

Faith Communities Say End the Danger and Moral Tyranny of Nuclear Weapons

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“The prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons is a deeply spiritual and moral imperative,” stated Dr. William F. Vendley, Secretary General, *Religions for Peace-International (RfP)*, at the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons convened by the Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Federal Ministry of the Republic of Austria.

Speaking at the special session on *Nuclear Weapons and the Moral Compass* Co-chaired by Ambassador Libran Cabactulan, Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations and attended by governments, faith communities and civil society organizations, Dr. Vendley affirmed the growing consensus among diverse religious communities on the need for total abolition of nuclear weapons and their strong commitment to take actions.

Madam Ela Gandhi, Co-President of *RfP*, peace activist and granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi said, “There is no moral justification for nuclear weapons. The combined nuclear arsenal in the world can indeed have the effect of not only destroying humanity as a whole, but also destroying any possibility of future generations being able to survive and lead a normal life....Leaders, therefore, have a moral duty to bring an end to the possession and production of nuclear weapons.”

Dr. Mustafa Cerić, Honorary President of *RfP* and the former Raisu-l-Ulama of Islamic Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Grand Mufti of Bosnia, stated “I am here to remind my fellow Muslims that we must be people of faith, who are the messengers of PEACE, who are the peaceful men as our name calls us to be. Hence, we need to join forces with other people of faith to play the needed vital role in helping to achieve a nuclear weapons-free world.”

Reverend Tyler Wigg Stevenson, World Evangelical Alliance, reflecting on authority and justice stated, “No state has the authority to use nuclear weapons; the only legitimate goal for such weapons is that they never be used, under any circumstances.”

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Mr. Jonathan Granoff, President of the Global Security Institute and Special Representative of the United Religions Initiative, called on the United Nations Security Council to expressively prohibit the targeting of cities by nuclear weapons and such a position needs to be formalized in consistent with the existing humanitarian law. He concluded that “Nuclear weapons are immoral; we must work together to eliminate them.”

Organized jointly by the Permanent Mission of the Philippines, Global Security Institute, the United Religions Initiative, World Evangelical Alliance and *RfP*, this was the first time that civil society organizations were given a platform at the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in its three years history.

From its founding in 1970, *RfP*, the world’s largest and most representative multi-religious coalition that works for peace, has consistently been working to eliminate nuclear weapons.