



22 January 2021

Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC  
Minister for Defence  
PO Box 6100  
Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

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Dear Minister Reynolds

## **RE: UN TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

Today is a historic milestone in the campaign to rid the world of nuclear weapons: the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (the Treaty) enters into force. The treaty makes it illegal under international law to develop, test, possess, host, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.

Two-thirds of UN member states have adopted the Treaty. **I am writing with disappointment that Australia is not one of those countries.**

Until now, nuclear weapons have been the only weapons of mass destruction not subject to a global ban treaty, despite the catastrophic harm they inflict. Today's momentous change in international law brings us one step closer to abolishing the nuclear threat for good.

The *2016 Defence White Paper*, *2017 Foreign Affairs White Paper* and *2020 Defence Strategic Update* each defends the need for nuclear capacity - primarily through using the US' capacity on Australia's behalf - but each is misguided. Only prohibition will lead to safety.

**There is no good reason for Australia not to support a nuclear-weapon-free world.** The use of nuclear weapons is incompatible with the protection of human rights, including the right to peace<sup>12</sup> and the right to life.<sup>3</sup> It is also a threat to people's right to be free from torture.<sup>4</sup>

I call on your government to please consider signing on to the Treaty to send a strong message to the world that it is the right thing to do to aim for a nuclear-free-world. Amnesty International Australia is open to working with you on this important matter.

For further information, or to discuss and organise a meeting, please contact Joel MacKay at [joel.mackay@amnesty.org.au](mailto:joel.mackay@amnesty.org.au) or 0424 242 112.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations, *Universal Declaration on Human Rights*, Art. 28, Art. 33

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace*

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Art. 6(1)

<sup>4</sup> United Nations, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Art. 7

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Klintworth', written in a cursive style.

Sam Klintworth  
National Director  
Amnesty International Australia