

# **Cross-Party Group on Nuclear Disarmament**

25<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 1.00pm

Minute

## **Present**

### **MSPs**

Bill Kidd, Ross Greer, Richard Leonard, Mercedes Villalba, Paul McLennan

Parliamentary Officers:

Chris White (office of James Dornan), Jenny Olsen (office of Bill Kidd), Craig Horne (office of John Mason)

### **Invited guests**

Tuva Widskjold (Coordinator ICAN Norway)

### **Non-MSP Group Members**

Janet Fenton, (CPG Sec. Secure Scotland/ICAN Scottish Round Table)

Seonaid Stewart (Peace & Justice Scotland)

Kate Arnott (Women's International League for Peace & Freedom – Scottish branch) David Kelly (Scottish CND)

Anne McCulloch-D'Lyske (Conscience)

Georgia Simpson (UN House Scotland)

Clara Zhang (UNHS)

Beret Dernbach (UNHS)

Gari Donn (UNA Scotland)

David Mackenzie (Nukewatch/Trident Ploughshares)

### **Apologies**

Maja Fjellvær Thompson, (ICAN Norway) Ariane Burgess MSP, Gillian Mackay MSP, Bill Butler (NFLA) Claire Duncanson (Edinburgh University) Lynn Jamieson (SCND) Marianne Pallister (Pax) Guy Johnson (Medact) Arthur West (DboTB)

### **Agenda item 1**

**1. Welcome, Minutes matters arising.**

Bill Kidd welcomed everyone in attendance.

### **Minute of Meeting on 21st September 2022.**

With one amendment – that Richard Leonard be added to the apologies - the minute was approved. Approval was moved by David Mackenzie and seconded by Bill Kidd.

## **Agenda item 2**

### **2. ICAN Act On It Forum in Oslo, & Parliamentarians meeting 9-10 March 2023.**

Bill Kidd introduced the item, noting that he is booked in to attend both the civil society and the parliamentary events, and was keen to see others from Scotland there.

#### **Guest speaker :**

Tuva Widskjold (Coordinator ICAN Norway) explained that she had taken over at the last minute from Maja Thompson, who had been taken ill earlier on the day of the meeting.

There are 16 NGOs in ICAN Norway, and the majority of the Norwegian Parliamentarians are ICAN Pledgers, but unfortunately that is not the position taken by the Norwegian Government.

The Parliamentarians Conference on 10 March is co-hosted by the Norwegian Cross Party group, will take place in the Norwegian Parliament from 9.00am – 3.00pm and promises to be a safe space for all parliamentarians to exchange views and strategies. This is a follow on from the Parliamentarians Conference in Vienna. Tuva reminded us that all parliamentarians have a responsibility to uphold the humanitarian principles established ten years ago, when Norway hosted the first conference on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

The meeting in Oslo aims to further the action of states, civil society and others working to abolish nuclear weapons, increasing the pressure on nuclear weapon complicit states. Campaigners in Norway and elsewhere appreciate the crucial role that Scotland has in the hosting of the UK's nuclear weapons, and Scottish opposition to that policy. In addition the Parliamentarians' Conference, which all Parliamentarian Pledgers are encouraged to register and attend, ICAN Norway is hosting the Act On It forum for civil society on 9th March to meet, learn and exchange information and ideas about anything and everything to do with nuclear weapons, including the narrative emerging from the war in Europe and the challenges posed by Russia and others. The aim is to engage and act as a possible force for good in a terrible situation. It was also noted that there will be social opportunities to build our connections and grow. There was a question about NATO and the need for a review of its nuclear armed strategy. Norwegian ICAN partners have different perspectives on NATO but as in Scotland, all agree that NATO

membership should not involve commitment to a nuclear-armed alliance. There are more details for NGOs as well as Parliamentarians including info on accommodation for the forum on the website

<https://tinyurl.com/4vkuu6rv>

Scottish parliamentarians and NGOs hoping to attend or wanting to find out more can email [hello@nuclearban.scot](mailto:hello@nuclearban.scot) to ensure that our attendance is coordinated and everyone is included in the network.

All Parliamentarian Pledgers should have received invitations to the Parliamentarians conference and are asked to email the Scottish ICAN Roundtable at [hello@nuclearban.scot](mailto:hello@nuclearban.scot) in addition to replying directly to ICAN.

Janet Fenton urged all civil society organisation to consider sending representatives and for Parliamentarians to note that the Parliamentarians Conference takes place on one day, although they are encouraged to stay for both gatherings and the social occasions organised by ICAN Norway, reminding the meeting of the wonderful hospitality offered by ICAN Norway when ICAN won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017. In addition to Bill, Trident Ploughshares, Conscience, WILPF and the ICAN Scottish Round table will have representatives participating at the conference

## Agenda item 3

### **3. TPNW Entry into Force two-year anniversary Sunday 22nd January and Bulletin of Atomic Scientists Doomsday Clock announcement on 24th January**

Bill Kidd reported on the Parliamentary Motion of welcome for the TPNW EiF, noting in 2017 on the occasion of the TPNW's adoption he had delivered a letter of support from Scotland's first minister to the president of the negotiations. Bill then read the text of the motion: which was warmly received.

Janet reported that the advancing of the Doomsday Clock to 90 seconds to midnight was both terrifying and depressing, and she reported that the second anniversary of TPNW EiF was marked by activists across Scotland revisiting and commemorating their actions when the TPNW had entered into force, and noting that two people from Faslane Peace camp had blocked the North Gate at Faslane by locking on and lying down, requiring the gate to be closed with consequent disruption at the base for which they were both arrested.

Richard Leonard, signing the motion during the meeting, hoped that the motion would be debated, since the future of the planet itself is something that the Scottish Parliament really should debate.

**Motion ref. S6M-07610**

**Second Anniversary of the TPNW's Entry into Force at the United Nations**

Submitted by: Bill Kidd, Glasgow Anniesland, Scottish National Party. Date lodged: Tuesday, January 24, 2023

That the Parliament welcomes the second anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 22 January 2023; notes that the TPNW has gained 92 state signatories and 68 ratifications, and that there are signs of growing support in the parliament of nuclear weapons states; understands, for example, that, as well as Scottish NGO activism in the Cross Party Group on Nuclear Disarmament, the majority of MSPs in the current Scottish Parliament session and in session five signed the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) Parliamentary Pledge to remove nuclear weapons from Scotland upon independence and for Scotland to ratify the TPNW, and that there are over 70 MPs in the House of Commons signatory to this pledge of commitment to the TPNW; further understands that, seven months into the new French parliamentary assembly, there are now 35 legislators signatory to the pledge and that there are also 50 United States' legislators signatory to the pledge; recognises the 2022 report, *Risky Returns: Nuclear Weapon producers and their financiers*, which evaluates the impact of nuclear weapons' illegality under international law on the long term investment of nuclear weapons production, and whether this is becoming a less attractive investment option due to fiduciary concerns; acknowledges that this report analysed 24 companies heavily involved in nuclear weapons production, and reports that, in 2022, there was a fall of \$45.9 billion in long term investments in loans and underwriting; considers that, in the personal investment market, there is growing appetite for deriving personal income, like pensions, from ethical and sustainable portfolios, many of which exclude nuclear weapons production, and understands that ICAN has described this drop in long term investments into nuclear weapons production as indicating a downward trend that is stemming from the entry into force of the TPNW, which made these weapons illegal under international law, like other unhumanitarian weapons, such as cluster munitions, and other weapons of mass destruction, like chemical and biological weapons.

## Agenda item 4

### **4.Scottish Neutrality and Feminist Diplomacy Post Independence**

Discussions on the possibilities for neutrality as a position for Scotland will be held on 1st or 2nd March March, organised by Secure Scotland as part of its exploration of non-adversarial legislative opportunities in politics, considering the importance of political declarations in changing the 'norms' in policy even when legislation is not an option. This discussion will involve members of the Oireachtas and Irish CND about progressive Irish diplomatic efforts. Bill Kidd has kindly offered to host a Parliamentary Round Table on Scotland and the TPNW with any Irish elected representatives. There may also be a 'closed doors' meeting outside the parliament conducted by Chatham House rules. Interested parties should email [secretary@seurescotland.scot](mailto:secretary@seurescotland.scot) or contact Janet Fenton directly in the first instance.

## Agenda item 5

### **5. Feminist Approach to International Relations**

We agreed to ask Clare Duncanson to report on Scottish Government 's work on a feminist approach to foreign policy at a June Meeting of the CPG. Bill Kidd noted Clare's contributions to work with the CPG for the TPNW, particularly around the disproportionate impact on women and girls. David Kelly highlighted work done at Strathclyde University by Catherine Eschle, particularly around exposure of racialized, gendered and colonial dimensions of nuclear discourses at the heart of the global nuclear order and we noted Catherine's previous work with Clare and more recently her organisation of Embrace The Base, commemorating the Greenham women's contribution to disarmament.

## Agenda item 6

### **6. Update on progress on the Unready Scotland Report**

The transport in convoy of nuclear weapons and weapon material between Aldermaston/Burghfield and Coulport is regular and intense, perhaps reflecting the increase in the cap on warhead numbers announced in the 2021 Integrated Defence Review. The publication of Unready Scotland was followed in 2018 by a good parliamentary debate which led to a promise of a review of convoy safety, which reported in 2019. While this review represented some progress Nukewatch regards it as deeply flawed in two main ways -that it adopted MoD risk assessments without independent scrutiny and that it continued the trend of greater secrecy surrounding the issue, especially in regard to any accident scenario exercises, the outcomes of

which were previously made public. Nukewatch has asked the new Community Safety Minister, Elena Whitham, for a meeting and this has led to a meeting in the near future with officials in the Defence Policy Unit. The warheads are carried in heavy trucks at the heart of a multi-vehicle convoy. While not armed for nuclear detonation the warheads (perhaps two to a truck) contain both plutonium and high explosive. The Palomares incident and the Vixen B test in Australia show how plutonium can be widely spread if the high explosive is detonated. In Scotland the convoys pass through densely populated areas such as on the Edinburgh By-pass and the M74 through Glasgow.

## Agenda item 7

### **7. Trade Unions & Nuclear Disarmament Networking**

We had hoped for an update from Arthur West. This was postponed to a future meeting and Bill and Janet will check Arthur's availability and find an appropriate date.

## Agenda item 8

### **8 Civil Society Updates**

**Conscience.** Anne McCulloch-D'Lyske spoke of the aspiration for a Peace Tax Bill to allow conscientious objectors to withhold tax that was for military purposes and that this should be a constitutional right.

**Scottish CND.** David Kelly gave an account of future plans, including Glasgow CND's Reclaim the Clyde project, walks for peace in the spring, and a major event in Glasgow in the autumn.

**Peace and Justice Scotland.** Seonaid Steward noted that Peace and Justice had new premises at Words and Actions for Peace, 58 Ratcliffe Terrace, Edinburgh, shared with Secure Scotland, and that work is underway recruiting volunteers and organising events. Cross party group members from civil society as well as MSP's will be made welcome.

**Secure Scotland** Janet Fenton noted that "A Guided Tour of the Unacceptable" – a geographical and historical film about the Faslane/Coulport nuclear weapon complex had begun its tour in Bo'ness on 23rd January. The film was commissioned by Scottish CND and Secure Scotland.