

# Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Distr.: General  
26 November 2023

English only

---

New York, 27 November–1 December 2023

## **A victim-centered approach for international cooperation on Articles 6 and 7**

**Working paper submitted by Peace Boat**

### **I. Introduction**

1. Peace Boat welcomes the adoption of the Vienna Action Plan at the first Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (1MSP) in June 2022 and acknowledges Actions 19-32 and 49-50 that provide for victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance therein.

2. Peace Boat also welcomes the efforts of the informal working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance. Notably, we welcome the fact that its meetings have actively taken place with attendance of a number of civil society organizations, including those from the communities affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons. The remarkable leadership by the Co-Chairs, namely Kazakhstan and Kiribati, is commended.

### **II. Victim-centered approach and Japan's lessons**

3. People affected by nuclear weapons must be at the center of discussions of victim assistance and environmental remediation. Their experiences should be the very starting point, and in line with Action 19 of the Vienna Action Plan, they need to be consulted “at all stages” of the victim assistance and environmental remediation process. Taking such a victim-centered approach is key.

4. It is in this spirit that Japanese civil society experts put together joint recommendations on Articles 6 and 7 of the TPNW in consultation with hibakusha (victims of the use of nuclear weapons) and presented the summary to the 1MSP.<sup>1</sup> The full version can be found at <<https://peaceboat.org/english/news/TPNW1MSP-JP>>. These recommendations share key lessons from Japan's experiences with victims of the use and testing of nuclear weapons, including the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the exposure of Japanese fishing boats to radioactive fallout from

---

<sup>1</sup> TPNW/MSP/2022/NGO/27 “Recommendations from Japanese Civil Society on Articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,” Working paper submitted by the Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition

nuclear tests conducted in the Pacific, and information exchange and support activities for nuclear victims in other States.

5. Peace Boat played a central role in the formulation of the above-mentioned recommendations. Further, the organization has since 2008 carried out the “Global Voyage for a Nuclear-Free World: Peace Boat Hibakusha Project” with cooperation of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo) and the Cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; working together with over 170 hibakusha to learn from their experiences and perspectives and convey these to audiences worldwide.

6. Based on the above experience, and building upon the discussions to date of the informal working group, Peace Boat notes two particular areas that require international attention for the near term. One is how to recognize and assess the needs of affected people and communities. The other is how the proposed international trust fund should work to meet those needs. This paper aims to address these questions, drawing from the above-mentioned Japanese civil society recommendations.

### **III. Needs of those who suffer from multi-dimensional harm**

7. To effectively assess the needs of affected people, it is important to understand the multidimensional nature of nuclear harm. The harm caused by radiation is lifelong. The risk of low dose exposure to radiation should not be downplayed, and the impact of internal exposure should also be considered. Children who were orphaned by the atomic bombs experienced difficulties in their lives, and women particularly suffered discrimination. As the families of hibakusha faced difficulties, they can also therefore likewise be considered nuclear victims.

8. The Japanese government set a narrow definition for the scope of suffering and also for eligibility for relief. The survivors themselves have taken action to ensure that their rights are recognised, by for example filing lawsuits. These include suits for the recognition of A-bomb disease, for the recognition as hibakusha of people exposed to radioactive fallout through “black rain,” and for survivors of non-Japanese nationalities to also receive the same relief measures as Japanese nationals.

9. These people who self-identified as nuclear victims, however who were not recognised by the government as such, themselves successfully fought to obtain their recognition and rights as victims. It is for this reason that input is needed from a broad range of victims and stakeholders regarding victim assistance, and that such relevant discussions should be open to all those who consider themselves to be nuclear victims. Many such people may belong to marginalized communities within their own countries. Further, this has been concealed under systems of power such as colonialism and racism, including in the case of Indigenous communities. The States Parties must provide international protection to ensure those who identify as victims are not subject to undue pressure, and that they can access relief regardless of domestic limitations or other challenges.

### **IV. International Trust Fund**

10. The international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation is necessary not only to assist States Parties in implementing their obligations under Article 6, but to facilitate the research and studies on the needs and practices of the affected people.

11. In light of Article 7.5 of the Treaty, this fund could be supported not only by States Parties, but also by States not party to this Treaty, international organizations, and civil society organizations. Furthermore, those eligible for assistance from this fund should not be limited to those from States Parties. The Meeting should confirm that Article 7.4 does not limit assistance to victims located within States Parties, but opens the provision of assistance to nuclear victims anywhere in the world.

12. For example, after the atomic bombings of Japan, many A-bomb survivors returned to the Korean Peninsula, which had been under Japanese colonial rule. Many others emigrated to the Pacific, as well as to North and South America, amidst the difficulties of post-war life. The Japanese government has a certain amount of data on the international migration of A-bomb survivors, and research has also been conducted by Japanese civil society organizations. Cross-border movement and migration of victims is also observed after nuclear testing. International cooperation, including the sharing of information with both States Parties and those States which are not party to the Treaty, is essential for a full understanding of the actual situation, and necessary resolution. For such considerations, it is important that eligibility of relief is not limited to victims living in States Parties, which would render the objective of guaranteeing the rights of nuclear victims impossible. A framework for cooperation between States regardless of their status in regards to the TPNW is vital.

## **V. Conclusion and Recommendations**

13. In conclusion, and from the perspective of a victim-centered approach for international cooperation on Articles 6 and 7, Peace Boat recommends the following action points:

- A victim-centered approach, with consultation of people affected by nuclear weapons, is key for discussions of victim assistance and environmental remediation
  - The lifelong, multidimensional nature of nuclear harm must be recognized. Further, input from a broad range of victims and stakeholders is necessary, including those who self-identify as nuclear victims but may not be officially recognised as such
  - States Parties should provide international protection to ensure victims are not subject to undue pressure
  - The international trust fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation is necessary, and could be supported not only by States Parties, but also by States not party to this Treaty, international organizations, and civil society organizations
  - Furthermore, those eligible for assistance from this fund should not be limited to those from States Parties, but nuclear victims anywhere in the world
-