

**ISRMUN**  
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**IAEA**

**International Atomic Energy  
Agency**

**Committee:** International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

**Topic:** Enforcing compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

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## I. Committee Background

The International Atomic Energy Agency was established by the United Nations (UN) on July 29th, 1957. It is headquartered in Vienna, Austria and has two “regional safeguards” which are located in Toronto, Canada and Tokyo, Japan (About, IAEA, 2021). The agency has 173 member states and four associate members (Cabo Verde, Guinea, The Gambia, and Tonga) (Member States, IAEA, 2021). The IAEA works with its member states and global partners to accomplish its mandate which consists of seeking safe, secure, and peaceful usage of atomic energy and nuclear technology, and to encourage and assist the research, development and practical application of atomic energy for peaceful uses throughout the world (About, IAEA, 2021). The agency is currently focused on supporting countries worldwide in the development and deployment of small modular reactors (SMRs) and the early detection and monitoring of zoonotic diseases (General Conference, IAEA, 2021).

## II. Topic Information

### A) History of the Topic

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is a significant international treaty that aims to “prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, to promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and to further the goal of achieving

nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament” (NPT, UN, 2020). The treaty was negotiated between 1965 and 1968 in Vienna, Austria. It was opened to signatures in 1968 and entered into force in 1970. It was renewed and extended indefinitely in 1995. A total of 191 states have joined the treaty, five of which possess nuclear weapons (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States). It is important to note that three states either in possession of or believed to be in possession of nuclear weapons have not joined the NPT. These countries are India, Israel and Pakistan (FAS, 2021).

The NPT is divided into three main sections: non-proliferation, disarmament, and the right to peacefully use nuclear technology. These sections are interrelated and together create an effective nonproliferation regime. Section I focuses on non-proliferation. It defines a nuclear state as one that has built and tested a nuclear explosive device before January 1st, 1967. According to this section, member states pledge not to “transfer nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices to any recipient or in any way assist, encourage or induce any non-nuclear-weapon state in the manufacture or acquisition of a nuclear weapon.” Next, Section II is about disarmament. It requires member states to “to pursue good-faith negotiations on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race, to nuclear disarmament, and to general and complete disarmament.” Finally, Section III encourages all countries to collaborate and develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes (Treaty, UN, 2021).

While the NPT is the most popular arms limitation and disarmament agreement, it has been criticized. The world has changed greatly since the NPT was last revised in 1995. Terrorism, non-state actor groups, and more have changed how and who can

possess nuclear weapons. One of the areas least enforced in the NPT is Section III which encourages countries to use nuclear energy for peace uses. The treaty is very vague on this point and does not specifically state what constitutes as peaceful use. According to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, this means that “countries can acquire technologies that bring them to the very brink of nuclear weapon capability without explicitly violating the agreement, and can then leave the treaty without penalty.” Moreover, even though required to dispose of their nuclear weapons, China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States have failed to do so as per Section I of the NPT. These nations have not been penalized or faced consequences for their failure to follow through with agreements made in relation to the treaty (Cirincione, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2015). This has led other member states to believe that “the nuclear 'haves' [want] to keep the nuclear 'have-nots' in their place.” Moreover, the non-member state India has called out the NPT for giving special status to states that possessed nuclear weapons before January 1967 (Rajagopalan and Biswas, The Diplomat, 2015).

## B) Current Issues

**China:** China currently has around 320 warheads (Arms Control Association, 2020). While a member of NPT, China has not followed the treaty’s guidelines of nuclear disarmament. Instead, the nation has been increasing its nuclear capabilities. In July 2021, it was announced that China was constructing nuclear missile silos outside the city of Yumen. These silos are capable of storing one intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that can reach Canada and the United States. While China has a relatively small nuclear stockpile compared to other nuclear powers such as Russia and the United States, the United Nations is concerned about its recent silo construction. The

expansion of its nuclear program is in violation of the NPT which obligates member states to dismantle their nuclear arsenals. However, China is yet to be reprimanded for its actions in accordance with the treaty (Mizokami, Popular Mechanics, 2021).

**Russia:** As of August 2020, Russia possesses “1,326 strategic warheads deployed on 485 intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and strategic bombers” (Arms Control Association, 2020). Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia made efforts to dispose of its nuclear arsenal through a series of agreements with the United States and its neighbours. However, cooling relations with the United States and members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have prompted the country to start building up its nuclear capabilities to match those of the United States. The nation’s production of new nuclear weapons is in violation of the NPT. However, it has not been stopped or removed from the treaty (Majumdar, The National Interest, 2018).

**United States:** Article Six of the Non-Proliferation Treaty makes it obligatory for nuclear states to dispose of their nuclear weapons. However, the United States, a member of the NPT, has failed to carry out this part of the treaty. In fact, the country “maintains an active nuclear stockpile of roughly 4,000 nuclear weapons, including over 1,500 deployed warheads” (Hartung, Forbes, 2021). Also, the US is working on producing technology that enhances the nuclear weapons it already possesses. According to the Inter Press Service, “has developed the “Reliable Replacement Warhead”, a new type of nuclear warhead to extend the viability of its nuclear arsenal.” It is also in the early stages of developing “tactical nuclear warheads with lower yields, which can be used on the battlefield without producing a great deal of radiation” (Jahanpour, Inter Press Service, 2015). These clear violations of the NPT have not been stopped by the United

Nations. It has caused other NPT member states to question the effectiveness of the treaty and whether there is a double standard when it comes to specific countries such as the US (Rajagopalan and Biswas, *The Diplomat*, 2015).

### **C) UN Action**

Since its inception in 1945, the United Nations has been dedicated to nuclear non-proliferation. The First Committee of the UN General Assembly, known widely as the Disarmament and International Security Committee (DISEC), specifically focuses on the topic of nuclear disarmament (Permanent Mission, 2021). In 1961, the UN General Assembly authorized the creation of an Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENCD). Between 1965 and 1968, the eighteen countries in the ENCD worked together to draft the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The UN reviews the NPT every five years at special Review Conferences at its headquarters in New York City. In 2017, the UN adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) to enhance the contents of the NPT. The TPNW is the first legally binding international agreement to ban nuclear weapons. Its aim is to completely eliminate all nuclear weapons and obligates its member states to not develop, test, produce, stockpile, station, transfer, or threaten to use nuclear weapons. It currently has 55 member states (UN Treaty Collection, 2021).

### **III. Essential Questions**

1. What is non-proliferation?
2. What is the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)?
3. Is your country a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty?

4. Does your country possess nuclear weapons? If so, what is your delegation doing to promote nuclear disarmament?
5. How has the Non-Proliferation Treaty been used by the United Nations to stop the use and production of nuclear weapons?
6. What mechanisms are in place to enforce compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty?

#### IV. Resources

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