

## Media release

### NETHERLANDS SECURITY COUNCIL CAMPAIGN RUNS INTO TROUBLE

117-nation anti-nuclear bloc urged to vote against the Netherlands

2 October 2015

Geneva-based nuclear disarmament NGO Wildfire>\_ today launched an international campaign against the Netherlands' bid for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the 2017-2018 term.

Wildfire>\_ is urging the 117 states that have endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons to vote against the Netherlands in the 2016 Security Council election, unless the Netherlands:

- Joins the Humanitarian Pledge;
- Announces specific, concrete steps to begin reducing the role of nuclear weapons in its security strategy and defence doctrine;
- Undertakes to provide to the 2017 NPT preparatory committee (or earlier) a comprehensive transparency report on any nuclear weapons in the Netherlands.

The Netherlands is a party to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) and claims to support nuclear disarmament. But despite the fact that as a non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT it is already prohibited from possessing nuclear weapons, the Netherlands has criticized and actively opposed moves to stigmatize and ban them. The Netherlands has not joined the Humanitarian Pledge, and as a member of NATO relies on nuclear weapons for its defence and keeps US nuclear weapons on its territory. Despite its NPT obligations, it has no plans to change this.

Launching the campaign in Geneva, Wildfire>\_ chief inflammatory officer Richard Lennane said, "The Netherlands is currently an obstacle to nuclear disarmament, maintaining hypocritical policies and obstructing efforts to delegitimize and outlaw nuclear weapons. But the Netherlands cannot win a seat on the Security Council without the support of the 117 states which have endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge to stigmatize, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. This is an historic opportunity for states committed to nuclear disarmament to use their influence to disrupt the status quo and drive real change."

Lennane added that it was "highly unusual - and perhaps unprecedented - for a Western state like the Netherlands to face opposition from civil society in pursuing a bid for a Security Council seat".

The three steps that the Netherlands is being asked to take in order to gain the support of the 117 pledging states are entirely feasible. Academic studies have concluded that there is no legal impediment to the Netherlands - or any NATO member - joining the Humanitarian Pledge. The second and third steps have been recommended by successive NPT review conferences, and are both measures that the Netherlands itself regularly urges other states to pursue. "Taking these steps would amount to no more than the Netherlands following its own recommendations", said Lennane. "The Dutch government would be foolish to risk its election chances when it can easily make the necessary policy adjustments without affecting its national security or alliance commitments".

The Humanitarian Pledge was launched by the government of Austria at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in December 2014. States joining the pledge undertake "to identify and pursue effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons" and "to cooperate with all relevant stakeholders ... in efforts to stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons in light of their unacceptable humanitarian consequences and associated risks". The text of the pledge and list of endorsing states is available at <http://www.icanw.org/pledge/> .

The Security Council election for the 2017-2018 term is expected to be held in October 2016. The Netherlands is competing with Italy and Sweden for two seats allocated to the Western European and Others Group (WEOG). A two-thirds majority of votes cast in the General Assembly is required for election to the Council.

Further information is available at the Wildfire>\_ campaign website:  
**<http://www.nlinunsc.org>**

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