

VITAL SIGNS

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

IPPNW MESSAGE AT THE HEART OF OSLO CONFERENCE AND CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and the Norwegian government organized parallel conferences in Oslo, Norway this March, with the common goal of focusing global attention on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Both conferences were an enormous success by any measure. The most important outcome, however, was that 127 countries came together for the first time since the beginning of the nuclear age to consider the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons as the basis for demanding their elimination.

More than 500 activists from 70 countries participated in ICAN's Civil Society Forum, on March 2-3. The Forum was a blend of scientific presentation, personal narrative, and campaign strategy discussion, capped by an evening of conversation with actor and activist Martin Sheen.

Experts on the physical, medical, and environmental effects of nuclear weapons, including Patricia Lewis of Chatham House, Sir Andy Haines of the London School of Hygiene and

Tropical Medicine, IPPNW co-president Ira Helfand, and Rutgers University climate scientist Alan Robock provided the grim facts, [\[Continued on pg. 2\]](#)



CO-PRESIDENT IRA HELFAND AND SIR ANDY HAINES ADDRESS THE ICAN CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM IN OSLO.

PHOTO: XANTHE HALL / IPPNW




HUMAN TARGET CONGRESS ADDRESSES ARMS TRADE

At the end of May hundreds of people from around the world will convene in the village of Villingen-Schwenningen at the edge of the Black Forest in southwest Germany to discuss problems and solutions about armed violence at "Human Target: International Congress on Social and Health Effects of the Global Arms Trade." IPPNW members and others concerned about the devastating social and health effects of the global arms trade will be among them. It is no accident that this congress will take place near the headquarters of Heckler & Koch, a major European arms manufacturer, located in the pretty little town of Oberndorf am Neckar.

Hundreds of thousands of people each year are killed by small arms alone, with millions more injured, maimed and traumatized. Many wars are fought over the interests of wealthy industrialized nations, and it is the guns we produce mostly in the global North that kill worldwide.

This congress, organized by IPPNW Germany and IPPNW in cooperation with the campaign "AktionAufschrei – Stoppt den Waffenhandel!", will feature international experts from many disciplines and countries including Kenya, Iran, Nepal, Zambia, Switzerland, Nigeria, India, the Philippines, Australia and the USA. They will share their knowledge on the global arms trade and

its wide range of effects on humans around the world. There will be lectures, panel discussions and workshops on both the problems and solutions, and on future activities and campaigns.

As part of the congress, there will be a bicycle tour May 26-29, when young activists from all over the world will cycle from Ulm to Villingen, organizing interviews, meeting politicians, giving public demonstrations and spreading information on the impact of the global arms trade. 



ONLINE: REGISTER NOW!

www.human-target.org

[AFP news continued on pg. 4]



IPPNW Message at the Heart of Oslo Conference and Civil Society Forum

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PHOTO: PERNILLA LUNDMARK / ICAN

while seasoned disarmament, environment, and human rights campaigners offered a variety of perspectives on pathways and obstacles to the treaty-making process.

The Forum closed with presentations from campaigners in 10 different countries—all of them young, creative, excited, and determined to eliminate these weapons and the threat they pose to their futures.


The two-day governmental conference opened on March 4. Noticeable by their absence were the US and the other NPT nuclear-weapon states, which had taken a collective decision to boycott the conference. The reason they gave—that the meeting would be a distraction from their step-by-step disarmament work inside the NPT—was dismissed as “not very convincing” by Norway’s Foreign Minister.

Speaker after speaker reiterated the message that IPPNW has been delivering for more than 30 years: the consequences of nuclear weapons use and nuclear war would be unimaginably catastrophic; not only do we lack the capacity to mount a medical and humanitarian response to the victims of nuclear detonations, but any attempt to prepare such a response capacity is infeasible; and the only appropriate and responsible course of action is prevention.

ICRC president Peter Maurer recounted the Red Cross experience following the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and noted that decades of subsequent Red Cross studies had come to the same conclusion: that the use of nuclear weapons would overwhelm existing disaster response resources, and that building an effective response infrastructure would be impossible.

While many of the technical and scientific presentations were compelling, no single talk captured the attention of the participants more than the one given by IPPNW co-president Ira Helfand on behalf of ICAN. As he wrapped up a brief but powerful summary of the climate and agricultural consequences of nuclear war, Ira spoke as a doctor to his patients, appealing to the 400 people in the room to remember what they had learned and to bring the information back to their governments as a cause for urgent action.

The diplomatic conference ended with a shared understanding that the global humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons should be the starting point for urgent action to ban and eliminate them. Mexico announced that it will host a follow-up meeting of States later this year to keep the momentum going—a decision that was greeted by cheers from diplomats and civil society participants alike.

Hopes ran high, as the gavel came down, that we had witnessed the beginning of a new process for nuclear abolition that could escape the gridlocked-plagued NPT and other disarmament forums dominated by the nuclear-weapon states. As IPPNW co-president and ICAN steering group member Bob Mtonga said, “This Conference has shown us that the countries that have renounced nuclear weapons and concluded regional Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, such as Africa and Latin America, are providing important moral leadership to carry forward international efforts to free the world of nuclear weapons and prevent the global public health disaster that their use would create.” 



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE ICAN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE AND STAFF WHO WORKED FOR MONTHS TO MAKE THE CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM A GREAT SUCCESS.



PHOTO: ALEXANDER HARANG



PHOTO: ALEXANDER HARANG

RUTGERS CLIMATE SCIENTIST ALAN ROBOCK EXPLAINED WHY A NUCLEAR WAR USING ONLY A FRACTION OF EXISTING ARSENALS WOULD CAUSE CATASTROPHIC DISRUPTION OF THE GLOBAL CLIMATE.



PHOTO: XANTHE HALL / IPPNW

“COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT THEIR CITIZENS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS TOPIC.” ~DR. HELEN DURHAM OF THE AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS



PHOTO: ALEXANDER HARANG

SOME OF THE 40 IPPNW ACTIVISTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE ICAN CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM. IPPNW, WHICH FOUNDED ICAN IN 2007, IS NOW THE LEAD MEDICAL PARTNER ORGANIZATION IN THE GLOBAL CAMPAIGN.



PHOTO: XANTHE HALL / IPPNW

DR. IRA HELFAND AT THE GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE

More on the Web:

ICAN video “Hope and Horror” shown at opening session of government conference: bit.ly/11gEuX4

Transcript of Ira Helfand’s presentation in Oslo: ippnw.org/pdf/wider-impact-by-helfand.pdf

ICAN Civil Society Forum program and related materials: goodbyenuk.es

MP3 (12 minutes): ippnw.org/audio/ira-helfand-030413.mp3

The complete program, downloadable presentations, and streaming video of the entire governmental conference Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons: bit.ly/QJlqz3 (will lead to a url beginning with “regjeringen.no”).

IPPNW video on the medical, environmental, and humanitarian consequences of nuclear war, presented by Ira Helfand. youtu.be/Ug-DJtvHFE0

On twitter.com search for: [#goodbyenukes](https://twitter.com/goodbyenukes) [#HINW13](https://twitter.com/HINW13)



PHOTO: XANTHE HALL / IPPNW

FINAL DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON ARMS TRADE TREATY AT UN

NOBEL LAUREATES SUPPORT STRONG ATT, IPPNW/PSR MEMBERS WRITE
 TO PRESIDENT OBAMA

 Letter by Nobel Peace Laureates: bit.ly/1353sO5

IPPNW engaged in a wide variety of efforts to support passage of a strong and effective Arms Trade Treaty leading up to the Diplomatic Conference held March 18-28 at the United Nations in New York City.

These efforts included working with colleagues from the Control Arms Coalition including Pax Christi, Oxfam, and Amnesty International on organizing a letter from 18 Nobel Peace Prize Laureates including former president Jimmy Carter and Desmond Tutu to President Barack Obama urging him to support a humanitarian-based ATT (see letter).

PSR Executive Director Dr. Catherine Thomasson was part of a delegation that delivered the letter to senior White House National Security staff just prior to the UN meeting.

“IPPNW participated in the historic 1997 meeting in New York of a small group of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, convened by Oscar Arias, who called for an International Code of Conduct on arms trade that would benefit all of humanity,” said Dr. Thomasson at the handover meeting. “After 15 long years and millions killed, maimed or traumatized by gun violence, we are hopeful that this month the world’s countries will make history and finally enact a humanitarian-based Arms Trade Treaty.”

We also worked with U.S. Physicians for Social Responsibility to organize nearly two thousand letters to the President and elected representatives.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureates



March 14, 2013

President Barack Obama
 The White House
 1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
 Washington, DC 20500


Subject: **Securing a Strong Arms Trade Treaty**

Dear Mr. President:

As fellow Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, we write to urge you to take a leadership role in ensuring that the United States supports a successful outcome at the United Nations Diplomatic Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, to be convened in New York on 18–28 March 2013, as called for by the United Nations General Assembly.

The U.S. and other arms supplier states have both a moral duty and a national security interest to help achieve such a Treaty in order to protect human rights and save the lives of innocent civilians caught in the crosshairs of conflicts fuelled by the irresponsible conventional weapons trade.

As the only health member on the Steering Board of the Control Arms NGO coalition, our active participation in meetings with delegates from countries around the world ensured they understood the dire health consequences that result from the unregulated spread of armaments worldwide.

IPPNW delegates participating included Drs. Ogebe Onazi, Omolade Oladejo, and Emeka Okolo from Nigeria, Drs. Shannon Gearhart, Cathey Falvo, Donald Mellman, and Andrew Kanter from the US, Dr. Bob Mtonga from Zambia, Vera Gruner from Austria, and Central Office Aiming for Prevention Director Maria Valenti. 



L-R: RAY OFFENHEISER, PRESIDENT, OXFAM AMERICA; GALEN CAREY, NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS; FRANK JANNUZI, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA; DR. CATHERINE THOMASSON, PSR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR; AND ACTOR DJIMON HOUNSOU.

AIMING FOR PREVENTION NEWS AND UPDATES

COLLABORATION BETWEEN AUSTRIAN AND ZAMBIAN AFFILIATES, IPPNW AND THE WORLD BANK'S "THEHIVE"

 More on the clinical research: bit.ly/WmLjDb

IPPNW Austria and Zambia Team up to Improve Care and Rehabilitation for Victims of Violence



PHOTO: ROBERT MTONGA / IPPNW



PHOTO: ISABELLA STELZIG

IPPNW has documented, through the One Bullet Stories, the tragic human consequences of gunshot injuries - but we can't stop by describing the problem. We are also committed to supporting those affected by armed violence.


IPPNW Austria and IPPNW Zambia have teamed up on a project to help improve care and rehabilitation for victims of violence. Drs. Michael Schober and Stephanie Hametner in Austria are the co-investigators with Dr. Bob Mtonga in Zambia. Nearly 30 Austrian medical students are involved in the project, and have been conducting research alongside Zambian student colleagues at the Lusaka University Hospital emergency room, as well as at social service agencies. Preliminary findings suggest widespread lack of awareness of social and other support services that are available to victims of violence.

Over thirty people from local partner organizations including the Young

LEFT: SOME OF THE HEALTH PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS.

RIGHT: AUSTRIAN MEDICAL STUDENT ISABELLA STELZIG WITH COLLEAGUES IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA.


Women's Christian Association, the National Council of Catholic Women in Zambia, the Zambian National Women's Lobby Group, the University Teaching Hospital's Accidents and Emergency Department, the University Teaching Hospital's Department of Social Counseling, and the Zambia Society of Physiotherapists, recently participated in a workshop to review the research findings and to collaborate on ways to improve services and disseminate information.

Ultimately we hope to replicate this in other countries. We are still seeking financial support to help defray costs in Zambia – please donate if you can! 

IPPNW Joins the World Bank's Online theHive



IPPNW has joined as a partner in an innovative new World Bank project, "theHive." "theHive"—a "Knowledge Platform on Fragility, Conflict and Violence"—is designed to create a worldwide community of practice on the prevention of violence by connecting knowledge across contexts and disciplines to bridge divides, and share emerging ideas and innovations to advance best practices in the field.

As a partner, IPPNW can contribute content and resources to "theHive" on events, projects, research, and publications related to conflict and violence. Individuals can join to have access to those resources. Please go to the website to join "theHive", or contact Maria Valenti at mvalenti@ippnw.org to suggest resources to add to the platform. 



ONLINE: "THEHIVE"

"theHive" is inspired by Michael O'Malley's *The Wisdom of Bees* (2010), which shows how bees build communities of multiple talents and autonomous yet coordinated actions focused on inducing a single result.

worldbankhive.logicaladvantage.com

AFFILIATES IN ACTION

INTERVIEW WITH DR. HELMUT LOHRER, IPPNW GERMANY

 INTERVIEWS ONLINE: PEACEANDHEALTHBLOG.COM

Dr. Helmut Lohrer, a family doctor living in the Black Forest of Germany, has been a passionate leader in IPPNW at the national and international levels since joining our cause as a medical student in 1986. He is the inspiration and energy behind “Human Target: International Congress on Social and Health Effects of the Global Arms Trade,” which will convene this May in his home town of Villingen-Schwenningen.

VS: IPPNW’s affiliates in the developing world have been the primary focus of our Aiming for Prevention campaign. Why did you think it was important to organize an international congress on armed violence in Europe, particularly in Germany?

HL: In medicine we are trained to not only treat symptoms, but also to look at the cause of disease. Armed violence is much less prevalent in Europe than, for instance, in some parts of Africa. Yet many of those guns are produced and exported from here. Preventing gun violence requires us to examine where those guns are coming from, where they are going, and why. IPPNW-Germany decided to make our contribution to this core international program of IPPNW by hosting a congress on the impact of the small arms industry.

VS: Why hold it in the Black Forest instead of a major city like Berlin?

HL: The largest producer of small arms in Europe is a medium-sized company based in the pretty little town of Oberndorf. Heckler & Koch guns are being used in almost every conflict around the world. The political decisions about exporting Heckler & Koch guns all over the world are taken in Berlin. But convening this gathering of international experts and advocates at the doorstep of the factory will have a

much greater effect than doing it in Berlin, where you share media attention with several other events. By hosting such an event here in the Black Forest, the whole area will be involved in the discussion about small arms. It’s also important to understand that Heckler & Koch is only one part of a large arms industry in this beautiful area. So you can imagine what an impact this congress could have.

VS: During the congress, IPPNW-Germany is organizing a visit to the headquarters of Heckler & Koch. What do you hope to achieve?

HL: We are planning a very peaceful and creative form of protest that is not meant to intimidate anybody working in the factory. Why not sing a song of peace at a fountain of war?


VS: We heard that the mayor of Villingen-Schwenningen is very supportive. That’s surprising since gun manufacturing is so important to the local economy.

HL: The Mayor of Villingen-Schwenningen, a medieval town not far from Oberndorf, has been a member of Mayors for Peace for years. After a long and intense discussion in the City Council, the Mayor persuaded the city to co-host our congress and to give us the town hall for free. This is indeed remarkable, considering the fact that



Heckler & Koch are not paying taxes to Villingen-Schwenningen.

VS: You’ve been volunteering with IPPNW for more than a quarter century. What’s motivated you all these years?

HL: It is the continuing hope that mankind will be able to eventually overcome war and violence – be it nuclear war with the prospect of our total annihilation or ever increasing carnage by the scourge of small arms. I wish my children could live in a world where it is not money and military superiority that governs the world, but where mutual respect for the diversity of humankind will lead to peace. 



UPCOMING EVENT

Join us in Villingen-Schwenningen, Germany for Human Target:

International Congress on Social and Health Effects of the Global Arms Trade.

human-target.org

IPPNW IN PHOTOS

PHOTOS, REVITALIZED AFFILIATE, AND 2013 REPORT FROM THE UK AFFILIATE MEDACT

 IPPNW.ORG AND FACEBOOK.COM/IPPNW

The Middle Powers Initiative, which IPPNW has co-sponsored since its launch in 1998, held a **Framework Forum in Berlin** on February 20-22, entitled "Creating the conditions and building the framework for a nuclear weapons-free world." 26 governments took part, along with parliamentarians, UN representatives, and prominent research institutions.



Left to right: **IPPNW's 2012-2014 four Co-Presidents**. Drs. Ira Helfand (USA), Vladimir Garkavenko (Russia/CIS), Robert Mtonga (Zambia), and Tilman Ruff (Australia) after the election results were ratified at the Hiroshima Congress.

Bios online: ippnw.org/board.html

The Medact report, ***The delusional thinking behind a policy of nuclear deterrence***, was launched at the House of Lords on February 6th, 2013. Speakers at the launch included Kate Hudson of CND, Ben Zala of the Oxford Research Group and Frank Boulton of Medact. The report is dedicated to Gill Reeve, former director of Medact.

Download publication: medact.org



The recently revitalized Costa Rican affiliate **delivered 1,000 paper cranes to Costa Rican President Laura Chinchilla** (on right) at a ceremony attended by the foreign minister, communications minister, and the ambassadors of Japan, France and Russia as well as Vappu and Ilkka Taipale of IPPNW Finland.

Photos online: on.fb.me/14ahHAS

April 5-7, 2013	European Students Conference Belgrade, Serbia
April 15, 2013	Global Day of Action on Military Spending Worldwide
April 20-21, 2013	ICAN Campaign Meeting Geneva, Switzerland
April 22-May 3, 2013	Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT PrepCom) Geneva, Switzerland
May 29-30, 2013	IPPNW Board Meeting Villingen-Schwenningen, Germany
May 30-June 2, 2013	Human Target International Congress on Social and Health Effects of the Global Arms Trade Villingen-Schwenningen, Germany
June 7-10, 2013	NWIP South Asia Dialogue Kathmandu, Nepal
June 6-13, 2013	Nuclear Abolition Week

Become a Partner in Peace today!

The Partners in Peace Sustainers Circle, IPPNW's growing network of dedicated monthly donors, forms the backbone of our annual fundraising efforts. Here's how it works: your monthly gift is automatically charged to your credit card or checking account, allowing IPPNW to rely on a steady stream of funding to continue our global fight for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Commit to only \$5 a month to receive IPPNW's biannual newsletter, *Vital Signs*, along with other IPPNW publications and urgent action alerts.

Increase, decrease, or suspend your gift at any time by phone or email.

To join, please use the form on the reverse side of the enclosed donation slip, call (617) 440-1733x304, or email IPPNW Development Associate Garrett FitzGerald at gfitzgerald@ippnw.org today.



IPPNW is a non-partisan federation of national medical organizations in 62 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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Vital Signs is published twice a year by IPPNW. 66-70 Union Square, #204, Somerville, MA 02143 USA Tel:+1.617.443.1733 Email: ippnwbos@ippnw.org

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