

## What you can do

### Be informed ...and inform others

Use the facts given on this sheet and other information from organisations listed to keep yourself and others up-to-date with the issue.

### Prayer and reflection

- Discuss the moral and humanitarian aspects of nuclear weapons and Trident. How does government policy square with what the Church teaches? What should our response be as Christian citizens?
- Ensure that prayers are included in your church community that will guide the decision-making of government away from security that is based on weapons and war.

### Action

- Host a meeting of local faith groups to reflect on what you might do and say together on this issue. Perhaps you could arrange a meeting with your local candidates in the run-up to the election.
- Join others in regular prayer vigils at Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment <http://bit.ly/1f3HKJW> and other nuclear establishments around the country.
- Use these petitions in your church or community to engage in debate and discussion on the UK's nuclear weapons programme.

### Rethink Trident Statement

Do you think that the government should scrap plans to spend over £100bn replacing Trident? Support the Rethink Trident statement. **Pax Christi** has endorsed this statement with the following Church leaders *Archbishop Malcolm McMahon and Bishops Marcus Stock, Philip Egan, William Kenney, Terence Brain, Peter Doyle, Thomas McMahon, Stephen Cottrell and Paul Bayes* <http://www.rethinktrident.org.uk/>

### Scrap Trident Petition

The government is cutting billions from public spending on health care, education, welfare and services and at the same time it is spending billions every year on Trident nuclear weapons. Sign the petition at <http://www.cnduk.org/scraptrident/>. You can also download a paper copy of the petition here <http://www.cnduk.org/images/stories/petition2013.pdf>

**Pax Christi**, St Joseph's, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY

[www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)

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## The Catholic Church and Nuclear Weapons

### Action needed NOW

A decision on whether to replace the Trident submarine fleet, the UK's independent nuclear weapons system, is expected to be taken in 2016. This year we have a General Election and an opportunity to challenge candidates on where they stand. Our present government plans to replace Trident. Our voices must be heard **now** if we are to change this policy.



### Did you know?

- Between them Russia, USA, UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea possess more than 17,300 nuclear weapons.
- Nuclear weapons create health and environmental catastrophes around the world. Testing in the Pacific, Kazakhstan, the United States, Africa, South Asia, and China has caused profound damage to the environment and local communities.

### Did you know?

- The UK alone has 225 nuclear warheads.
- Each Trident submarine carries eight missiles with five warheads. Each warhead has an explosive power eight times that of the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.
- The cost of replacing Trident is now over £100 billion and government spending on research and development for nuclear weapons is over £320 million a year.
- One-third of British universities have received funding from the Atomic Weapons Establishment which designs and manufactures the UK's nuclear weapons.

***Integrity will bring peace,  
justice give everlasting security***  
(Is 32:17)

The peace we seek cannot come from weaponry, but from a commitment to justice and nonviolent actions which recognise the dignity of every human person and all creation.

We reject models of security that rely on fear, the demonisation of others or on the strength of arms - conventional and nuclear.

**Pax Christi Vision Statement**

# Catholic Church Statements on Nuclear Weapons

## International

Nuclear deterrence cannot be the basis for an ethics of solidarity and peaceful coexistence among peoples and states.

*Pope Francis, December 2014*

We cannot justify the continuation of a permanent nuclear deterrence policy, given the loss of human, financial and material resources in time of scarcity of funds for health, education and social services around the world and in the face of current threats to human security, such as poverty, climate change, terrorism and transnational crimes.

*Archbishop Dominik Mamberti's Address at UN General Assembly in New York, 2013*

Nuclear weapons, aptly described as the 'ultimate evil', are still possessed by the most powerful States which refuse to let them go... No weapon so threatens the longed-for peace of the 21st century as the nuclear... With the valuable admonition offered in the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, the international community can now see how the legal and moral arguments against nuclear weapons intertwine with the strategic: since nuclear weapons can destroy all life on the planet, they imperil all that humanity has ever stood for, and indeed humanity itself...

*Archbishop Francis Chullikatt, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations, 2011*

What can be said, too, about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? ... that nuclear weapons have any place in a civilized society, is not only baneful but also completely fallacious. In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims.

*Pope Benedict XVI, 2007*

## England and Wales

The very existence of nuclear weapons has always posed grave moral questions... The Church has always been clear in its teaching about the vital necessity for eventual total nuclear disarmament. Our judgement is that, by decommissioning its nuclear weapons, the UK now has a unique opportunity to offer the international community an approach to security and legitimate self-defence without the unconscionable threat of nuclear destruction.

*Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, November 2006*

## A moral concern

Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or extensive areas along with their population is a crime against God and humanity. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation.

*Vatican II Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1965, #80*



## A legal concern

There exists an obligation\* to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

\*Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

*Legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, International Court of Justice 1996*

## A humanitarian concern

Nuclear weapons are unique in their destructive power and the threat they pose to the environment and human survival. They release vast amounts of energy in the form of blast, heat and radiation. No adequate humanitarian response is possible. In addition to causing tens of millions of immediate deaths, a regional nuclear war involving around 100 Hiroshima-sized weapons would disrupt the global climate and agricultural production so severely that more than a billion people would be at risk of famine.

*International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons*

## Useful organisations and websites

Action AWE

[www.actionawe.org/](http://www.actionawe.org/)

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

[www.cnduk.org/home](http://www.cnduk.org/home)

Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

[ccnd.gn.apc.org/](http://ccnd.gn.apc.org/)

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

[www.icanw.org/unitedkingdom/](http://www.icanw.org/unitedkingdom/)

Nuclear Morality Project

[www.nuclearmorality.com](http://www.nuclearmorality.com)

Nuclear Information Service

[www.nuclearinfo.org/](http://www.nuclearinfo.org/)



nuclear  
information  
service