

VITAL SIGNS

NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL PHYSICIANS FOR THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR (IPPNW)

EXCITING YEAR AHEAD FOR IPPNW

FLAGSHIP PROGRAMS GAIN MOMENTUM

At last year's World Congress in Switzerland, IPPNW set three goals to further our mission of a more peaceful, nuclear-weapons-free world: building the grassroots movement for the abolition of nuclear weapons; drawing world attention to the humanitarian costs of armed violence; and empowering the next generation of socially responsible physicians.

In September, IPPNW's board met in Boston to evaluate our progress and to strategize about new organizing opportunities that lie ahead. Over three days of energetic discussion, more than 30 federation leaders explored the synergies between the issues of nuclear disarmament and armed violence.

Active Leadership is Key

Under the guidance of IPPNW Vice President Dr. Tilman Ruff and a core group of campaign strategists, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) opened a new "hub office" in Geneva earlier this year. This was made possible thanks to a multi-year grant from the Norwegian government. In the near term, the Geneva team will focus on building the abolition campaign in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, while an expanded international working group will promote activities elsewhere in the world with existing national and regional campaigns in Europe, North America and Asia. In September, abolition campaigners came together in Geneva for a strategy conference that resulted in some exciting new opportunities for action. (See the ICAN update on pg. 5).

Aiming for Prevention (AFP) is entering its second decade as IPPNW's most important program confronting the broader tragedy of global armed violence. AFP is built on the research and advocacy of our affiliates in the global South and has attracted growing support from Northern activists as senseless gun violence takes a horrific human toll around the world. IPPNW volunteers have made dozens of presentations at the United Nations and key scientific meetings this past year, and have alerted the public, the media, and decision makers to the critical

ways in which armed violence is bad for health and development. (See the AFP update on pg. 4)

Creating Common Cause

Both ICAN and AFP are building partnerships beyond traditional peace organizations in order to link efforts with a wider network of civil society concern.

In the past year, hundreds of diverse interest groups from more than 60 countries representing women, environmental protection, development, labor, and business have come together under the ICAN banner to persuade governments to negotiate a comprehensive treaty – a Nuclear Weapons Convention – to eliminate and ban these instruments of mass murder.

[Continued on pg.2]





**2011 ANNUAL BOARD MEETING
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS**

 **ONLINE: MORE PHOTOS IPPNW.ORG**

PHOTO: LOHRER

AFP has taken a leadership role in international alliances including the Control Arms Coalition, the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), and also the World Health Organization's Violence Prevention Alliance.

**Evidence-Based Advocacy
for Change**

As the lead medical organization in ICAN, IPPNW has been working on major new initiatives to emphasize the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. A rigorous new scientific study on "nuclear famine" will be released soon, and we are working with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and national Red Cross societies to significantly elevate global appreciation of what is at stake.

AFP leaders have conducted violent injury research in hospitals and mortuaries in Africa and elsewhere to document the medical and human costs of armed violence. ICRC's

research in this area also makes the Red Cross a natural IPPNW partner, and we recently engaged with them on this topic at a panel convened by IPPNW at the UN Arms Trade Treaty PrepCom.

Building Bridges

In the great tradition of fostering international understanding, IPPNW delegations will return this year to North Korea and later to Pakistan to promote physician-to-physician dialogue around threats to peace and the dangers of nuclear weapons. In North Korea, we will hold an IPPNW seminar at the Pyongyang University Medical School with our national affiliate, visit city and rural hospitals, and meet with the Minister of Health. Watch for a report on our website and in the next Vital Signs.

The Next Generation

Medical students and young doctors have been integral to both ICAN and AFP and regularly participate in IPPNW dialogues with diplomats

and government officials. They have also pioneered many innovative, self-directed projects.

Over the past 12 months, students organized three major conferences: a national meeting in Washington, DC; the 21st IPPNW European Students Meeting in Tallinn, Estonia; and a summer school on nuclear and environmental issues held outside Batumi, Georgia. New student groups were also formed in Kosovo and Burundi.

A long-standing student initiative is the Nuclear Weapons Inheritance Project, which seeks to engage youth from around the world in demanding they be the last generation to live with the bomb. Earlier this year, a youth delegation met decision makers at the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

In August next year, scores of students will cycle 485 km, from Nagasaki to Hiroshima, on their way to the 20th IPPNW World Congress. Riding through Japanese towns and villages, they will organize public rallies, will meet local politicians and journalists, and will spread the IPPNW message. Students are also organizing "100 Targets" – public demonstrations to call attention to the danger of nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert – and "Global Hibakusha," a poster exhibition describing nuclear contamination at mining, testing, and weapons production sites around the world.


These acts of solidarity with the victims of Nagasaki and Hiroshima are part of IPPNW's determination to secure a world free of nuclear weapons for future generations. 



PHOTO: MORIZONO



PHOTO: LOHRER



PHOTO: MORIZONO



PHOTO: MORIZONO



GENEVA CONFERENCE PROPELS ICAN INTO 31 COUNTRIES

ICAN WAS LAUNCHED IN 2007 BY IPPNW AND IS NOW A GLOBAL GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT FOR TOTAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT THROUGH A LEGALLY BINDING AND VERIFIABLE NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONVENTION.

“ICAN is important. And I don’t say that just because I am speaking at your international conference.”

—Swiss disarmament advisor Jelena Milenkovic

These words of encouragement greeted 125 abolition campaigners from 31 countries who gathered in Geneva in September to plan the next steps in the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

The goal of ICAN is the commencement and successful conclusion of negotiations on an agreement to eliminate and ban nuclear weapons under international law, much like the conventions that already prohibit chemical and biological weapons, antipersonnel landmines, and cluster munitions. Whether negotiations start as the result of an Ottawa-type process that led to the Mine Ban Treaty or through a special UN conference proposed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his five-point action plan, the objective, said IPPNW leader and ICAN chair Tilman Ruff, "is to end all the stalling and start real work on a global abolition treaty now."

If there was a single, recurring theme at the Geneva conference, it was finding effective ways to engage the public with the nuclear threat at a time when global economic turmoil, the climate crisis, and seemingly interminable wars also demand immediate attention. ICAN campaigners proposed dozens of new ideas for building partnerships, using new social media technologies, com-



PHOTO (left to right): ICAN vice chair Rebecca Johnson, IPPNW program director John Loretz, Swedish campaigner Josefin Lind, and ICAN Australia executive officer Tim Wright chair the final strategy session at the ICAN campaigners conference in Geneva.

municating complex scientific knowledge and policy concepts in simple, compelling terms, and balancing frightening information about the effects of nuclear weapons with hopeful messages about a future in which they no longer threaten us.

Observing that ICAN has already attracted a new generation of nuclear disarmament campaigners (more than half of the conference participants were under the age of 40), European campaigner Arielle Denis summed things up this way: "We have to connect our old stories with our new stories to involve as many people as possible."



ONLINE: CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

Explore powerpoints and campaign materials and resources from the Geneva conference.

icanw.org/conference2011

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO PREVENT ARMED VIOLENCE?

IPPNW ANSWERS CALL TO ACTION AT WHO MEETING IN CAPE TOWN

 [More from Aiming for Prevention: ippnw.org/afp.html](http://ippnw.org/afp.html)



GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION
 CAMPAGNE MONDIALE POUR LA PREVENTION DE LA VIOLENCE
 VIOLENCE PREVENTION ALLIANCE / ALLIANCE POUR LA PREVENTION DE LA VIOLENCE

WHO 5th Milestones of a Global Campaign for Violence Prevention Cape Town

Dr. Etienne Krug, Director of the Department of Injury and Violence Prevention of the World Health Organization (WHO), challenged participants to “go home and decide how you will help move violence prevention forward” at the conclusion of a two-day meeting called “5th Milestones of a Global Campaign for Violence Prevention” this September in Cape Town, South Africa. Aiming for Prevention activists Drs. Robert Mtonga (Zambia), Daniel Bassey (Nigeria), Andrew Winnington (New Zealand) and AFP program director Maria Valenti joined more than 250 others to review progress on international violence prevention efforts and to help create a blueprint for the future.

Dr. Krug warned that attaining the “highest possible level of health”—WHO’s overarching goal—is not possible in violent communities. He said that while violence is among the world’s biggest public health problems, prevention efforts have not yet gained political traction. South Africa, he noted, had brought the first resolution on violence as a leading worldwide public health problem to the 1996 World Health Assembly.

Message to Development Community – Invest More Resources

What will it take to promote the concept that “violence is preventable?” Ideas ranged from sharing and replicating best practices, to linking violence to the social determinants of health in more concrete ways. The development community, Dr. Krug said, needs to invest more resources in low-income countries to document the context of violence and help create and scale up prevention programs.



and development, and preventing it is made a priority by states and NGOs alike, we will not move forward fast enough. We need political action and a deeper understanding that health, wellness, and progress cannot be achieved in unsafe and violent environments.

Maria Valenti presented one avenue to move this forward at a side meeting of the Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA). She has led the working group to develop an “assets” database cataloging human resources and materials of VPA members to encourage collaborations and networking. She announced that the searchable database will soon be made available to all VPA members.


IPPNW delegates left Cape Town headed for points around the compass—an armed violence research project in Liberia, a meeting with potential new members in Johannesburg, a cluster munitions summit in Beirut, and the IPPNW Board meeting in the US—our way of answering the call from Dr. Krug. 



PHOTO (ABOVE): IPPNW DRs. DANIEL BASSEY (LEFT), ANDREW WINNINGTON (MIDDLE) AND ROBERT MTONGA (RIGHT) WITH COLLEAGUES FROM NIGERIA AND ZAMBIA AT THE WHO VIOLENCE PREVENTION MEETING CAPE TOWN. PHOTO (ABOVE RIGHT): IPPNW’S MARIA VALENTI AND SHANNON TURNER OF PREVENTION CANADA.

Many ways to accomplish this goal—from improving child welfare to education on conflict resolution—were presented by researchers, educators, advocates, and others. There seemed to be a consensus that until violence is seen as an impediment to health



ICAN UPDATES AND HIGHLIGHTS

NEWS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

 Resources, reports, campaign materials online: icanw.org



ICAN-Africa was launched in July at IPPNW's African regional meeting in Livingstone, Zambia. At a Target X event covered by Zambian national television, IPPNW affiliate leaders explained how nuclear weapons endanger Africans, and how the Pelindaba Treaty, which establishes an African nuclear-weapon-free zone, can be used as a stepping stone toward a global abolition agreement.

Dr. Ira Helfand presented the preliminary findings of a **new nuclear famine study** at a seminar in Glion, Switzerland in September. The study, funded by the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs, examined the impact of a regional nuclear war on global agricultural production, food prices and availability, and potentially devastating nutritional burdens on vulnerable populations in the global south. Dr. Helfand expects public release of the findings later this year.


IPPNW is actively supporting a new ICRC resolution on nuclear weapons that will be submitted for a vote by national Red Cross societies in November. The draft resolution calls for a prohibition against any use of nuclear weapons, as well as their complete elimination through a binding treaty. IPPNW affiliates in many countries have been meeting



PHOTO (LEFT): AT THE ICAN-AFRICA LAUNCH - REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT DR. DANIEL BASSEY, BETTINA KORTEKAAS, NIGERIAN MEDICAL STUDENT HOMSUK SWOMEN, AND INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE OGEBE ONAZI.

with national Red Cross and Red Crescent officials to express support for the resolution and to discuss ways in which our organizations might collaborate in the future.

A new documentary film about nuclear weapons had an advance screening at the ICAN conference in Geneva. "In My Lifetime," produced by Robert Frye, takes an in-depth look at the history of the bomb and nuclear disarmament initiatives over more than six decades. More information about the film is available at www.thenuclearworld.org.

In the meantime, check out the exciting **new ICAN video, "Who We Are,"** on YouTube. ICAN activists and supporters from around the world sent clips from their videocams, laptops, and iPhones to Daniela Varano in Geneva, who turned the raw material into a high-energy, four-minute appeal with one simple message: "We want a world without nuclear weapons, and we want it now." 

Watch the ICAN video "Who We Are"  ONLINE: youtu.be/axRE6hICZx4



AFFILIATES IN ACTION

INTERVIEW WITH AHMED SAADA, PSR-EGYPT

 Full interview online: peaceandhealthblog.com



In early 2011 the world was riveted by massive demonstrations throughout the Middle East that came to be known as the Arab Spring. One of the most compelling was the occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo by thousands of Egyptians seeking government reforms. Middle East Regional Vice President Dr. Ahmed Saada of Egypt was one of those who held the vigil over many days and nights, and also helped treat wounded protesters who were attacked by government-led forces.

VS: You helped make history as part of the nonviolent revolution in Egypt. Were there any particular moments that stood out for you? How did it feel to be a participant in such dramatic events?

AS: As an Egyptian young man, I felt that I was putting all my future life on the edge for the sake of my country's freedom, to regain our dignity and to have a democracy in our New Egypt.

I stayed in Tahrir Square almost continuously for seven days, sleeping on the ground, walking all the day in protests and raising my voice amongst my Egyptian fellows calling for my country's freedom.

I feel proud as an Egyptian who stood up for freedom of mankind and said no for injustice, corruption, and dictatorship.

VS: What role can medical professionals play in the ongoing democracy movement in the Middle East?

AS: Medical professionals need first to fix the health care access system, patient rights, and educational systems.

Physicians need to be united—as we've started to be now—to be change agents in all aspects of life in our communities, not only the health

issue. As we carry this social responsibility, we have to be advocates for better life.

VS: The Middle East is a region where IPPNW's goals of nuclear abolition and the prevention of armed violence converge. What are your plans to engage with ICAN and Aiming for Prevention during the next year?

AS: First, regarding ICAN, I believe that raising the awareness of youth in all Middle East countries by conducting medical-oriented campaigns is the best way to engage.

This is also the case with Aiming For Prevention. Small arms are 10 times more expensive now in Egypt than before revolution, because of the increase in demand.

As health professionals, we need to be heard in our communities; we must start a large campaign to confront this dangerous problem.

VS: IPPNW will hold a regional meeting in Ankara later this year. What do you hope will happen there?

AS: I hope we will reach a common understanding among all members of IPPNW in the Middle East region about our organizational priorities


and goals. Meeting in Ankara, with Palestinians and Israelis present, is a great chance to form a solid ground for regional peace initiatives—including a nuclear-weapons-free Middle East.

The inclusion of students in this meeting is important, to help restructure the affiliates and strengthen the upcoming active generation in IPPNW.

This is the right time for ICAN and AFP to become active, high priority projects in the Middle East.

VS: You came into IPPNW as a medical student and have risen quickly to a leadership position within the federation. What drew you to this work and what advice would you give to other students and young doctors about how to integrate social activism into medical practice?

AS: As a young man I believed I had a social responsibility towards a better future for our planet and mankind, and this is what originally drew me to the IPPNW federation. The same conviction has kept me working for a better world for more than eight of my 29 years.

In the old days, physicians used to be called "wise men," and not only treated people but also provided help or advice to people in their communities. I believe in that. I also believe that youth who do not act from a sense of social responsibility are wasting time, and that with some effort they can change the face of the world. 

IPPNW TO JAPANESE PM: “PLACE PUBLIC HEALTH ABOVE ALL OTHER INTERESTS” AT FUKUSHIMA


CALLING FOR STRONGER ACTION TO PROTECT VICTIMS

On August 22, as evidence of severe public health threats from the Fukushima nuclear reactor disaster continued to emerge, IPPNW sent a letter to then-Prime Minister Naoto Kan (who has since resigned) expressing our concern that the official response had been inadequate to the magnitude of the crisis.

“The Japanese public and the international community,” wrote co-presidents Vappu Taipale, Sergey Kolesnikov, and Robert Mtonga, “do not seem to have been fully informed about the nature and extent of radioactive emissions from the crippled reactors.” The letter went on to question whether affected populations had been properly monitored, whether the evacuation zone was wide enough, and whether exposure limits, especially for children, were sufficiently protective.

The letter contained a series of recommendations from IPPNW experts on radiation and

health, including the establishment of comprehensive data collection and health monitoring systems, stricter exposure norms, relocation assistance for evacuees, and significant, government-funded decontamination measures.

The letter, which can be read in full on IPPNW’s blog (peaceandhealthblog.com), was circulated widely among Japanese civil society groups and was the subject of several reports in the mainstream and independent media. 



ONLINE: IPPNW LETTER TO JAPANESE PM

The letter is available online in English and Japanese.

peaceandhealthblog.com/2011/08/23/ippnw-pm-kan-fukushima/

15 DAYS, 485 KM, FROM NAGASAKI TO HIROSHIMA

PLANNING AND FUNDRAISING UNDERWAY FOR THE 2012 BIKING AGAINST NUKES (BAN) TOUR


In August 2012 young anti-nuclear activists from all over the world will cycle through Japanese villages, organizing public rallies, meeting politicians, and spreading the IPPNW message.

As the next generation of health professionals, IPPNW medical students are already playing an active role in safeguarding the world’s health.

Working with IPPNW affiliated organizations throughout the world, medical students show by example and are changing how social responsibility is imagined, developed and deployed.



IPPNW medical students work on many projects to promote peace, disarmament, and human rights.

Support the 2012 BAN TOUR and purchase a “Give Peace a Chance” raffle ticket today! Tickets are \$100 and one lucky winner will receive \$10,000. 



SAVE THE DATE:

IPPNW’S
20th WORLD
CONGRESS
IN
HIROSHIMA!

**Student
Congress**
August 22 – 23,
2012

Main Congress
August 24 – 26,
2012

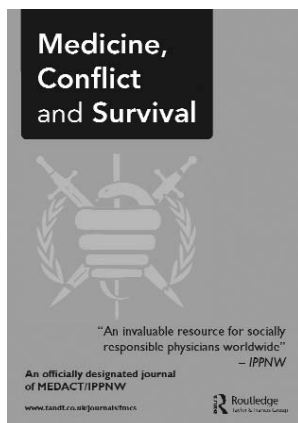
Please mark your calendars now. The Congress is open to all physicians, medical students, health professionals and concerned citizens.

Please join us to renew our memory of the atomic bombings of Japan and to redouble our efforts to create a more peaceful, nuclear-free future.

CALENDAR

October 31-November 1, 2011	2nd Ministerial Review Conference for the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development Geneva, Switzerland
December 9-10, 2011	IPPNW Middle East Core Group Meeting Strategies for Peace and Health in the Nuclear Free Middle East, Ankara, Turkey
February 13-17, 2012	Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) 4th PrepCom, New York City, USA
March 12-16, 2012	UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons (UN PoA) PrepCom, New York City, USA
April 12-15, 2012	European Students Meeting Berlin, Germany
April 16-17, 2012	WHO Violence Prevention Alliance Annual Meeting, Munich, Germany
April 30 - May 11, 2012	NPT PrepCom, Vienna, Austria

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 **ONLINE:** tandf.co.uk/journals/mcs



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IPPNW is a non-partisan federation of national medical organizations in 63 countries dedicated to safeguarding health by working to ban nuclear weapons and to address the impact of militarism and war on human health.

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