

## **WE'VE BANNED THE BOMB!**

The putting into force of the long-awaited Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was a cause for celebration at Faringdon Peace Group's March meeting. Kate Hudson, General Secretary of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) for over 10 years and old friend of Faringdon Peace Group (FPG), spoke to us about the background to the treaty, what it covers and what we can do to encourage the UK Government to support it.

Kate explained that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1970 had now largely stalled with the nuclear weapons states failing to fulfil their obligations under it. In the mid-90s there was a call for a 'Nuclear Weapons Convention' similar to those for chemical and biological weapons, but this was never drawn up. The frustration of countries in the global south, many of which have declared themselves nuclear-free zones, alongside Obama putting nuclear weapons back on the agenda and the 2010 NNPT review which expressed 'deep concern' over the humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear conflict all combined to lead to a groundswell of support for a new treaty. The TPNW was adopted by the United Nations in 2017, achieved the 50 ratifications necessary 3 years later and passed into law on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021.

There was much rejoicing in the peace movement and among non-nuclear weapons states, but the 5 signatories of the original NNPT (US, Russia, UK, France and China) not only refused to ratify the treaty themselves, but also pressured smaller countries not to sign. The TPNW prohibits not only the use of nuclear weapons, but also their manufacture, stockpiling and testing. There is an obligation on states using these weapons to look after the victims, restore the environment and compensate people whose land has been contaminated by testing.

There is broad support for the treaty across civil society in this country, including faith leaders – the Pope and the Archbishop of York among them, Trades Unions and councils. There is a 'nuclear-ban communities initiative' across the world which councils here are signing up to, bypassing the Government. Mayors are encouraged to become 'Mayors for Peace'. There is support among opposition parties in the Commons for Early Day Motion 1072, which calls for the Government to ratify the treaty and put into practice its stated commitment to global nuclear disarmament. Kate urged us to lobby our MPs and to engage with our local communities, spreading the good news about what this treaty can do for the world and for us here in Faringdon.

If you would like to see a full recording of the meeting, please go to [www.faringdonpeacegroup.org.uk](http://www.faringdonpeacegroup.org.uk)

Karen Vogt, Faringdon Peace Group