can have a significant impact even on states that refuse to join them, including through divestment and changes in alliance arrangements.
- The impact of weapon prohibition treaties becomes greater over time as more states join them.

WHAT DOES IT COST RWANDA TO JOIN THE TPNW?



Following the presentation, the participants engaged in discussions regarding Rwanda's position on the TPNW and the associated costs of joining. Rwanda was among the 122 countries that voted in favor of the TPNW during its adoption in the UN General Assembly in 2017.

It has been communicated that Rwanda's domestic process for ratifying the TPNW is currently underway. In January 2022, Ambassador Kavaruganda Guillaume, representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, expressed during a meeting with stakeholders in Rwanda that Rwanda would adhere to the TPNW in due course, stating, "it is not so urgent but we will do it." Similarly, during the most recent meeting in February 2023, Mr. Rwagasana Robert from MINAFET reiterated the same sentiment, stating, "it is not a matter of if we will sign or not, it is a matter of when."

These statements reaffirm Rwanda's commitment to eventually signing and ratifying the TPNW.

About compliance for Rwanda,

- Rwanda already has concluded both its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement as well as its Additional Protocol with the IAEA.
- Rwanda already also is compatible with the core prohibitions of Article 1:
- **Creating:** development, testing, production, and manufacture
- **Obtaining** (including for others): acquisition, stationing, transfer, and receipt
- **Retaining:** possession and stockpiling
- **Using:** Use and threat of use
- **Assisting:** Assistance or encouragement with any of above.

Accordingly, Rwanda has the ability to adhere to the TPNW without incurring any significant additional obligations, without revising its current conduct, and most likely without necessitating new domestic legislation.

In the concluding part of this discussion, the participants were informed about the reasons to join ICAN in the effort to eliminate nuclear weapons and the significance of being an ICAN partner.



WHY TO JOIN ICAN TO END NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Like climate change and pandemic disease, the terrible risks posed by nuclear weapons constitute a global problem that requires a collective global response. Whatever the interests and strengths of your organisation, there is a way to contribute to nuclear disarmament efforts. ICAN has the wide network, a solid plan, and a Nobel Peace Prize winning track record of success. With more organizations like yours on board, we can eliminate nuclear weapons.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN ICAN PARTNER

Any NGO is eligible to become an ICAN partner organization. No joining fee or annual subscription is required. ICAN partners are coordinated, connected, and cooperating on nuclear weapons abolition through the TPNW.

As a partner, you will:

- Receive regular updates, briefings, press points, and social media materials to talk about nuclear disarmament.
- Have access to the diverse expertise across the campaign.
- Be eligible to join the ICAN delegation to United Nations and official meetings.
- Benefit from ICAN training and support programmes, be eligible to apply for small grants to support your organization's activities in universalising the TPNW, and more.

(ICAN_PARTNERS_FLYER)

Regarding the five organizations present, AJECL is already an ICAN Partner. Pax Press and La Galope Rwanda have submitted applications to become ICAN partners, which have been received and are currently under analysis. AJECL has been requested to provide its recommendation, and this has already been done. Ejo Youth Echo and Vision Jeunesse Nouvelle are in the process of preparing their applications.

3. MoU signed between these partners

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the five organizations consists of 16 articles that outline the terms of a partnership focused on promoting collaboration in establishing sustainable and peaceful societies through dialogue and nonviolent action. During the discussion, the participants emphasized the shared objective of this partnership and unanimously agreed that genuine dialogue and nonviolence are the most effective approaches to resolving conflicts.



It is in this spirit that they have joined the ICAN initiative to support the TPNW. The principles of "Si vis pacem para pacem" (If you want peace, prepare peace) and "Peace never comes from the fire" will serve as guiding principles for all the partners' initiatives.

4. The recommendations from the meeting held at Ste Famille Hotel on 3rd February 2023

The participants were briefed on the recommendations stemming from this meeting, emphasizing the importance of urging Rwanda to promptly adhere to the TPNW. By doing so, Rwanda would join the 92 countries that have signed the treaty and the 68 countries that have ratified it. This step would make a significant contribution to shaping a future world free from nuclear weapons.



5. Discussion about how to get Rwanda into TPNW as soon as possible

The participants dedicated time to discussing the necessary actions to facilitate Rwanda's accession to the TPNW. Firstly, it was recognized that the TPNW is a significant milestone for the first generation of the 21st century. As newly established organizations, it is crucial to gain a comprehensive understanding of the treaty and to support our team of journalists in comprehending and embracing it. This will enable them to prepare informative radio talks that can generate public interest. Additionally, it will be important to identify key stakeholders who can assist in persuading decision-makers to take the necessary steps to bring Rwanda into the treaty.



From these ideas, the meeting made different recommendations.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

- Each partner is responsible for identifying and contacting stakeholders from relevant government institutions involved in the process of joining the TPNW, such as MINAFFET, MINADEF, MINIJUST, the Cabinet, Parliament, Senate, and the presidency of the Republic. Additionally, institutions that have an interest in the treaty, such as MININTER, Ministry of Environment, and REMA, should also be engaged in advocacy efforts.
- It is important for each partner to ensure that the MoU is well-known and understood by their staff and Board of Directors.
- AJECL and Pax Press will collaborate to assess the requirements for a TPNW workshop. The workshop will include representatives from the five partner NGOs, government officials, and a group of journalists who will contribute to producing a radio talk on the TPNW to generate interest among the public and government stakeholders. Two funding proposals will be submitted to ICAN for financial support before the second meeting of State parties in November, ensuring progress is made towards Rwanda's participation in the TPNW.
- The next meeting will be held online on 23rd June 2022 at 10:00. The primary focus will be on identifying stakeholders from the targeted institutions who can support advocacy efforts and devising strategies to engage and collaborate with them.

The Secretary

TUYISHIMIRE Jean Pierre

AJECL

The facilitator of the meeting

Fr. IYAKAREMYE Theogene

AJECL

