

Scotland's Bomb: Six Times More Powerful than Hiroshima

By [Arthur West](#)

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The Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament looks forward to 2019 as another year of campaigning to rid our country and our world of the scourge of nuclear weapons, writes ARTHUR WEST

In Scotland we are very conscious that 25 miles down the road from the wonderful city of Glasgow the Faslane naval base houses the Trident nuclear weapons system.

Trident is a fearsome weapon of mass destruction. Each Trident warhead is at least six times more powerful than the bomb dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima at the end of the second world war.

However the radioactive fallout from a weapon as powerful as Trident would also cause deaths and injuries around the world — even in countries not directly involved in the conflict. A number of scientists are also of the view that climate change affecting global food supplies could not be ruled out in the event of a nuclear weapons exchange anywhere in the world.

It is a popular myth that nuclear weapons provide security. As Tim Wallis says in his wonderful book *The Truth About Trident*,

“security in today’s world does not come from military might, or from threatening other countries with nuclear destruction. It comes from working effectively with others through multilateral institutions such as the UN to ensure that all countries are secure from threats like fascism, genocide, megalomaniacal attempts at global domination and other ideologies that potentially threaten all of us.”

The destructive power of the current Trident system means that it presents a major threat to world peace. It is even more worrying that the UK government is pressing ahead with plans to replace the current system with an even more lethal set of weapons of mass destruction.

A number of recent reports have indicated that the cost of Trident replacement is spiralling and now looks likely to exceed £200 billion. This represents a major drain on public spending and takes money away from areas such as health, education and community care.

Our executive committee recently decided to organise a series of Scrap Trident Action Days

across Scotland throughout 2019. These activities will involve street stalls, public meetings and protests aimed at hammering home the message that it is time for Trident to go and, if it does, the world becomes a more peaceful place.

Scottish CND also works in partnership with a number of organisations in the wider Scottish peace movement. For example we are part of the Scottish Don't Bank on the Bomb Network that campaigns to raise awareness about the way some banks and financial institutions finance the production of nuclear weapons.

A recent report produced by the network highlighted the point that two Scottish financial institutions, the Royal Bank of Scotland Group and Standard Life Aberdeen, have between them made available over £2.8bn to companies involved in nuclear weapons production between 2014 -2017.

The level of financial assistance which continues to be available to nuclear weapons producing companies means that the work of the network is vitally important - and this is why Scottish CND will continue to play a full part in its activities during 2019.

It would be remiss of me when giving any account of the current work of Scottish CND not to mention our involvement with ICAN — the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

Within the structures of ICAN Scottish CND work with partner organisations to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which was passed at a special session of the United Nations in July 2017.

This treaty, which asks countries to commit themselves to not becoming involved in the testing, production, manufacturing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons, is very welcome indeed. The treaty also asks countries such as Britain to take steps to get rid of their nuclear weapons as a step towards a peaceful and more secure world. At the present time 19 states have fully ratified the treaty and 70 have signed the treaty with an intention to ratify.

Unfortunately the UK government has refused to engage with the treaty and is doing their best to ignore it. However in Scotland the First Minister and a number of MPs from different political parties have indicated their support for it.

In terms of Scottish CND priorities we will continue with the uphill struggle to pressurise the Westminster government to take a more serious view of this very important nuclear disarmament treaty.

It goes without saying that the world is a very dangerous place at the moment. The Trump administration seems intent on moving away from treaties aimed at the reduction of nuclear weapons. The British government also seem totally committed to pressing ahead with Trident renewal. This is why we must increase our activity.

At the present time we have active local groups in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Renfrewshire, Ayrshire, Aberdeen and the emergence of groups in Fife and Arran. It will be one of our priorities in 2019 to try to add to our local groups and networks and strengthen our anti nuclear weapons message across the country.

The last two years have also seen the revival of the Scottish CND Trade Union Network. The

main aim of the Network is to raise awareness about nuclear weapons issues within the Trade Union movement. The Network organises regular stalls at Trade Union conferences and provides briefing papers on issue such as Defence Diversification and the health and safety dangers arising from basing nuclear weapons in Scotland.

To sum up: we realise that currently we are working in a very difficult political context – it has been a particular challenge since 2016 to prevent peace issues being totally lost within the constant debate around Brexit issues.

However, despite this current difficult political context, Scottish CND and our partners in the wider peace movement are well aware that it is our responsibility to continue struggling for a more peaceful world free of the scourge of nuclear weapons. In the words of Kate Hudson, general secretary of CND, CND is needed now more than ever.

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Arthur West is the chair of [Scottish CND](#).

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