



**OPANAL**  
Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean

**General Conference**

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**Statement by the International Committee of the Red Cross**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for the International Committee of the Red Cross to take the floor at this session of the General Conference of a body so important for peace and security, and with which we share common objectives.

As is well known, in recent years, the nuclear-weapon States have been modernizing their arsenals so that they can be used in a wider range of contexts, and thus, issues of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation have taken on a new urgency on the world stage.

For decades, the ICRC and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement together have continued to regularly call for the absolute prohibition of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco was a fundamental pillar of international disarmament law which, since its entry into force, provided a framework for protection and security against the catastrophic risks posed by nuclear weapons.

Beyond the historic value of the establishment of the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in a densely populated region of the world, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean today maintain a commitment to nuclear disarmament as strong as when it was created. Proof of this is the large number of States in the region that have decided to ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The ICRC sees adherence to and faithful implementation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as the way forward and calls for the universalization of this treaty, calling on all States to sign and ratify or accede to it without delay. We also stress the importance of

participating in the second meeting of States Parties to this treaty, which will take place in the near future<sup>1</sup>, and we encourage those States that are not Parties to participate in any way as observers.

The TPNW is a complementary treaty to predecessor treaties on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, including those that establish nuclear-weapon-free zones, such as the Treaty of Tlatelolco. In this regard, we believe that the TPNW elevates the object and purpose of the Treaty of Tlatelolco from a regional to a global dimension, in addition to the fact that it does not incur additional obligations for the States Parties to Tlatelolco and that, rather, accession to the TPNW would constitute the next logical step.

The TPNW represents an indispensable and long-awaited pillar towards the universal goal of a world free of nuclear weapons and free from the mass suffering that would be caused by the use of these weapons.

By signing and ratifying the Treaty, States fulfil their responsibility to protect humanity against nuclear catastrophe, based on a more viable and humane conception of security, without nuclear weapons. That is why it is crucial to work tirelessly to ensure the widest possible adherence to this very important instrument.

We at the ICRC therefore firmly believe that nuclear disarmament is a humanitarian imperative. In this regard, the ICRC is at the disposal of all States to support them in the universalization and implementation of the TPNW from a multidisciplinary approach, including legal and diplomatic, through its representatives present throughout the Americas, including New York, as well as from our headquarters in Geneva.

Thank you for your attention.

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<sup>1</sup> The second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPAN) will take place from November 27 to December 1, 2023, in New York.