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Second session: 1 :24 :47 – 2 :14 :04



**“Do we really need nuclear weapons? Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the time of COVID-19”**

### **Second Dialogue: Challenges for the world without nuclear weapons**

<Speakers>

Mr. Julian Borger (Facilitator): World Affairs Editor, The Guardian News & Media

Ms. Beatrice Fihn: Executive Director, ICAN

Mr. Gilles Carbonnier : Vice-President, ICRC

Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu: Under Secretary-General / High Representative for disarmament Affairs, UN

Mr. Ban Ki-moon: Former UN Secretary General / Deputy Chair of the Elders

**Julian Borger:** Good morning from Washington where the sun is just coming up on 9th of August, 75th anniversary of the Nagasaki bombing. I would like to thank Nagasaki prefecture, Nagasaki city and the ICRC for making this discussion possible. The theme of this panel is about the challenges that faced the world in terms of getting to a world without nuclear weapons. How do we get from where we are now to a world without nuclear weapons when the distance we will have to travel seems to get longer every day?

The US and Russia are in the middle of a massive modernization process of their nuclear arsenals,; and we are witnessing a bonfire of arms control agreements: the US has withdrawn from the JCPOA ; the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) is over; the US has withdrawn from the Open Skies treaty, and of

course the New START, the last major Arms Control agreements between the US and Russia, is due to expire in few months yet if signed it is going to be extended.

Add to that the threat to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is under increasing strain. Some people are saying we are now witnessing the death of arms control. The question we have here today is how the experiences and the messages of the Hibakusha can help turn this around and get us going in the right direction again?

To discuss that, I am truly honored to introduce this panel: Beatrice Fihn is joining us from the ICRC headquarters in Geneva. Beatrice Fihn is the Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize for their work to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons as a driving force behind the nuclear weapons ban treaty; also in Geneva, is Gilles Carbonnier, the Vice-President of the ICRC; from Nagasaki, Izumi Nakamitsu, the UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and; joining us from Seoul, Ban Ki-moon, the former UN Secretary-General who is now Deputy Chair of the Elders.

Welcome to you all and let's just go straight into the questions and we will talk about questions are coming from the viewers today. Beatrice, can I start with you, hopefully with some good news, how would you say that the nuclear weapons ban treaty can help turning around the momentum towards a new arms race; how can it be enforced; and how can it exert any control over the nuclear weapon States, who don't want to be a part of it?

**Beatrice Fihn:** Thank you very much Julian, and thank you so much the ICRC for having me here in Geneva and also for having invited me to this event. With respect to all this talk about the death of arms control, I think it's important to remember that arms control was never the complete solution to this problem. Arms control is a very temporary step. One of the challenges with all of these agreements that are now unraveling was that they never really addressed the underlying problem. The biggest challenge for these arms control agreements and why I think they're so vulnerable is that they are contradictory.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons if we are witnessing its admirers of the arms control, we have also seen these last decades the birth of humanitarian disarmament. Disarmament based on humanitarian principles, based on the Geneva Conventions, the laws of war that civilians should not be targets in warfare and therefore we have to address certain weapon systems, starting with biological weapons, chemical weapons, and landmines, this idea that these weapons cause indiscriminate harm on civilians and the Treaty of the provision of nuclear weapons is following the footsteps of those, and trying to implement the Geneva Conventions, but related to nuclear weapons.

As long as we think that nuclear weapons are legitimate and they have a role to play in security policy, it is going to be very hard to eliminate. The TPNW is really the driving force of changing our perceptions around nuclear weapons and we've seen in the past the weapons that get prohibited is much easier to eliminate so at this point, the treaty, it doesn't have any support from the nuclear armed state yet it is a tool to pressure, tool to change the perception of this weapon and create the actual conditions for nuclear disarmament. I am actually very hopeful and I have seen these days now we commemorated Hiroshima and Nagasaki are huge outpouring of public support for the ban treaty, outrage about the nuclear weapons still exist and lots of governments are speaking up and taking the charge and meeting to ratifying the treaty. Organizations like the ICRC or the United Nations are coming together to say this is something that we need to fix. I think that is the starting point for addressing this problem.

**Julian Borger:** Thanks very much. Also in Geneva, Gilles Carbonnier, can I ask you, as you are representing the ICRC here: ICRC is supposed to be an entirely non-political organization and yet, nuclear weapons are inherently political. How do you jump that divide and get the ICRC involved in disarmament?

**Gilles Carbonnier:** Good morning Julian and hello to everyone. This is a critical question. As we have seen during the break in the short video, ICRC was on the spot with volunteers of the Japanese Red Cross in Hiroshima, in August 75 years ago. The two ICRC delegates, who included a medical doctor Marcel Junod, were absolutely horrified by the sheer inhumanity of the scenes they witnessed, with the cities completely wiped out with all medical facilities that also medical staff and personnel killed, destroyed and injured. To see tens of thousands of victims being left unattended in unspeakable conditions and being unable to adequately address this humanitarian catastrophe was a shock 75 years ago. This brought the ICRC on humanitarian grounds almost immediately to call for a prohibition of nuclear weapons.

The whole movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent a few years later joined that call. 75 years later, I think that it is really important that we try to better understand the testimonies of the *hibakusha* who experienced this unspeakable suffering, devastation and losses. Japanese Red Cross Society hospitals have treated survivors since the attacks, many of whom have died because of the radiation. The hospitals have also treated descendants who had issues because of genetic damage to their parents. We can see that this is a general transgenerational issue and for strictly humanitarian reason, ethical reason and legal reason, there is a very strong case why the ICRC engage with full force to prohibit use and eliminate nuclear weapons.

I would like to thank and commend Nagasaki City and Nagasaki Prefecture through Mayor Taue and Vice-governor Ken Hirata for co-organizing this with us, because I think these testimonies become more important in the face of and the growing risk of use of the nuclear weapon that we see today.

**Julian Borger:** Thank you very much. I am coming back to Nagasaki now. Izumi Nakamitsu, you are the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and I am curious about how you go about your job in terms of confronting the nuclear weapons states who are also the major powers at the UN. Do you consider the nuclear weapons states currently to be in contravention of Article VI of the NPT, which puts on them the obligation to disarm? If so, what can the UN and your office do about that?

**Izumi Nakamitsu:** Thank you Julian first of all for your sympathy. Indeed, I do have very difficult jobs to do. For us the messages that disarmament and arms control both of them really should be considered as very important tools for security and that has been our message to all of the nuclear weapon states. They all say the International Security environment is indeed deteriorating and perhaps it's not a time to pursue disarmament quite the contrary. Our response to that is it's not less disarmament but it should be more disarmament and the example that I always cite, my favorite example is the partial nuclear test ban treaty which was in fact agreed and entered into force in less than one year after the Cuban missile crisis. At the height of the most difficult period of the previous Cold War, those nuclear weapon states actually did understand the value of disarmament and arms control, so they need to understand and recognize the responsibility as nuclear weapon states, to return to dialogue and negotiation rather than pursuing strong rhetoric used against each other. That has been our very strong message this morning also at the peace ceremony from the Secretary General.

I think it is quite urgently, need to have a risk very concrete risk reduction measures as we always say the risk of nuclear detonation whether that is intentional or miscalculation by mistake is dangerously high at the

moment. The most urgent is to discuss and agree on concrete risk reduction measures and they will be opportunities in front of us at the 10th review conference of the NPT, tentatively scheduled for January next year. Of course, there are other things that we need to do, we are very much looking forward to the entry into force of the TPNW, when it enters into force will form a very important new pillar of disarmament and arms control regime. You started out this session almost the death of arms control and disarmament, we must make sure that that would not happen. We have to reverse the current trend and we must protect and we must further strengthen disarmament regime and TPNW will be very important from that perspectives.

**Julian Borger:** Thank you, before we get to the Secretary General, I would like to ask a follow-up question to Nakamitsu: Do you tell the nuclear weapon states at the moment that the UN considers them to be in violation of the NPT, because of their failure to pursue disarmament?

**Izumi Nakamitsu:** Yes, we consistently remind them of the Article 6 obligations. The reason why NPT is very important for all of us is because that is the only international treaty obliges nuclear weapon states to pursue nuclear disarmament and that is why we consider consistently calling on the United States and the Russian Federation of the importance of renewing or the extending the New START Agreement treaty. If that is allowed to expire, there will be no restraints, that would be the first time in 50 years or so that nuclear superpowers would not have any legal restraints between the two countries on nuclear weapon issues. We consistently remind them all the obligations and we want to make sure expiration of the New START Treaty will not happen in which case, as I said, there will be no restraint and that will be a very new situation first time in many years since the height of the Cold War.

**Julian Borger:** Thank you. I am finally going to Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in Seoul: How worry should we be about what is happening at the Korean peninsula in the current situation, and how can we turned the situation around towards a more hopeful direction in terms of disarmament?

**Ban Ki-moon:** Thank you very much. It is a great pleasure, I am honored and humble to participate on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of atomic bombing of Nagasaki. Before I answer something about the denuclearization process in Korean peninsula, as you may remember, I was the first the Secretary-General of the United Nations to visit both Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 5<sup>th</sup> 2010, I visited the City of Nagasaki and I met many Hibakushas and the city officials including Mayors. I paid my deepest tribute and condolences to all those people who were sacrificed and also I wanted to keep some message of hope through a many Hibakushas there, then I moved to Hiroshima the next day, the August 6<sup>th</sup> 2010 and for the first time I participated in the Peace Ceremony together with the Prime Minister Abe at that time. I was told by that time, even US ambassador had never visited and paid any respect to Hiroshima and Nagasaki victims. That was a very humble moment.

But the current state of nuclear arms control globally is a huge source of concern, just as the risk of nuclear configure is increasing and the global mechanism to address them are rather unraveling. The facilitator, you mentioned about the JCPOA and many other mechanisms which are not working, even NPT during my time was not able to have any agreement and unfortunately, NPT conference has been postponed.

I'm also happy to see the Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu with whom we worked together. We know that the complete nuclear disarmament implemental process, that requires nuclear weapon states' political

will. Unfortunately, old (five) nuclear weapon states, they are not having a good relationship and against the backdrop, we are witnessing continued arms' race among nuclear weapon states. As to nuclear missiles development, there is increasing or modernizing or even sophisticating their nuclear capacities. These are the great sources of concern again on this backdrop, the COVID-19 has demonstrated how abstract threats can rapidly become horrifyingly real and change our world beyond recognition. The world must wake up but to the seriousness of existential threats from nuclear weapons and from climate change.

Now to your question about the Korean Peninsula, this is again a huge source of concern, that North Korea has been keeping, even under 10 Security Council resolution, the North Korean authorities have never heeded to the wars and appeals to have a complete and verifiable, unreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Three summits between the South and North Korean leaders and two summit meetings between the US and North Korea and even one more additional brief meeting at Panmunjom, all these summit level meetings have only left to our firm conviction that North Korea is not committed to denuclearization. I know that the situation is a very real and international community including Security Council has never been able to convince uneven force North Korea to abide by all this governance systems on denuclearization of this world and therefore, we must work together, particularly, it is very important that the United States should do much more.

Earlier this year in January, I was in Washington D.C. participating in the doomsday Clock unveiling ceremony. I and the chair of the Elder, Mary Robinson were part of this moving this hand of the Clock to just 100 seconds before the doomsday at midnight. That is quite worrisome experience for me that we have already 100 seconds before doomsday. I appreciate that the US has taken some time to meet with the Russians for the extension of the New START. The United States are also arguing that China should take the part to this. I agree with the tradition, if they can have a trilateral agreement, it would be much better but time is very much limited unless the US and Russia can have an agreement to extend this New START Agreement by February next year.

There will be nothing in this world which govern the denuclearization, nuclear weapons. President Putin of Russia has made unconditional accept of the agreement. He would agree to the extension of the New START Treaty then the wisdom tells us that the US agree with Russia to extent this New START Treaty and invite China. Engage in China to the agreement which will make it even better governance system. I also watch this nuclear weapon states as well as their ally countries including Japan, to immediately agree and ratify the PTNW. There are about 43 countries and we may have to have seven more states so that this can be effective as well as possible. Those are some comment at this time, I would also like to engage in further discussions.

**Julian Borger:** Thank you very much Secretary-General. On the issue of the *hibakusha*, very soon that generation will be gone and there will be no one left to has witnessed the use of nuclear weapons in warfare first hand. As a result, the threat of nuclear weapons use may become an abstract idea. In contrast to for example climate change, which people can see happening all around them when people really become aware of danger of nuclear weapons it may already be too late. I was wondering about the problems and challenges involved in the mobilization of popular opinion to change policy. I will ask Beatrice again, how do you go mobilize around an issue that many people can see as abstract?

**Beatrice Fihn:** I think that really hits very close to what the problem is with this weapon. It has been described so abstract for a very long time, is very theoretical when people talk. The experts, which is usually white male from nuclear arm states, the way they talk about it is very sterile, very theoretical, you would

feel like you are in an international relations' University course, sometimes. They were debating different kind of theoretical concepts, though when you hear from the survivors you realize that this is real, and this is actually a real weapon. This is not a theory, historic game that we are playing between the US and Russia, this is real people, it's about warfare, it's about targeting civilians in warfare and punishing innocent civilians. This is not a weapon that you would take out in a war with North Korea. Kim Jong-un, for example, a mass murder of innocent North Korean civilians with it as something that is actually completely unacceptable when we talked about other weapons we would never have these countries say that they would do that with chemicals or biological weapons.

I think talking about in the sterile way, has been intentionally discouraged the public from being able because it's so abstract and so theoretical and so complicated that the regular person doesn't feel like they have any agency on this issue. I think that's why it's so important to lift up the stories about survivors and not just about Hiroshima and Nagasaki but also the new test sites, we have Marshall islands, Fiji and other Pacific island states as well as in Kazakhstan and in Algeria, we have around the world impacted communities that have suffered from and continue to suffer today are much younger generations than the hibakusha, for example. I also think it's very telling that all of these communities that have suffered from their protesting can testify about the impact that speak about it first-hand are very marginalized communities. It's quite is the colonies in indigenous communities. They do not test these weapons outside Washington, it tested only from indigenous communities or colonies. People that mattered less to these decision makers.

I think that is again about suppressing the real impact and it's based on very interesting conversations now around the adversaries about how, for example, the US government intentionally tried to stop and suppress the conversation about the humanitarian impact. There is lots of stories about John Hersey's book 'Hiroshima' which is really a significant piece of journalism that describes this and how it is going to battle narratives from 1945 around this weapon. I think that is really environmental lift up these stories and remember them and talk about it in a human framing, because people are really bad at preventing them.

**Julian Borger:** I think a lot of people would be interested in asking what I can do as a citizen: As a part of the international community or as a citizen of my own country, what can I do to make a difference to push forward the cause of disarmament. Izumi, what advice would you give to people watching this about how to make a difference?

**Izumi Nakamitsu:** Thank you for that question. First of all, I agree with Beatrice. Disarmament discussions have been way too technical: experts getting together and talk about technical aspects of disarmament nuclear weapons etc. The reason why Hibakushas' stories are so powerful is because, through their stories, we put individual faces together with nuclear weapons' problems so we have to absolutely make sure that this would not be common discussions in abstract and there are many things that we can do. In fact, I am actually very encouraged spending the past couple of days in Hiroshima and now in Nagasaki, I have met a lot of young people who are in fact working on that. We heard a lot of very encouraging stories in the previous session, the first session today also, the key is, to put human faces and human stories on this issue. It's not necessarily that we will be using online platforms the virtual means etc. It is about making sure that people understand they are human beings who suffered and put the faces to these stories.

Music, films, animations, all sorts of community story-telling methods, there are many creative ways of actually utilizing and making sure that those stories actually will be carried forward as human stories. In that, there are many things that you can do as citizens: talk about it; engage in discussions; talk about this with your friends at schools; go on field trips these days through virtual means; visit the nuclear weapon / atomic

bomb museums in Hiroshima and Nagasaki through virtual means. As the UN office for disarmament affairs, one of the things that we started this year, this is a new program is hashtag disarmament used for disarmament and within it, we have a new platform of youth disarmament champions. We have selected 10 youth champions from across the world, about a 1000 for replying to be on this course. There is an educational element to it and there is network element to it, I really would like to encourage young people from different parts of the world to share their stories what might be the disarmament priorities in their respective communities, understand that they are issues that they have to share and they have to connect and they have to create networks, learned new knowledges, skills and creating those movements, I think will be very much a key.

I would also like to say that I'm looking through the 'me too' movements, the 'Friday for future' and now 'black lives matter', those incredible youth movements on different issues where young people have stepped on to voice their opinions and views and demands now starting to reach. We have to make sure that young people today will be talking about it, learning about it, networking and hopefully create a new energy for nuclear disarmament, that will soon result in the actual total elimination of nuclear weapons. I'm hopeful and the UN will be committed to create as many platforms as possible and work with the young people of today.

**Julian Berger:** Thank you. Gilles, can I ask you, which lessons can be drawn from these movements, these grassroots movements that Izumi referred to, including the climate change movement, Black Lives Matter, all these movements that seems generate a lot of energy at the moment. How can this energy be harnessed to move disarmament forward do you think?

**Gilles Carbonnier:** I cannot agree more with Izumi and Beatrice about the need to put the human dimension and the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons at the center of the conversation. That is where the testimonies of *hibakusha* come in.

If you look just at what happens now in Beirut or with regard to COVID-19, you see how quickly medical systems can become overwhelmed. In Beirut, an explosion of an ammonium concentrate depot combined with COVID-19 has led to a situation in which a even very sophisticated medical assistance cannot adequately address with the consequences. When we speak nowadays of about 14,000 nuclear weapons, most of which are much more destructive than the one used at 75 years ago in Nagasaki or Hiroshima, it is easy to understand that neither medical systems nor any humanitarian organizations or states are able to cope with the consequences. What we cannot prepare for, we must prevent in the first place.

That is what we do at the ICRC to prevent the use of nuclear weapon: Two years ago by Peter Maurer, the President of the ICRC, appealed to all states especially nuclear armed states and their allies to urgently reduce the risk of use of nuclear weapons. We have also reached out to civil society and to the wider public through social media and other communication channels . A video we made for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has generated over a half of million views across the world. These are some of the ways we spread the word, and raise awareness, mobilize, and put pressure on states.

Together with Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, the ICRC will continue to work with states to assist them in the efforts to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We are also working with all relevant stakeholders in order to counteract the erosion of the multilateral disarmament architecture, always putting international humanitarian law principles and rules at the center.

Frankly speaking, it is very hard to envisage how the use on the nuclear weapon could respect the principle of protecting civilians, protecting civilian facilities. Because of that, we strongly believe that as chemical and biological weapons are prohibited, nuclear weapons should also be prohibited and eliminated.

**Julian Borger:** Thank you very much. I will now ask the Secretary-General: Are there any lessons to be drawn from the global response to COVID-19 in terms of building and international campaign to move disarmament forward?

**Ban Ki-moon:** Participants have been discussing about the nature of this discussions on nuclear disarmament in international forums, I can easily become abstract and technical and what is most worrisome is that we see the lack of discussions what was the absence of discussions on nuclear issues at this time while we haven't talked a lot about climate change at this time. But we still have 13,400 nuclear warheads shared by P5s, we do not know how many for some other nuclear weapon states: India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel, would stop taking storage and management will be again very important.

As Mr. Carbonnier has just mentioned that any mismanagement of this ammonium nitrate has been seen as almost like a nuclear weapon. Somebody remarked that it looks like Hiroshima and Nagasaki at nuclear weapon bombing. Therefore, we need to pay attention in parallel with the negotiations. What is the clearest lack is the political leadership at this time, starting from the number one country in this world, the United States. Their withdrawn from JCPOA, which have been hard efforts, hard negotiations including European Union, Germany and Iran and that all P5. If this all hard negotiations could easily be broken by one country and this is a withdrawal, then what kind of message can we deliver to the people, to the young people. What kind of messages are we going to deliver to our young generations who will be in charge of this global peace and security?

That is what I am seriously concerned. This is what I am asking the Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the Under-Secretary-General on ODA, Ms. Nakamitsu, and all the other leaders should do much more. 20 years ago, I served as a chairman of the platform of CTBTO, I served for six months as chairman. At that time, even from the beginning of the CTBTO, the US has been absent while the secretaries were still playing a very important role.

Without this international organization not fully functioning, fully recognized as international organisation, there was a lack of governance systems. NPT is not functioning well, and they have not been able to agree on any statement and I hope that there will be a good agreement in next January year. The Unites States is to show an urgent and immediate global leadership, first over extend the New START Treaty, also ratify the TPNW which was put by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Therefore, I am urging global leaders to show their global vision and global solidarity and proper leadership. That is the only invoice that you can't expect that we can ask we can hope our next generation can leave in a better and safer world without nuclear threats.

**Julian Borger:** Thank you very much. An interesting question from the one of the viewers: we talked a lot about the role or responsibility of the nuclear weapons' power, but there are another set of the states who are hosts to nuclear weapons in Europe, namely Belgium, Netherland, Italy, Germany, and Turkey: Can I ask you Beatrice, what responsibility do these countries bear in terms of disarmament?



**Beatrice Fihn:** I think that is a really great question because these countries are most definitely part of the problem. We very often look at nuclear armed states, they are the only ones that are responsible for this issue but as with all issues, racism, sexism, climate change, they really like the worst offenders the problem but then there's this ring around them that protects them and the these five countries, not just those purpose but also countries are part of the nuclear umbrella that are their militaries will be part or participating in using nuclear weapons using weapons of mass destruction of civilian populations. They legitimate these weapons; they are supporting of holding the system and makes it easy for the nuclear arms states to continue with that.

I think that's really important to expose and I think that the treaty of prohibition is powerful in exposing where the problem is that there's so many more countries that rely on nuclear weapons, legitimize them, support them and actually even asks the nuclear states to keep them in many ways. Before we can get to the nine nuclear armed states, we have to get through these at the stop getting them to protect this. In particular countries like say in Germany for example, with a very strong moral leadership in the world: talking about human rights, humanitarian law and yet, the German military is prepared to mass murder civilians with weapons of mass destruction.

That is a part of whole thing and it's very uncomfortable for these leaders and they like not talk about it and pretend like it's a structural issue, we're not actually responsible of the US's weapons. The citizens in these countries have a huge responsibility to call out their governments and we see a huge support in, say Germany is an example, public support for signing the treaty people want Germany to be on the right side of history on this issue. It needs to be a part of recognizing that my country is part of the problem and that's really one of the things that we're working on while the treaty of nuclear prohibition is the purpose, even if you don't get the new ground state support immediately, it is such a powerful tool to expose the hypocrisy in these countries.

**Julian Borger:** Thanks very much. I have been told that we have to wrap up the discussion. It is a shame we could talk so much longer, as nuclear weapons is one of the most important issue facing the world, and it is just incredible that it is not more at the center of public debate. This discussion has been about how to turn talk into action and I found it a very interesting discussion. I would like to thank the participants. It was a real honor to share this platform with Beatrice Fihn, Gilles Carbonnier, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Izumi Nakamitsu. Thank you very much for taking part in this really interesting discussion.