



PRESS RELEASE
WILPF International
New York, NY
17 June 2017

EMBARGOED UNTIL 00:01 EDT 17 JUNE 2017

Press Release

Thousands of women march in New York City and around the world to demand nuclear disarmament

Today, on 17 June, thousands of women are gathering in New York City and around the world to protest nuclear weapons and support their prohibition. The Women's March to Ban the Bomb take place two days after the opening of negotiations for a international treaty to ban nuclear weapons and is an entirely women-led initiative, following in the footsteps of decades of women's leadership in anti-nuclear activism.

The Women's March to Ban the Bomb takes place as around 130 governments resume negotiations in the United Nations on a ground breaking new treaty that will ban nuclear weapons. When adopted, such a treaty will make it illegal for any signatory country to possess nuclear weapons and will impose economic, legal, political, and social barriers to nuclear weapon possession. It will further stigmatize nuclear weapons and help compel their elimination.

"The sufferings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have continued through generations. It is time for the governments to listen to the voices of women calling for elimination of nuclear weapons, and this is why you will find us on the streets today" stated Kozue Akibayashi, the President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), which is hosting the march.

"Securing a nuclear-free planet is not a luxury but rather it is a requirement for our collective future," says Leslie Cagan, the lead organizer of the one million person march in New York in 1982 who is now an organizer for the People's Climate Mobilization and who is speaking at the rally.

Despite being staunch advocates for disarmament and peace women's voices are often overlooked or marginalized in disarmament and security decision-making processes, as are the voices of other groups whose lives and communities are impacted by nuclear weapon testing, developing, stationing or maintenance.



The 130 countries that support the ban treaty face opposition from nuclear-armed countries and their nuclear-supportive allies. One of those being the United States. Ray Acheson, programme director at WILPF says “The United States is spending \$1 trillion USD over the next thirty years to modernize its nuclear weapon arsenals and triple the killing power of these weapons.” This excessive spending comes in contrast to proposed cuts to vital anti-poverty programmes and healthcare – including reproductive rights - which will have a disproportionate impact on women.

WILPF and its event partners see a connection between the current momentum of political resistance in the United States and what is happening inside the UN. There are similarities in the demands for a change to the status quo and frustration with double standards and false promises.

“Just as many people have been marching in the United States for justice and equality, inside the United Nations smaller and less influential countries are standing up to the powerful nations that hold us hostage by having these weapons,” continues Ms. Acheson.

The march is hosted by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and supported by dozens of co-sponsor and partner organizations that are representative of peace, disarmament, women’s rights, indigenous, environmental, and human rights communities, among others.

There are over 60 sister events are taking place in other cities across the United States, such as in Australia, Cameroon, Canada, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Nigeria, New Zealand, Philippines, Switzerland, and the UK.

END OF RELEASE

The event begins at 12:00 with kick-off speeches and music on 41st St. between Sixth Avenue and Broadway. The march will move east along 42nd St., turning north on 3rd Avenue before ending at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza (47th St. between 1st and 2nd Avenue) across the street from the United Nations. A rally is planned with an all-female line-up of speakers and musical performers. See attachment for a full list and biographies.

This is an excellent opportunity for photographs. Our collection will be posted online at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/wilpf-international/albums>

Details of the route, site and timings can be found on the event website: www.womenbanthebomb.org. Find us on Twitter at @WILPF and @WMTBTB.

For more information or help to set up interviews with speakers or women activists before, during or after the march, please contact Allison Pytlak, WILPF programme manager, tel: +1 212 682 1265 / mobile: 603-479-5253/ email: allison@reachingcriticalwill.org



1. Co-organizers of the march and rally include: Hibakusha Stories, International Peace Bureau, Native Organizers Alliance, PAX, Peace Action New York State, Western States Legal Foundation, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) (host), and WILPF-US.

A full list of sponsors and endorsers is available at
https://www.womenbanthebomb.org/sponsors_and_endorsers

2. Negotiations on a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons will take place at the UN in New York from 15 June – 7 July 2017. This follows a first negotiating session that took place from 27-31 March 2017. WILPF is a member of the steering group of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the leading civil society movement for the treaty. More resources about the ban can be found at www.reachingcriticalwill.org or www.icanw.org.

3. This event builds on a long history of women's leadership in anti-nuclear activism – from protesting nuclear testing in the Bikini Atoll in the 1950s, to taking action in the UK against the stationing of US nuclear weapons decades later. In New York in 1982 women took the lead in organizing the anti-nuclear march that culminated in a rally in Central Park that was attended by over one million people.