

**International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons**  
**Archbishop John C. Wester of Santa Fe**  
**Archbishop Paul D. Etienne of Seattle**  
**Archbishop Peter Michiaki Nakamura of Nagasaki**  
**Bishop Alexis Mitsuru Shirahama of Hiroshima**  
**Archbishop Emeritus Joseph Mitsuaki Takami of Nagasaki**

**Statement in Support of the Third Meeting of State Parties to the  
Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**

**March 6, 2025**

I am John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe. I'm speaking on behalf of my Archdiocese, and the Archbishop of Seattle, the Bishop of Hiroshima, and the Archbishop of Nagasaki. We take guidance from our Holy Father, Pope Francis, who has declared the very possession of nuclear weapons to be immoral. We pray for his health.

Two years ago, in Nagasaki, on the 78<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its atomic bombing, we Catholic leaders formally created the Partnership for a World without Nuclear Weapons. Our four dioceses include the birthplace of nuclear weapons, the most deployed weapons in the United States, and the only two cities that to date have suffered atomic bombings. We lend our voices in staunch support of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, at this Third Meeting of State Parties.

In July 2017, the Vatican was the [first nation-state](#) to sign and ratify the Treaty. We note that the nuclear weapons powers have never honored their long-held obligations, under the 1970 NonProliferation Treaty, to enter into serious negotiations leading to global nuclear disarmament.

In contrast, the entry into force of the ban treaty was a great step toward the light of peace. The nuclear armed states have a moral obligation to hear the voices of the majority of the world, and to listen to those who are threatened by annihilation, at the whim of any one of their nine leaders. Russia's nuclear saber rattling over Ukraine has made this truly clear, while the ongoing crisis in the Middle East has further escalated the risks. Meanwhile, the nuclear weapons powers are engaged in massive "modernization" programs, designed to keep nuclear weapons forever.

The international legal force of the ban treaty is limited to those states that have formally ratified it. But its moral power does not recognize boundaries between nations, nor lines on a map. The moral power of this Treaty is global, and universal. We hope and pray that it will pressure the nuclear weapons states to finally honor their disarmament obligations under the NonProliferation Treaty.

Moreover, we specifically call upon world leaders to demonstrate measurable progress toward nuclear disarmament, by the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of the atomic bombings. Eight decades of nuclear threats is far too long, as evidenced by the horrors documented by the atomic bombing museums in Japan.

We demand concrete action toward nuclear disarmament. The 80<sup>th</sup> atomic bombing anniversaries, just five months, from now are the right time to make that demand. Our Partnership for a World without Nuclear Weapons will be in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to bear witness and strongly advocate for just that.

Please know of our continued prayers for peace and healing. May you all help lead this suffering world, to the promised land of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We deeply thank you for your efforts, and pray for your every success.

The Most Reverend John C. Wester  
Archbishop of Santa Fe, USA

The Most Reverend Paul D. Etienne  
Archbishop of Seattle, USA

The Most Reverend Peter Michiaki Nakamura  
Archbishop of Nagasaki, Japan

The Most Reverend Alexis Mitsuru Shirahama  
Bishop of Hiroshima, Japan

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