

## International Day Against Nuclear Tests



"The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty fosters international peace and security by constraining the development of nuclear weapons. Our collective security demands that every effort should be made to bring this essential treaty into force." *UN Secretary-General, António Guterres*

The 2015 agreement aimed at curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions in exchange for relief from economic sanctions. The United States withdrew from the accord last year and has imposed new sanctions on Iran to cripple its economy, in hopes of forcing Tehran into negotiating a wider-ranging deal. Also at this time, the Europeans also face a July 7 deadline set by Tehran to offer long-promised relief from U.S. sanctions, or Iran says it will also begin enriching its uranium closer to weapons-grade levels.

Archbishop for the USA Military Services said, "I regret to learn of the U.S. government's intention to withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty that has served for over thirty years to reduce nuclear arsenals between the U.S. and Russia significantly. . . . I ask all Catholics and people of good will to join in prayer for renewed, earnest dialogue among world leaders. May efforts on the part of all of us foster hope and encourage the aspiration of all peoples to live in peace and security." Most Rev. Timothy Broglio, USCCB –Feb., 2019

In **January 1969**, Canada ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and their missiles were phased out. Canada is currently a member of every international disarmament organization and is committed to pushing for an end to nuclear weapons.

**WHAT IS THE CTBT?** **The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty** (CTBT) bans nuclear explosions by everyone, everywhere: on the Earth's surface, in the atmosphere, underwater and underground.

**WHY IS THE CTBT IMPORTANT?** It makes it very difficult for countries to develop nuclear bombs for the first time, or for countries that already have them, to make bombs more powerful. It also prevents the huge damage caused by radioactivity from nuclear explosions to humans, animals and plants.

Since nuclear weapons testing began on 16 July 1945, nearly 2,000 have taken place. In the early days of nuclear testing little consideration was given to its devastating effects on human life, let alone the dangers of nuclear fallout from atmospheric tests. Hindsight and history have shown us the terrifying and tragic effects of nuclear weapons testing, especially when

controlled conditions go awry, and in light of the far more powerful and destructive nuclear weapons that exist today.

The human and environmental tragedies that are the result of nuclear testing are compelling reasons for the need to observe the International Day against Nuclear Tests – a day in which educational events, activities and messages aim to capture the world's attention and underscore the need for unified efforts to prevent further nuclear weapons testing.

The international instrument to put an end to all forms of nuclear testing is the 1996 Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), unfortunately, this has yet to enter into force.

On 2 December 2009, the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly declared 29 August the International Day against Nuclear Tests by unanimously adopting resolution 64/35. **The resolution calls for increasing awareness and education “about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions and the need for their cessation as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.”**

2010 marked the inaugural commemoration of the International Day against Nuclear Tests.

Since its establishment, many bilateral and multilateral governmental level developments as well as broad movements in civil society have helped to advance the cause of banning nuclear tests.

Moreover, “convinced that nuclear disarmament and the total elimination of nuclear weapons are the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of nuclear weapons,” the General Assembly designated 26 September as the “International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons”, which is devoted to furthering the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, through the mobilization of international efforts.

As the Secretary-General recognized in his new disarmament agenda “Securing our Common Future” launched on 24 May 2018, the norm against testing is an example of a measure that serves both disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. By constraining the development of advanced new types of nuclear weapons, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty puts a brake on the arms race. It also serves as a powerful normative barrier against potential States that might seek to develop, manufacture and subsequently acquire nuclear weapons in violation of their non-proliferation commitments.

**Every effort needs to be made to ensure the entry into force of the CTBT and to preserve its place in the international architecture.** In this regard, the Secretary-General appeals to all remaining States whose ratifications are required for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to enter into force to commit to sign the Treaty at an early date if they have not already done so, and to accelerate the completion of their ratification processes.

It is the hope of the UN that one day all nuclear weapons will be eliminated. Until then, there is a need to observe International Day against Nuclear Tests as we work towards promoting peace and security world-wide. Initiatives such as the International Day against Nuclear Tests are part of the global efforts towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.