



Labour ignores failure of anti-nuclear weapons conference it spoke at

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nuclear weapons

Countries including the UK failed to reach agreement at a UN nuclear conference in New York on how to eliminate nuclear weapons, while the Labour Government [declined to comment](#) despite sending a minister who spoke at the opening session.

The 11th Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) took place from 27 April to 22 May, bringing together states parties, observers and non-governmental organisations. A [House of Commons Library briefing published](#) on 20 April said participants included treaty members, observers and NGOs who:

discuss[ed] the functioning of the treaty, the implementation of its provisions and the state of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation more broadly.

The briefing warned that “there are concerns that a belief in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is under threat”. This is because nuclear weapons states modernise and expand their arsenals, while at the same time these concerns grow.

There has been a move away from nuclear arms control as an enabler of confidence building and strategic stability.

The review conference “sometimes called RevCon” produced a document which remained in draft, showing what agreements on nuclear non-proliferation the parties to the treaty had attempted to reach consensus on. Paragraph 15, concerning Iran’s nuclear weapons programme, remains contested, and the document was not “adopted” by the RevCon.

Nuclear weapons conference: diplomatic reaction to failed talks

Senior UN diplomats shared their disappointment about the [failure of the conference](#) to come to an agreement at a press conference which concluded the two week event.

The Eleventh Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT president, and Vietnam's permanent representative to the United Nations, [Do Hung Viet said](#)

I am disappointed that the review conference was unable to reach consensus on an outcome document and really seize this critical opportunity to make our world a safer place.

He added:

The current international environment, which is really marked by deep tensions and an elevated risk posed by nuclear weapons, demands very urgent action.

Throughout the conference I have appealed to all states parties to continue to make full use of the available avenues for dialogue, for negotiations for negotiation to come to an agreement. I believe such an agreement would have contributed significantly to reducing tensions, to lowering the nuclear risks and contribute to the ultimate total elimination of the nuclear threat.

He went on to warn that the failure of the RevCon made him concerned about the NPT itself.

A substantive outcome would have strengthened the treaty and advanced its objectives, but in absence of such an outcome, I am concerned for the future health of treaty.

Two sides of the same coin

Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs – the most senior diplomat at the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs – [Izumi Nakamitsu said](#)

Non-proliferation and disarmament are two sides of the same coin, and it is simply wrong for nuclear weapons states to assume that nonproliferation obligations will be just adhered to without nuclear weapon states commitment and implementation of disarmament commitment under article six.

[Article VI of the NPT says](#)

Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and

effective international control.

However, Nakamitsu said that despite the failure of the conference to agree on an outcome document, the NPT is still in effect. [She added](#)

There was no consensus outcome, but we all need to remember that legal commitments or legal obligations under this treaty remain. So we need to make sure that all states, especially nuclear weapons states, really understand it and then maintain their commitment. Additionally, they must really move to implement their commitments.

Labour buries head in sand over deadlock

Speaking at the start of the conference on 27 April, UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office minister of state [Stephen Doughty MP said](#)

The United Kingdom is fully committed to the Treaty and our obligations under it, including Article Six.

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He also said at the time:

The UK believes that the Treaty remains the only credible route to tackle the nuclear challenges of the decades to come [â?¡] We must use the next few weeks to unite behind it [â?¡] We want this Conference to deliver a consensus outcome that strengthens implementation of the NPT. [â?¡] Whether or not we can get there, the Treaty's role in global security is enduring and undiminished.

But a collective signal that, despite our differences, we can come together to restate common commitments would further strengthen it and send a powerful message.

The *Canary* asked the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) if it would like to comment on the failure of the conference and a spokesperson said, "we are not providing a response on this story."

UK violating NPT given its modernisation and expansion of nuclear arsenal â?? CND

[Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament](#) general secretary Sophie Bolt told the *Canary*:

Nuclear risks are growing and following the expiry of the New START Treaty between the US and Russia in February, this year's NPT Review Conference was a critical opportunity to get disarmament efforts back on track.

In February 2026, [the UK Labour Government was criticised for its lack of diplomatic action, given the UK's status on the international stage as a nuclear weapons state, over the expiration of New START](#) (New Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty). The treaty limited the number of nuclear weapons the US and Russia could hold.

Bolt continued:

Instead, Nuclear Weapons States shamefully blocked any meaningful progress over the course of the negotiations resulting in deadlock.

It's now been 16 years since a consensus was reached on implementing the NPT – meanwhile nuclear powers are spending over \$100bn (£86bn) a year on modernising and expanding their arsenals.

And she added:

For nuclear powers like the UK who are signed up to the NPT, this is a violation of their commitments made under Article IV of the Treaty.

It's telling that the British government has not committed to these failed negotiations as it prepares to announce its Defence Investment Plan, which will include funding for nuclear-capable F-35A fighter jets to give the RAF a nuclear capability for the first time in almost three decades.

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Nuclear-armed states – undermining the NPT and pointing the world toward catastrophe

The International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) advocates for nuclear disarmament and promotes the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Half of the UN countries support the TPNW, but no nuclear weapons-armed states have added their support.

ICAN United Nations liaison Seth Shelden said:

Our key concern has not been whether or not diplomats agree on a piece of paper, but whether or not the NPT member states are reducing risks related to nuclear weapons.

Shelden explained that risk must be central:

The surest path to eliminating the risk is eliminating the weapons, as legally required under the NPT. And the majority of countries are indeed working in good faith toward disarmament, including by signing and ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

However:

the small handful of nuclear-armed states, and certain of their allies, are undermining the NPT, frustrating disarmament efforts, expanding arsenals, and provoking proliferation, pointing the world toward catastrophe.

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