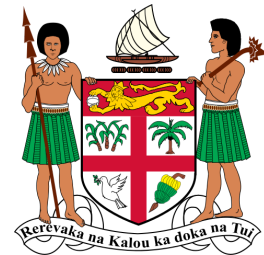




**ICAN** 2017  
NOBEL  
PEACE  
PRIZE



**Permanent Mission of Fiji  
to the United Nations**

## **EVENT SUMMARY**

*Circulated 10 July 2020*

# Event to Commemorate the 3rd Anniversary of the Adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

1. On 7 July 2020, the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), 2017 Nobel Peace Laureate, co-hosted an online event to commemorate the third anniversary of the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) by 122 States. Participants included representatives of States, the UN secretariat, and civil society.
2. The following **29 States participated** in the event: Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Ireland, Jamaica, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Thailand, Uruguay, and Viet Nam.
3. The Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations, H.E. Dr. Satyendra Prasad, announced during the event that Fiji had deposited its instrument of ratification for the TPNW with the UN Secretary-General earlier that day. In doing so, Fiji became the 39th State to ratify or accede to the TPNW. Only 11 further ratifications are now needed to reach the threshold of 50 ratifications required for entry into force.
4. H.E. Ms. **Elayne Whyte Gómez** of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Culture of Costa Rica, who served as president of the conference that negotiated the TPNW in 2017, congratulated Fiji on its leadership and invited all States that have not yet done so to conclude their ratification processes as soon as possible. She also reminded those States that have already ratified the TPNW of their obligation under Article 12 to promote “universal adherence” to the treaty. In voting to adopt the TPNW three years ago, she said, States “paid a duty to the past” and “laid the foundations for the future – a future in which the security of States is comprehensive and universal”. Against the backdrop of the continued modernization of nuclear arsenals and the deconstruction of nuclear regimes and norms, the TPNW brings forward a “new conceptual and legal reality”. As the world confronts the “pervasive impacts” of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries must invest their scarce resources in “the wellbeing of humanity”. She said

that she looked forward to celebrating the depositing of the 50th instrument of ratification for the TPNW, and encouraged States to begin planning for the first meeting of States parties, to be held within 12 months of entry into force.

5. H.E. Dr. **Satyendra Prasad**, the Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations, expressed his hope that Fiji's ratification of the TPNW would contribute to the momentum to get the treaty "over the line" for entry into force. He recalled that more than 300 nuclear tests were conducted in the Pacific region between 1946 and 1996, "in the air, underground, below the sea – across the vast blue Pacific". Radioactive waste from the tests is still stored in the Marshall Islands, French Polynesia, Kiribati, and elsewhere in the Pacific, and infrastructure from the test programmes is in a precarious state. He noted that Pacific islanders were deliberately exposed to the nuclear fallout from the tests, most have been denied compensation, and "far too many have died". Nuclear explosions do not respect national borders, nor does nuclear waste respect time, as it stays around for generations. "Human suffering across the Pacific from decades of exposure to nuclear weapons testing remains a sore point of our colonial past," he said, with Pacific islanders still suffering from ill health, the contamination of ecosystems, and dislocation from their ancestral lands. This year marks 34 years since the entry into force of the Treaty of Rarotonga, which established the South Pacific as a nuclear-free zone. The "Agenda for Disarmament" presented by the UN Secretary-General in 2018 has become "even more important in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic", he said. He paid his respect to the Fijian politicians and members of civil society who have promoted nuclear disarmament for decades and educated the world about the impacts of nuclear testing.
  
6. Dr. **Vanessa Griffen**, a Fijian academic and ICAN campaigner, spoke about the solidarity among Pacific islanders in opposing nuclear weapons and the rich history of anti-nuclear activism in Fiji. "Most of us of a certain generation in Fiji have known about nuclear weapons the hard way, through being in a country, in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, during actual atmospheric nuclear tests," she said. Fijians and other Pacific islanders came to understand the impacts of nuclear tests on the food chain and on future generations. "Radioactivity was a new reality for us in the Pacific." She noted that Fijian soldiers who were involved in the British tests in Kiribati in the 1950s continue to suffer from the effects to this day. In the Pacific islands, there was no distinction, she said, between countries that had nuclear tests on their territory and those that did not, as everyone was affected by the tests and committed to protesting them. Fiji has a long record of contributing to nuclear disarmament, including by hosting the first conference of the Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific movement in 1975. Several representatives of Fijian civil society presented to a Fijian parliamentary committee earlier this year in support of Fiji's ratification of the TPNW. She noted the important role that Fiji played in the negotiation of the TPNW, in particular its work to shape the provisions on victim assistance and environmental remediation.

7. Mr. **René Holbach** of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, speaking on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, congratulated Fiji on its ratification of the TPNW, describing it as “an especially powerful statement” given that Fiji is “a country from a region affected by nuclear testing, whose soldiers were involved in the tests on Kiritimati island”. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, he noted, the TPNW continues to make “steady progress” towards the threshold of 50 ratifications required for its entry into force. As the UN Secretary-General has made clear, once it enters into force, the TPNW will become “an important element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework”. The negotiation and adoption of the TPNW was informed by “a growing concern with the devastating humanitarian impact that even a single nuclear explosion would have”. A deteriorating international security environment and rising nuclear risks have made achieving the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons “more urgent than ever”.
8. Representatives of **New Zealand, Ireland, Ecuador, Malaysia, and Jamaica** congratulated Fiji on its ratification of the TPNW and welcomed the steady progress being made towards the treaty’s entry into force. A number of speakers also highlighted the close cooperation between governments and civil society in securing the adoption of the TPNW in 2017 and in working towards its universalisation. An appeal was made for States that have not yet signed or ratified the TPNW to do so on **6 August 2020**, which marks the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima – or as soon as possible thereafter.



*H.E. Dr. Satyendra Prasad, Permanent Representative of Fiji to the United Nations, holding Fiji’s instrument of ratification for the TPNW.*