



## Reaching Critical Will

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# *Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)*

## *WHAT is the NPT?*

The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is a multilateral treaty with **three main pillars**:

1. “Non-nuclear weapon states”—those that do not possess nuclear weapons—agreed to not seek or manufacture nuclear weapons and agreed to accept safeguards on their nuclear activities;
2. All states, including the five “nuclear weapon states”—the United States, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, France, and China—agreed to pursue negotiations toward nuclear disarmament; and
3. All states agreed to recognize the “right” to develop and use nuclear energy without discrimination.

## *WHEN did it start?*

The NPT was negotiated between 1957 and 1968. It opened for signature on 1 July 1968 and entered into force on 5 March 1970.

## *WHO is part of it?*

190 states have ratified the NPT, becoming “states parties” to the Treaty. India, Israel, and Pakistan have not signed or ratified the Treaty and have developed nuclear weapons since its entry into force. North Korea did ratify the Treaty but announced its withdrawal in 2003.

## *HOW has the NPT functioned?*

NPT states parties meet every five years to “review the progress of the Treaty”. Review Conferences convened in 1975, 1980, 1985, and 1990. For an historical overview of the NPT review process from 1975–1995, please see [www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/history.html](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/history.html).

In **1995**, the Review Conference also addressed the question of extending the Treaty past its initial 25 years. States parties at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference agreed to a **package of decisions**:

1. Strengthening the review process and providing for intercessional Preparatory Committees;
2. Adopting principles and objectives for achieving nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament;
3. Extending the Treaty indefinitely; and
4. Adopting a resolution on the Middle East.

In **2000**, states parties at the Review Conference adopted **thirteen progressive and systematic steps** to implement the nuclear disarmament obligation in the Treaty and the decisions reached at the 1995 conference.

In **2005**, states parties failed to agree on an outcome document, largely because of disagreement between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states, with the former emphasizing the importance of strengthening non-proliferation efforts and focusing on specific cases of actual and suspected non-compliance with the Treaty, and the latter emphasizing the importance of compliance with and implementation of past disarmament obligations. Developments outside the review process also prevented progress, including the failure to bring into force the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the United States’ withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and the failure of states to commence negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

## What's next?

The next Review Conference will meet in New York in April–May 2010. The **third and final Preparatory Committee** for this conference will meet from **4–15 May 2009** in New York.

**Items currently under consideration** during this review process include:

- Implementation of the 1995 and 2000 nuclear disarmament commitments;
- Operationalization of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East;
- Entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
- Commencement of negotiations of a fissile materials treaty;
- Qualitative and quantitative improvement of nuclear forces by the nuclear weapon states;
- Universalization of the Treaty;
- “Negative security assurances”;
- The nuclear programmes of North Korea, Iran, and Syria;
- Establishing a reporting mechanism for nuclear disarmament; and
- Establishing a standing NPT secretariat.

**To get involved in the review process**, first subscribe to Reaching Critical Will’s General E-News Advisory by emailing [info@reachingcriticalwill.org](mailto:info@reachingcriticalwill.org) with the subject line “subscribe enews”. Through this free service, you will receive information on how to participate directly in the Preparatory Committee and Review Conference and on how to advocate and educate for nuclear disarmament locally.

If you come to New York, you can attend all plenary meetings of the NPT conference, hold and attend side events, and interact with government and civil society delegates from all over the world.

**However, the most effective advocacy for the NPT and nuclear disarmament can be done from your home.** There are plenty of opportunities for active involvement with NPT conferences even if you can’t make it to New York:

- **See where your government stands** on the issues by reading their statements from the 2008 PrepCom here: [www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/prepcom08/statements.html](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/prepcom08/statements.html)
- **Subscribe to RCW’s *Conference on Disarmament Report***, and receive weekly updates on what your government is saying in Geneva (email [info@reachingcriticalwill.org](mailto:info@reachingcriticalwill.org) with the subject line “subscribe cdreport”). [www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/cd/cdindex.html](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/cd/cdindex.html)
- **Subscribe to the *News in Review***, the daily non-governmental NPT publication, to receive daily updates on what is happening at the PrepCom (email [info@reachingcriticalwill.org](mailto:info@reachingcriticalwill.org) with the subject line “subscribe nir”). [www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/nirindex.html](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/nirindex.html)
- **Make an appointment with your Foreign Ministry or equivalent.** Urge your Foreign Minister to attend the conference, reminding them that they represent you. Call your representatives in New York and Geneva, to let them know that you are paying attention, and that you are demanding nuclear disarmament. Use our Governmental Contact Database for their information: [www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/govcontacts/govindex.html](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/govcontacts/govindex.html)
- **Call your local media.** Publicize your views and your government’s policies, and let them know what’s happening at the Conference on Disarmament and the NPT conferences.
- **Talk to and engage** your friends, family, neighbours, local representatives, community groups, schools, and churches about the issues.
- Once the NPT meeting is in session, you can **read what your government did or did not say.** We post all statements, working papers, non-papers, reports, NGO statements, and official documents on our website in near real-time: [www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/2009index.html](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/2009index.html)