An Introduction to Implementing the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

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ABSTRACT
The 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a significant international achievement, although it faces opposition from the nuclear-armed states and some of their allies because it is intended to create impetus for a transition away from nuclear weapons, on which they rely for security. Now that the TPNW has entered into force internationally, its stakeholders face a range of practical decisions and other questions related to how to implement its provisions and build a sustainable multilateral regime that will contribute to the treaty's overall goals. This article, by the issue's guest editor, provides context for the TPNW's emergence and the main categories of literature that have emerged on different aspects of the new regime, including some of the major TPNW-related debates. The article further outlines how each of the other thematic contributions to this journal issue fit within it and relate to each other. These include research articles on matters related to national implementation, treaty compliance for nuclear-armed states eventually wishing to join the TPNW, universalization, and building a sustainable treaty management culture. Commentaries from academic experts, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and civil society activists round out the issue.

Introduction

Negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations and adopted in July 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is, on the face of it, a significant achievement. The TPNW includes a range of prohibitions on States Parties’ participation in nuclear weapon-related activities, which extend to not developing, testing, producing, acquiring, possessing, stockpiling, using, or threatening to use nuclear weapons. Deploying nuclear weapons on one’s national territory and assisting any state in the conduct of prohibited activities are also banned. Moreover, drawing from the model of other recent humanitarian-inspired treaties in the weapons field, the TPNW obliges States parties to provide “adequate assistance to individuals affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons, as well as to take necessary and appropriate measure of environmental remediation in areas under its jurisdiction or control contaminated as a result of activities related to the testing or use of nuclear weapons”.

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1This paragraph draws from an overview of the TPNW on the website of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs: https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/.
On 22 January 2021, the TPNW entered into force internationally. This process was triggered by the ratification of Honduras 90 days previously, making that country the treaty’s fiftieth State Party and, under the TPNW’s provisions, propelling the regime over the entry-into-force threshold. Many welcomed the new treaty – from the UN Secretary-General to the Catholic Pope – although congratulations from the nine nuclear-armed States and their allies were conspicuously absent. Instead, some of them reiterated their opposition to the TPNW (NATO 2020). Instead of depending on support from these states, at least early in its lifespan, the TPNW’s proponents “argue that its success will follow from the development of a norm of unacceptability of nuclear weapons possession that will become stronger as more states sign and ratify the treaty” (Considine 2019, 1075). Central to the TPNW’s rationale is that it will contribute in time to a broader transformation in nuclear politics intended to overcome today’s stalled nuclear disarmament efforts.

Underpinning such aspirations, the TPNW is a legal agreement with specific – yet wide-ranging – prohibitions, positive obligations and other provisions like those mentioned earlier that must be implemented by its State Parties for the regime to be credible and influential. For all that the TPNW’s international entry into force was a political milestone, how effectively it is implemented will be of more lasting significance for ongoing efforts to progress toward a nuclear-weapon-free world. TPNW State Parties and supporters need to translate lofty political aspirations as expressed in the preamble and articles of a hurriedly negotiated and adopted legal agreement into concrete reality. In January 2022 those supportive of the TPNW will have the opportunity to indicate how they mean to do so when its first Meeting of States Parties is convened, most likely in Vienna, Austria.

To help focus constructive attention on TPNW implementation matters it is the theme of this issue of the *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, which features several research articles and commentaries outlining how to give effect to aspects of the new regime. These stem from a common starting point, which is that decisions made in the TPNW’s early years will count significantly in whether the TPNW regime is set to succeed or stagnate. Crucial too will be the stewardship culture and shared vision that develops amongst the treaty’s stakeholders, including governments and civil society, the latter having played a prominent role in the treaty’s instigation.

**The Context**

In addition to the global nuclear disarmament movement, the TPNW drew lineage from earlier international humanitarian campaigns to prohibit weapons that resulted, notably, in agreements banning anti-personnel mines (in 1997) and cluster munitions (in 2008) and which were founded on government-civil society partnerships and clear goals (Borrie

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2The TPNW initially opened for signature on 20 September 2017.
3Guterres hails entry into force of treaty banning nuclear weapons*, UN News, 21 January 2021, https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/01/1082702. Pope Francis welcomed TPNW entry into force in his weekly Vatican address: see “Treaty banning nuclear weapons comes into force”, *Vatican News*, 22 January 2021, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/world/news/2021-01/treaty-banning-nuclear-weapons-comes-into-force.html.
4For basic documents about the TPNW, including the text of the treaty, see https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/.
It will be of help to the reader to briefly outline some of this context. Until toward the end of the 21st century’s first decade humanitarian perspectives made surprisingly few inroads into post-Cold War nuclear politics (Borrie and Caughley 2013). The final outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was therefore significant because its Action Plan mentioned “deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and reaffirms the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law”.

In turn, the way for this was partially cleared by US President Barack Obama’s Prague Speech on nuclear disarmament on 5 April 2009 in which he said:

One nuclear weapon exploded in one city—be it New York or Moscow, Islamabad or Mumbai, Tokyo or Tel Aviv, Paris or Prague—could kill hundreds of thousands of people. And no matter where it happens, there is no end to what the consequences might be—for our global safety, our security, our society, our economy, to our ultimate survival . . . I state clearly and with conviction America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons (Obama 2009).

Together, these prominent acknowledgements of concern about the ongoing risks that nuclear weapons pose offered some cover to the governments deciding to convene international gatherings to explore humanitarian perspectives. After Norway convened an initial conference in Oslo in 2013, Mexico hosted a second in Nayarit early the following year, and Austria followed with a third in Vienna in late 2014.

The three humanitarian conferences – along with various humanitarian joint-statements, UN General Assembly resolutions, studies, and, less positively, a failed 2015 NPT Review Conference – ultimately contributed momentum toward a nuclear ban treaty. Over this period civil society groups mobilized under the banner of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement also became engaged, including many of the latter’s National Societies. In contrast, the governments of the five NPT Nuclear-Weapon States mostly spurned the humanitarian conferences (although the United Kingdom and the United States did attend the Vienna Conference). In 2016 they further boycotted a UN Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations, as did the other nuclear-armed states. Non-nuclear-armed Western allies did attend these events in the main, albeit with increasing discomfort given the implications of a nuclear ban for their extended nuclear deterrence “umbrella” relationships with the United States.

This discomfort led Australia, supported by some other nuclear umbrella states, to instigate a vote on the OEWG draft report in summer 2016 in Geneva as this contained a recommendation for the commencement of negotiations on a nuclear ban treaty.5

5For a concise history of nuclear disarmament efforts until earlier this century see Wittner (2009).
62010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document, document NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I)*, 2010.
7The five NPT Nuclear-Weapon-States are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Four states with nuclear weapons are not NPT members: India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan.
8Report of the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations, A/71/371 (2016): http://www.undocs.org/A/71/371.
report still passed by a large majority and a subsequent UN General Assembly First Committee resolution obtained enough votes in late 2016 to give effect to the OEWG recommendation and mandate a nuclear ban treaty negotiation.\(^9\) Nevertheless, by normal multilateral arms control and disarmament standards the time and resources allocated to the TPNW negotiations were cut to the bone. The UN resolution mandated only two sessions of negotiations in New York, the bulk of this time to be set aside for the June-July 2017 period. Costa Rica’s Geneva-based Permanent Representative, Ambassador Elayne Whyte Gómez, gamely accepted the challenge of presiding over negotiations for a treaty that would have to be achieved quickly or not at all.

Ultimately, the TPNW negotiations succeeded in achieving an outcome. On 7 July 2017, the diplomatic delegations of 122 nations voted to adopt the treaty text in a conference hall within the United Nations Headquarters building at which a large number of experts, civil society activists and survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings of Japan, and nuclear tests in the decades since, were present.\(^10\) With the lone exception of the Netherlands, the Western alliance’s umbrella States – those of NATO, Australia, Japan, and South Korea – did not attend the TPNW negotiations, nor did any of the nine nuclear-armed powers.

The Discourse

The TPNW baby had been delivered. No sooner had it arrived when debate flared in policy and academic circles about what, if anything, the TPNW will grow up to be.\(^11\) Representatives of several nuclear-armed states immediately stated in public their governments’ opposition to the new treaty (United States Mission to the United Nations 2017). Some of these opponents also voiced the conviction that the TPNW will never gain the status of customary law, and could undermine the NPT (Ford and Perkovich 2017). Their overarching message was that the TPNW will be ineffective and irrelevant even as the vehemence and nature of such statements indicated fears it might have just the opposite effect.

Although this journal issue is focused on treaty implementation issues, it is nevertheless useful to have a general sense of the contours of this TPNW-related discourse, which since the treaty’s adoption has tended to fall into three broad areas. The first area of discourse relates to the TPNW’s origins. Some useful accounts have already appeared on aspects of the humanitarian initiatives that resulted in the TPNW, and the TPNW process itself, written from academic perspectives (Potter 2017; Hanson 2018; Gibbons 2018; Docherty 2018; Considine 2019; Egeland 2019) or in the form of memoirs or other accounts of individuals involved.\(^12\) Certain contributions blend these perspectives.\(^13\) Such accounts need to be treated with a certain amount of caution, especially as a basis for wider theorization, until more evidence is available, including from officials and former officials involved in the TPNW process and its humanitarian antecedents. This

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\(^9\)UN resolution A/RES/71/258 (2016): http://www.undocs.org/A/RES/71/258.

\(^10\)One delegation (The Netherlands) voted against. Singapore abstained. I was among the observers at the negotiations.

\(^11\)Hamel-Green (2018) is a useful resource in exploring this debate. See also Ifft and Koplow (2021).

\(^12\)These are numerous, especially among ICAN-related activists. See, for instance, Fihn, Bolton, and Minor (2017); Ruff (2018).

\(^13\)Notably, see Kmentt (forthcoming). Some of his arguments were published in Kmentt (2021).
will aid the process of triangulating a more authoritative narrative account, as will greater scholarly access to official documents generated leading up to and during to the TPNW process – including relevant policy and academic literature having an influence at that time.

More academic investigation of civil society’s role would also be desirable. For instance, ICAN’s role in instigating the TPNW process is well known due to the Nobel Peace Prize ICAN was deservedly awarded in 2018. But as a consortium of diverse civil society groups ICAN was hardly monolithic, and until 2012 a nuclear ban treaty like the TPNW was not even its goal. ICAN’s journey to the goal of a nuclear ban treaty and its re-structuring as a campaign with discernible similarities to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munition Coalition is of significance in understanding the origins of the TPNW and something to be further explored.¹⁴

In connection with the TPNW’s origins there is also further research to be done on which (if any) lessons can really be drawn from the TPNW story in terms of a “humanitarian disarmament” model for other international initiatives. In this regard, additional detailed, thick empirical data would help test some TPNW-related claims in the theoretical literature, for example on norm emergence or the influence of transnational advocacy network on the TPNW’s emergence. Much has not been firmly settled about the behind-the-scenes dynamics that ultimately brought about the TPNW process, and these facts, if they come in, will almost certainly compel revision and improvement of theory-based claims to date. This is important since both supporters and opponents of the TPNW have made assertions about the nature of its origins to support claims they make in the second broad area of academic and policy discourse – whether the TPNW is good or bad for international security. Nowhere is this seen more sharply than in dispute over whether the TPNW reinforces or undermines the NPT.

TPNW supporters note the problems in the NPT regime due to perceived lack of implementation of its Article VI obligation by the nuclear “haves”, and argue that the TPNW is a legitimate response from a cross-section of the nuclear weapons “have-nots”. Alongside the lack of progress of the Nuclear-Weapon States on their NPT obligation to negotiate on nuclear disarmament in good faith, allied states under their extended nuclear deterrence “umbrellas” are also impediments despite talking a good game on the need for nuclear disarmament. In the words of one former senior Canadian diplomat, “the nuclear dependent allies opted to privilege adherence to the doctrine of nuclear deterrence over advancing nuclear disarmament goals” (Meyer 2018, 1). This tension (or alleged double-standard) has a corrosive long-term effect on international efforts to curb nuclear weapons, and could result in the NPT’s eventual collapse.

In this line of thinking the TPNW gained traction among some non-nuclear-armed NPT State Parties as a constructive alternative to NPT rupture, one drawing on other likeminded international initiatives in the weapons field, which could have some longer-term impact in encouraging transition away from reliance in perpetuity on nuclear weapons for security.¹⁵ Part of the TPNW’s appeal is precisely that it creates a clearer political choice to make for states relying on nuclear weapons, including the umbrella states. This process safeguards the NPT in the longer term because without tangible

¹⁴For further discussion of this and other unanswered research questions see Borrie, Spies, and Wan (2018).
¹⁵For a sophisticated articulation of similar views, see Ritchie (2019).
progress toward a nuclear-weapon-free world that treaty’s “grand bargain” will break
down.

In contrast, some critics of the TPNW decry this as intentional polarization that
amounts to mere “virtue signaling” (Ford 2018) and creates undue pressure on states
reliant on nuclear deterrence that could undermine their security. Some of them charac-
terize the process leading to the TPNW as a naïve exercise led by the usual suspects
among the humanitarian disarmers, but which is a “strategic error”. The TPNW is
a competing disarmament forum, which does not require NPT membership and could
even open the door for exodus from the NPT by nations of real proliferation concern that
chafe at the nuclear nonproliferation treaty for more sinister reasons (Highsmith and
Stewart 2018). In the words of one its harshest critics, the TPNW is a “rushed, technically
flawed, deliberately divisive, and self-limiting diplomatic exploit which, in its present
form, should be rigorously refuted” (Schulte 2017, 19).

Debates in this second realm of TPNW discourse have consumed the most political
oxygen to date while generating copious commentary (Egeland et al. 2018; Erästö 2019;
Hajnoczi 2020; Hilgert, Kane, and Malygina 2021). The debate over the relationship
between the TPNW and NPT has, it could be argued, not helped either regime. It has
arguably distracted governments’ attention from more substantive treaty implementa-
tion-related matters. Moreover, it means the President-Designate of the next NPT five-
yearly Review Conference, Ambassador Gustavo Zlauvinen of Argentina, must now
factor how the TPNW is to be reflected into his risk assessment and plans for managing
that event. This important NPT meeting already promises to be challenging for other
reasons including differences over the prospect of a zone free of weapons of mass
destruction in the Middle East (the issue that sank the 2015 NPT Review Conference’s
chances of success) (Bino 2020), Iran’s NPT compliance (Bob 2021), the North Korean
situation (Murphy 2021), and the deterioration of strategic relations between the
Western nuclear powers and Russia and China that makes a consensus outcome more
difficult to achieve in general.

Most NPT commentators seem to agree that it would be a very negative development
if the upcoming Review Conference fails to reach an outcome that moves toward
addressing the NPT regime’s deterioration. This event, usually convened five-yearly,
has already been postponed twice due to the Covid-19 pandemic and is almost certain
to be delayed now for a third time until early 2022 (which may mean the TPNW’s first
Meeting of States Parties has to be rescheduled). To that end, while the NPT regime has
a long list of urgent, difficult issues to address, dispute over how to recognize the TPNW
need not be one of them. Yet to a large extent questions about whether the TPNW is
ultimately a good or a bad thing for the world are unanswerable before some time has
passed and its actual impact can be measured. Fortunately, there are some indications
that the debate over the NPT and the TPNW is cooling off, although this lowering of
rhetorical temperature should not be read as constituting a change in basic position
among any of those involved.

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16According to the United States in a letter to TPNW signatories obtained by the media: “US urges countries to withdraw
from UN nuke ban treaty”, Associated Press, 22 October 2020. https://apnews.com/article/nuclear-weapons-
disarmament-latin-america-united-nations-gun-politics-4f109626a1cdd6db10560550aa1bb491.
This brings us to the third area of TPNW-related discourse, which to date has received perhaps the least attention despite its urgency and importance: the manner in which the TPNW will be implemented in practical terms.\(^1\) How will the new regime look in terms of its structures and operating dynamics? How will the TPNW’s major provisions be implemented and monitored? How will confidence in compliance with its various prohibitions be ensured? How will the TPNW regime relate to other parts of the international system including bodies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which administers nuclear safeguards?

Of the three areas of TPNW discourse outlined here, this third realm is, I would argue, the most consequential. After all, the TPNW story will have little appeal as a model for other international initiatives if it fizzes out. And long run judgment about whether the TPNW was positive for the world – or not – will depend on how effectively it is implemented in a process that starts now, not when the treaty was drafted.

One essential factor is that the TPNW’s diplomatic stewardship be sound and sensible. States Parties must develop a clear view early on what they are trying to achieve if they expect the regime to be implementable. The treaty text itself provides some guidance, but there are practical questions that require more work as well as an agreed action plan with benchmarks. As part of their responsibilities, delegations of TPNW State Parties need to properly inform themselves about the options for implementing the treaty and accept that they need to engage on their differences of approach. And they need to stump up sufficient resources to make sure the TPNW’s obligations can be implemented in a credible way, while integrating its obligations into their national legal and bureaucratic systems. If humanitarian-inspired treaties of the past are any indication, partnership with an epistemic community of non-State experts, buttressed with support from advocates in civil society to keep public and political attention on the regime, will generate much creative thinking.

Critics and opponents of the TPNW, having made their points, might do well to appreciate that its effective implementation will reinforce the NPT’s non-proliferation goals even if they have no intention of ever becoming TPNW State Parties. In that respect, they should avoid being a hindrance to TPNW State Parties. They might even consider how they might selectively assist, for example by participating as observers in TPNW Meetings of State Parties, which would aid mutual understanding. They could also support the provision of relevant technical advice when requested by TPNW State Parties, including through the good offices of the IAEA, and look at what assistance they might provide to victims of nuclear testing and for environmental remediation consistent with the TPNW.

The Contributions in This Issue

The contributions in this journal issue are intended to help those thinking about TPNW implementation or wanting to learn more about what is involved. The issue draws on a variety of perspectives including those of national officials engaged in TPNW stewardship, civil society advocates and researchers, the Red Cross, and

\(^1\) Notable exceptions include Patton (2018); Patton, Philippe, and Mian (2019); Kütt and Mian (2019); Shea (2020); Docherty (2020).
epistemic experts from academia and think tanks. Several contributors are veterans of other multilateral processes, including in the humanitarian disarmament field, and there is much to be learned from those experiences as the reader will discover. As mentioned earlier, the contributions take two forms: comprehensive research articles, and briefer commentaries.

In their research article, my colleagues from the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) James Revill, Renata Hessman Dalaqua and Wilfred Wan examine the TPNW’s provisions informed by experience from other arms control and disarmament agreements. They discuss which practical elements will need to underpin effective national implementation of the treaty. Their focus is on initial declarations under TPNW Article 2, which all States Parties will have to complete; Article 5 (national implementation); victim assistance and environmental remediation-related questions stemming from Article 6, and how to enact international cooperation and assistance (Article 7). The authors observe that, to meet the requirements of the TPNW, its State Parties do not need to start from scratch given the existing architecture to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. However, State Parties should share their national implementation experiences and build common understandings: establishment of a support entity committed to supporting, coordinating, and sustaining momentum on implementation would help to this end – a point also raised by other contributors to the issue.

One of the trickier tasks before State Parties is to devise how the adherence of a nuclear-armed state deciding to join the treaty could be assessed, building on the provisions in TPNW Article 6. While the likelihood of such countries joining the TPNW soon does not seem very great (judging from their statements), there is a need for the TPNW regime to develop a practical approach to demonstrate its seriousness and the feasibility of the regime in the face of this situation, which is nonetheless still conceivable. The TPNW provides for a nuclear-armed state to join once its weapons and nuclear-weapon program are eliminated. Alternatively, it could join the treaty while still possessing nuclear weapons and proceed to disarm in accordance with a time-bound plan approved by the State Parties. As Pavel Podvig observes, this creates verification challenges. His article, building on years of research at UNIDIR on innovative approaches to verifying the absence of nuclear weapons, suggests a verification arrangement that does not require access to sensitive information during the weapons elimination process. Rather, the task is achieved by containing nuclear weapons and all dismantlement activities in a dedicated segment of the nuclear complex of the disarming state.

Richard Lennane and Richard Moyes seek to address how can the TPNW regime be sustained. Experience of other multilateral treaty implementation processes in arms control and disarmament indicates that their dynamics change over time, and it can be hard to maintain the engagement and support of stakeholders. Each author draws upon his own deep experience, including to implement the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Convention on Cluster Munitions in Moyes’ case, and as a former head of the Biological Weapons Convention’s Implementation Support Unit in Lennane’s. In doing so they grapple with a criticism leveled at the TPNW that it is a symbolic gesture of no real contribution to nuclear disarmament. The article concludes that, if the TPNW can develop a broad and diverse practitioner community, ideally supported by an implementation support unit,
Universal or near-universal membership of the treaty is not required; neither is meeting the criteria to become customary international law. Provided a reasonably large and globally representative number of states join the treaty and participate actively, constructively and visibly in its implementation and promotion, the norm will grow.

In the fourth research article, Alexander Kmentt and Nick Ritchie assess the challenges and opportunities for expanding TPNW membership and adherence. Kmentt is a senior Austrian official (writing in his personal capacity) deeply involved in the humanitarian initiatives leading to the nuclear ban treaty process, especially the 2014 Vienna humanitarian conference, and an ambassador experienced in the practicalities of multilateral regime dynamics. Ritchie is a scholar who has theorized rigorously about these dynamics, and particularly the international system of nuclear weapons control – including what the value of a nuclear prohibition regime could be in achieving nuclear disarmament progress. Far from Article 12 “universalization” (as it is usually referred to among diplomats) being an incidental activity, Kmentt and Ritchie situate it in the nuclear context as a strategy for maximising the authority of the treaty and its core norms and principles across four categories of state: disarmament advocacy states, a non-nuclear-armed state majority, nuclear client states, and nuclear-armed states. These norms and principles are extensions of what already exists, they argue, particularly for non-nuclear armed states. But making these connections will require targeted and sustained political work in partnership with civil society to engage non-nuclear armed states with a range of normative arguments for the treaty and against the narratives of its critics. They set out a range of ideas for outreach activities based on other treaty universalisation campaigns.

Beside the four longer articles just outlined, this journal issue on TPNW implementation also includes three briefer commentaries on expectations for the new treaty regime. NGOs played significant roles individually and as a consortium in bringing about the nuclear ban treaty, and here Alicia Sanders-Zakre and Beatrice Fihn of ICAN set out the Campaign’s hopes and priorities, among which the treaty’s victim assistance and environmental remediation obligations are core. In his piece, Magnus Løvold of the International Committee of the Red Cross focuses on humanitarian expectations for the TPNW’s first Meeting of States Parties in 2022. Amongst its purposes, the Meeting of States Parties can inculcate practices to strengthen the taboo against nuclear weapon use by drawing attention to its humanitarian consequences and questioning nuclear deterrence practices. This kind of activity is consistent with what Kjølv Egeland, a leading academic scholar on the discourse around the new treaty, argues in a separate commentary is a key contribution the TPNW can make – piercing the “feigned abolitionist consensus, creating room for adversarial politics and the advancement of an alternative view of nuclear order and security” that he and others such as Ritchie have argued is necessary to successfully delegitimise and devalue nuclear weapons (Ritchie and Egeland 2018; Meyer and Sauer 2018).

Devaluing nuclear weapons is likely to be a lengthy process given an increasingly tense international situation in which all the nuclear-armed states are modernizing their arsenals, and some are discussing new roles for their nuclear weapons. But the challenge of catalysing transition away from reliance on nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence also speaks to its importance. It is by no means a hopeless task, especially now

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18For a brief overview, see Borrie and Dunn (2020).
that the majority of countries have unambiguously stated their opposition to nuclear weapons by adopting the TPNW. It is time for them to work now to put the new treaty on its best footing for the tasks ahead in giving effect to its obligations for State Parties, and broader aspirations to strengthen the nuclear disarmament regime.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on Contributor

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