

From Advocacy to Diplomacy: The Case of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons¹

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Abstract. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) has become known for its active engagement in the drafting and promotion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). ICAN's success is related to the fact that it counts other anti-nuclear non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and a number of state figures and diplomats among its members. ICAN is a "transnational advocacy network" (TAN) that has managed to engage a significant pool of state and non-state stakeholders (actors). This paper aims to explore the ICAN phenomenon and identify the features of this transnational advocacy network. The study is based on documents and materials drawn from the official ICAN website, working papers from the NPT Review Conferences, and interviews with representatives of anti-nuclear NGOs. The novelty of the study consists in the fact that a new interpretation of the concept of "transnational advocacy network" was introduced into Russian academic discourse and the main instruments and principles of TAN were identified on the basis of the ICAN example. The research into ICAN was carried out according to three bullet-points: (1) analysis of NGO activities in the NPT negotiation process; (2) identification of the features of ICAN as a TAN, the main trends and methods of work; (3) problems and limitations of ICAN. A hallmark of TANs today is that they combine advocacy and expert assessment, allowing such coalitions to work successfully with international organizations and states. ICAN is an interesting case study because there has been a convergence of interests between a number of states and anti-nuclear NGOs. However, the question remains as to how long it will be able to keep functioning in the TAN format and continue to frame the agenda of the NPT Conferences. The drive to ban nuclear weapons, and then to lobby for the signing and ratification of the NPT, demonstrated that ICAN had moved from public activity to direct diplomacy. However, there is reason to believe ICAN and its coordinating role in the NPT negotiation process may become less important as the focus and interests of states shifts back to public outreach activities.

Keywords: ICAN; transnational advocacy network; TAN; regime; NPT; TPNW; NGOs; prohibition of nuclear weapons; nuclear norms.

¹ English translation from the Russian text: Mikhaylenko E. 2022. Ot politiki ubezhdeniya k diplomatii: uroki mezhdunarodnoy kampanii po zapreshcheniyu yadernogo oruzhiya. *Mezhdunarodnyye protsessy* [International Trends]. 20(1). P. 55–79. DOI 10.17994/IT.2022.20.1.68.5

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)² is a transnational advocacy network (TAN) of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), representatives of national parliaments and diplomats that advocates for the elimination of nuclear weapons. It was established as a result of a decision made at the 2007 International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)³ world congress in Helsinki.⁴ ICAN unites under its banner both NGOs working in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament and individual government officials and diplomats.

The consolidation of various players within ICAN allowed significant progress to be made in 2016–2017 in terms of promoting and developing the main provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The campaign received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017. The TPNW entered into force in 2021.⁵ The fact that the draft treaty was adopted and ratified so quickly by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) testifies to the sheer scope of the work carried out by activists and ICAN members. In terms of understanding how modern NGOs can consolidate efforts to lobby for new norms and treaties, it is important to study ICAN and its methods.

Numerous researchers have broached the subject of TANs and their role in human rights, environmental and other areas (Keck, Sikkink 1998; Keck, Sikkink 1999; Thomas 2002; Mato 2005; Kelly 2007; Trommer 2011; Strange 2011; Pieck 2013; Zayak 2017; Carson 2018; Smith, Hughes, Plummer, Duncan 2020; Crowley-Vigneau, Baykov 2020), but understanding their role in the context of nuclear non-proliferation and the prohibition of nuclear weapons is relatively new. Most researchers study the role of the TPNW in the context of the nuclear non-proliferation regime (Acheson 2018; Considine 2019; Egeland 2019; Meyer, Sauer 2018; Mikhaylenko, Degtyarev 2019). At the same time, ICAN itself remains poorly studied, save for a few individual works devoted to it. For instance, Thomas Ruff and his IPPNW colleagues have covered the history of ICAN and its participation in the TPNW (Ruff 2018).⁶ Nick Ritchie and Kjølvs Egeland see ICAN as a “transnational advocacy network” that has managed to mobilize a large number of state and non-state actors (Ritchie, Egeland 2018) using the “rhetoric of resistance.” At the same time, John Borrie and several other experts suggest paying attention to the methods of work employed by ICAN and how effective they are (Borrie, Spies, Wan 2018).

² The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). URL: <https://www.icanw.org/> (accessed: 20.01.2022).

³ International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW). URL: <https://www.ippnw.org/> (accessed: 20.01.2022).

⁴ International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. URL: <https://www.ippnw.org/programs/nuclearweapons-abolition/international-campaign-to-abolish-nuclear-weapons> (accessed: 20.01.2022).

⁵ Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. URL: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/ru/wmd/nuclear/tpnw/> (accessed: 20.04.2022).

⁶ Hawkins D., Sweeney D., Ruff T. ICAN's Origins – From Little Things, Big Things Grow... ICAN. October 2019. URL: https://www.icanw.org/ican_origins (accessed: 01.02.2022).

Russian scholars who have broached the topic include A. Naumov, E. Ivanova, L. Voronkov, A. Gutorov, and E. Shagabieva, who have written about the formation and activities of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) (Naumov 2009; Ivanova, Ivanov 2012; Voronkov 2018; Gutorov 2017; Shagabieva 2010). The role of NGOs as global civil society organizations has been studied separately in Russian discourse (Ivanov 2010; Efimov 2010; Stetsko 2012; Evlaev, Zubkov 2020; and others).

Several works have been published on the role of norms in the context of nuclear non-proliferation (Price, Tannenwald 1996; Rublee, Cohen 2018; Muller, Wunderlich 2018; 2020; Istomin, Crowley-Vigneau 2020). In Russia, A. Crowley-Vigneau and A. Baykov introduced the term “transnational advocacy networks” into the scientific parlance (Crowley-Vigneau, Baykov 2018). However, research into the role of civil society and NGOs in promoting the ideas of disarmament and the prohibition of nuclear weapons is severely lacking in the Russian discursive space.

This article aims to fill the theoretical gap and identify the role of modern anti-nuclear TANs in the formation of new norms within the framework of the nuclear non-proliferation region through the example of ICAN. The sources used for our study include documents and materials from the official ICAN website, working documents of NPT Review Conferences (NPT RC), and interviews with representatives of anti-nuclear NGOs. The paper’s contribution to the field lies in the fact that it introduces a new interpretation of the concept of “transnational advocacy networks” into Russian scientific discourse and that it uses the example of ICAN to identify the main tools and principles of the operation of TANs. In the first part of the article, we discuss the theoretical foundations of the establishment of TANs, and formulate a theoretical approach to the analysis of ICAN. This is then followed by an empirical analysis of ICAN as a special TAN model.

Research Methods

In terms of its theoretical base, the present study takes its cue from critical approaches to international security, which include post-structuralism, constructivism, feminism, and other movements (Buzan, Hansen 2009; Bolton, Minor 2016). Post-structuralism, as understood by Lene Hansen, allows us to expand the boundaries of research, encompassing existing institutions and practices, while also involving marginalized groups and voices (Hansen 2010). Researchers who use this approach call for a critical deconstruction of the ways “strategic studies” builds “societal cohesion” and legitimizes particular policies (Hansen 2010). Adopting a post-structuralist approach (or a broad understanding of the term) allows us to trace the evolution of norms in the context of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, as well as the institutionalization of the image of the “Other” in the practice of ICAN. The prohibition of nuclear weapons is an important practice for deconstructing rational norms. Norms can have permissive or enabling effects when we fear a situation may develop in an unwanted way. They may also have constitutive effects, that is, they determine who we are (Price, Tan-

nenwald 1996). Studying examples of nuclear and chemical weapons “taboos,” Richard Price and Nina Tannenwald note that the prohibitory norms that shaped chemical weapons were institutionalized, while nuclear weapons were not legally prohibited. All that exists is a non-use norm, which in practice has greater force than the prohibitory norm regarding chemical weapons (Price, Tannenwald 1996). ICAN calls for the deconstruction of the non-use norm regarding nuclear weapons, and thus for a complete ban on their use. According to researchers, this leads to a conflict with existing norms within the nuclear non-proliferation regime itself (Acheson 2019). A combination of structuralist, feminist and constructivist approaches can be used to explore the role of ICAN’s practices in transforming traditional norms and forming new ones within the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

The research presented here is based on interviews with representatives of anti-nuclear NGOs who took part in the NPT Preparatory Committees in 2018 and 2019, as well as on the observations of participants at conferences and meetings that took place as part of ICAN’s activities.⁷ The critical mobilization around the promotion of the TPNW is a good case for studying the activities of TANs, for two reasons: 1) ICAN includes several networks and NGOs, which both problematizes and furthers the theoretical rethinking of TAN theories; and 2) ICAN’s work on the side-lines of the Preparatory Committees and the NPT Review Conferences is an important area in the internationalization of a new norm, namely the stigmatization of nuclear weapons.

As far as this researcher is concerned, ICAN’s role in the NPT negotiation process and the promotion of the TPNW is crucial. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons aims to strengthen Article 6 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.⁸ In this paper, we will attempt to answer two central questions: 1) What role do NGOs and ICAN play in promoting the idea of banning nuclear weapons and lobbying for the signing and ratification of the TPNW? and 2) How interested are NPT member states in supporting the ICAN TAN and the creation of new norms?

The study of ICAN as a TAN involves four stages: (1) defining the theoretical field of research; (2) analysing the activities of NGOs in the NPT negotiation process; (3) determining the features of ICAN as a TAN, as well as the main areas and methods of its work; (4) clarifying the problems and limitations of ICAN’s activities in the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

⁷ The author of the present study conducted 12 in-depth interviews during her work as an observer in the NPT Preparatory Committees (April 23 – May 6, 2018, and April 29 – May 10, 2019) on the role of the TPNW in the transformation of the NPT regime and the role of ICAN in this process, as well as 15 short-form interviews with representatives of national delegations and NGOs. Respondents were asked three questions: “Why is the TPNW necessary? Will the TPNW enter into force? What role does the TPNW play in the context of the nuclear non-proliferation regime?” Most representatives of the official delegations of nuclear-weapon states refused to comment on the issue. A list of NGO representatives and members of official delegations of NPT member states who were interviewed can be found in Appendix 1.

⁸ Article 6 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons reads: “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.” Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. URL: https://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/conventions/npt.shtml (accessed: 20.04.2022).

The Theoretical Foundations of TANs

The term “transnational advocacy network” was introduced into scholarly discourse by Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in their work “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics” (Keck, Sikkink 1998). Numerous works have been published in the twenty-plus years since that paper appeared that delve deeper into the theory and study of specific TANs (Kelly 2007; Strange 2011; Pieck 2013; Zayak 2017; Crowley-Vigneau, Baykov 2020). Yet almost all theoretical works on transnational advocacy networks are based on the concept first put forwards by Keck and Sikkink.

TANs are “forms of organization characterized by voluntary, reciprocal and horizontal patterns of communications and exchange” (Keck, Sikkink 1998: 8). Like lawyers, these networks can advocate and protect the rights of others. They can be formed around such important value-laden issues as human rights, the environment, women, etc. The moment a leader emerges who can provide a strategy for solving intractable problems, TANs become an “action network” (Keck, Sikkink 1998: 9). According to Keck and Sikkink, TANs can include different participants: international and domestic NGOs, research and advocacy organizations; local social movements; foundations; the media; churches, trade unions, consumer organizations, intellectuals; parts of regional and international intergovernmental organizations; and parts of the executive and/or parliamentary branches of governments. transnational advocacy networks bring together actors who share common values and a common discourse. Their activities centre on the exchange of information and coordination of actions. The purpose of TANs is to mobilize information in order to create a new information agenda and put pressure on governments and international organizations. Transnational advocacy networks bring new ideas, norms and discourses into political debates and serve as sources of information and arguments. These are large communication groups.

The activities of TANs, like those of any social movement, can be implemented in different ways: through diffusion, where modern technologies make it easier for ideas and movements to spread from region to region; internalization, or movement beyond the territory or state where it first emerged; and externalization, when it reaches global status (della Porta, Tarrow 2005: 3–5).

Ideas and norms are important for TANs, just as they are for any social movement. Keck and Sikkink identify three reasons for the appearance of transnational advocacy networks: 1) the inability to resolve issues at the domestic level; 2) the emergence of thought leaders who believe that networking will help them achieve their goals; and 3) the development of means of communication (international conferences and other events) (Keck, Sikkink 1999). Sonja Pieck believes that the mobilization (and disappearance) of social movements can be explained through the study of emotions (Pieck 2013: 123). Coalitions are typically formed around emotions such as anger at injustice or exclusion, a sense of solidarity, or hope for change. They become the basis of the

belief that transnational interaction can lead to desired social transformations. Emotions can also play an important role in the process of bureaucratization, when a movement becomes institutionalized. Empathy and solidarity can serve as a bond between activists, even in the presence of geographic or cultural differences. Within organizations, emotions can provide a sense of community and wholeness. The problem with research into transnational advocacy networks is that the process of bureaucratization can be weak or even harmful, as it can lead to the creation of hierarchies and centralized decision making, which is contrary to the original purpose of the movement or coalition (Pieck 2013: 124). Typologizing TANs is particularly difficult, as each example is unique.

Transnational advocacy networks make use of various tools in the course of their work: information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics, and accountability politics (Keck, Sikkink 1999: 95–98). Information politics assumes the ability to obtain political results from the data used by NGOs (Keck, Sikkink 1998: 16). A feature of NGO information policy is that it is “first-person information,” including, for instance, eyewitness accounts (Keck, Sikkink 1998: 19). The toolkit of information policy today is becoming increasingly diverse: social networks supplement traditional media, they are increasingly recognized as an important tool for protecting one’s interests (Borrie, Spies, Wan 2018: 11). A growing number of researchers are examining the use of social media in grassroots and social movements, as well as issues related to civic engagement, social capital, and voter turnout (Chalmers, Shotton 2015; Borrie, Spies, Wan 2018). NGOs use symbolic politics to produce powerful arguments containing specific examples, stories and images that could attract the attention of the audience and move people to action (Keck, Sikkink 1998: 22). Leverage politics refers to the use of instruments of pressure through the involvement of powerful political actors or participation in international organizations, as well as to intangible (moral) levers that make it possible to exert pressure on states that traditionally want to project a positive image to voters (Keck, Sikkink 1998: 23). Accountability politics is aimed at achieving specific results that go beyond simply discussing the problem (Keck, Sikkink 1998: 24–25). Not only do NGOs involve government representatives in resolving specific issues, but they also work with them to achieve results. Thus, politicians and government representatives take responsibility for resolving the issue.

NGOs can carry out their activities through transnational pressure groups, transnational social movement organizations, transnational advocacy networks, and global civil society (Kelly 2007). One feature that sets TANs apart from other international movements and pressure groups is the importance of the ideas or values that underlie their formation (Kelly 2007: 87). While transnational pressure groups focus on lobbying their interests at home, and transnational social movement organizations represent institutionalized forms of global protest politics, transnational advocacy networks combine persuasion and expertise to enable them to work successfully with international organizations and states.

TANs are unique in that they are able not only to mobilize different types of players, but also to encourage states to internalize new norms which soon acquire a “taken-for-granted” quality, making conformance with the norm almost automatic (Finnemore, Sikkink 1998: 904). The ultimate goal of TANs is, through socialization and institutionalization, to make a given norm natural, “like the laws of nature” (Keck, Sikkink 1998: 35).

When analysing TANs, it is important to find out under what conditions they are most likely to achieve their stated goals, and what will happen to them after they have completed their mission. In fact, a measure of the effectiveness of transnational advocacy networks could be the appearance of a new agenda in international organizations, influence on state behaviour, or influence on the institutional procedures of international organizations (Keck, Sikkink 1999: 98–99). Modern transnational advocacy networks have a wider range of issues and objectives, as they work on a global scale with international institutions. This is why it is important to understand the life cycle of modern TANs, as well as their role in international relations today.

The Role of NGOs in the NPT Negotiation Process

NGOs are actively involved in the NPT negotiation process. Their activities with respect to the nuclear non-proliferation regime can be divided into three stages. The first stage was associated with the formation of the anti-nuclear movement and the participation of civil society in shaping the anti-nuclear agenda at the national and international levels from the 1950s to 2000. At the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the decision was taken to invite representatives of intergovernmental organizations and NGOs as observers and allow them to attend meetings starting from the next conference.⁹ The second stage (2000–2005) was marked by the official participation of NGOs in the negotiation process at the NPT Review Conferences and Preparatory Committees. The third stage (2007–2020) is associated with the formation of TANs and their activities in the context of the NPT negotiation process.

The most significant element of the first stage was the civil society movement for nuclear disarmament. In the 1950s–1960s, the older anti-war NGOs started to merge with the new nuclear disarmament organizations. One of the first initiatives was the proposal of the International Peace Bureau to convene special UN sessions on disarmament and nuclear disarmament, and to recognize the illegality of nuclear weapons.¹⁰ The fight to ban nuclear weapons was associated with deteriorating relations between the Soviet Union and the United States and the fear of activists that one or both of the

⁹ Final Document. Part II. Documents issued at the Conference. Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. 1995. URL: http://www.nonproliferation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/1995_FD_Part_II.pdf (accessed: 22.02.2022).

¹⁰ International Peace Bureau. URL: <https://www.ipb.org> (accessed: 20.01.2022).

sides could resort to the use of nuclear weapons (Santoro, Ogilvie-White 2010). NGOs acted as pressure groups on governments and also formed a general civil peace movement. Representatives of NGOs and the academic community did not have a formal status at the NPT RC, but were allowed to either participate as external expert advisers in delegations, or be present informally in meeting rooms and communicate with delegates. For example, the U.S. delegation held a number of meetings with representatives of NGOs prior to and throughout the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1985. At the same time, some diplomats believed that the participation of NGOs had a detrimental effect on the process. The Chairman of the 1990 NPT RC tried to prevent NGO representatives from attending the conference. Despite this, NGOs were still able to influence a group of non-aligned states which ended up blocking the final document of the conference.¹²

NGOs have officially been allowed to participate as observers at the NPT since 2000. Those that have taken part in the NPT RCs since that time can be classified into two types: research NGOs and advocacy NGOs (Williams, Viotti 2017: 174). Research NGOs are notable for their organized structure, technical experts, the desire for regular interaction with politicians through expert consultations, and the active promotion of the strategies they develop. One such NGO is the James Martin Center for Non-proliferation Studies in the United States, which counts leading experts in the field of nuclear non-proliferation among its members. Representatives of research NGOs were often active participants in the NPT negotiations process before 2000 as part of official delegations. Advocacy NGOs promote specific policies primarily to influence public opinion and gain the support of civil society (Williams, Viotti 2017: 174). They form the basis of the anti-nuclear movement. More than 200 such NGOs currently participate in the NPT negotiation process, and they each have different approaches to nuclear non-proliferation issues and employ different tools when working with delegations.

The first network structure to bring together advocacy NGOs under a single banner was the Abolition 2000 association,¹³ which included almost all anti-nuclear NGOs (the International Peace Bureau, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms,¹⁴ the International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation,¹⁵ and others). In 1996, Abolition 2000 drew up a convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.¹⁶

¹¹ See, for example: Expert Member of the German Delegation on the NPT Review Conference. Oral History Interview with Harold Muller. 15.11.2016. Wilson Center Digital Archives. URL: <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/177544> (accessed: 22.02.2022).

¹² Pilat J. F. Arms Control and the 1990 NPT Review Conference. Workshop Summary. Occasional Paper. 1990. No. 25. CNSS.

¹³ Abolition 2000. URL: <https://www.abolition2000.org/en/> (accessed: 05.01.2022).

¹⁴ The International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms (IALANA). URL: <https://www.ialana.info/> (accessed: 05.01.2022).

¹⁵ International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation (INESAP). URL: <http://www.inesap.org/what-inesap> (accessed: 05.01.2022).

¹⁶ Model Nuclear Weapons Convention. Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Testing, Production, Stockpiling, Transfer, Use and Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons and on Their Elimination. INESAP. 1997. URL: http://inesap.org/sites/default/files/inesap_old/publ_nwc_english.pdf (accessed: 05.01.2022).

The resulting document received the support of the UN Secretary-General and was distributed to UN members states as a guide for multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament. Significantly, the draft Convention later served as a basis of sorts for the creation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The question of the legitimacy of nuclear weapons has been raised time and again. In 1995, the decision of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons called on nuclear-weapon states to commit to eliminating their arsenals.¹⁷ A number of coalitions took on this task during the NPT negotiation process: the Middle Powers Initiative (MPI), the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), and the Article VI Forum (A6F). Despite this, the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons justifying the presence of nuclear weapons as a tool for protecting state security was adopted the very next year.¹⁸ The humanitarian conferences held in 2012–2015 gave impetus to a new round of negotiations. Activities to promote the prohibition of nuclear weapons began within the framework of a UN Open-Ended Working Group (UN OEWG) in 2016, in which ICAN played an active part.¹⁹

ICAN was established in 2005 at the initiative of President of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War Ronald McCoy with the goal of banning and eliminating nuclear war. The 2005 NPT RC was one of the most disastrous conferences of the NPT review cycle, and the absence of any kind of progress in the nuclear disarmament process prompted McCoy to propose that the successful experience of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, which led to the conclusion of an international convention through the joint work of civil society and governments of several countries, be used in the establishment of ICAN.²⁰ The first ICAN office was opened in Melbourne in 2006, and a second in Oslo in 2010. It then went on to employ staff in Geneva between 2010 and 2015 thanks to funding, mostly from the Norwegian government, to coordinate the campaign and expand its reach, initially in Europe and then in the Middle East and Africa. At the 2010 NPT RC, participating countries expressed their “deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons.”²¹ Three conferences were held on the back of this statement in 2013 and 2014 on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear explosions, with ICAN

¹⁷ The Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. URL: <http://www.ccnr.org/canberra.html> (accessed: 05.01.2022).

¹⁸ Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons. Note by the Secretary-General. Fifty-First Session of the UN General Assembly. 19.07.1998. URL: <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/advisory-opinions/advisory-opinions-1996-ru.pdf> (accessed: 05.01.2022).

¹⁹ Decision of the UN General Assembly on the Establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group. United Nations. General Assembly. Seventieth Session. First Committee. Agenda Item 97 (bb). General and Complete Disarmament: Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations. 29.10.2015. URL: <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/1com/1com15/resolutions/L13Rev1.pdf> (accessed: 14.02.2022).

²⁰ Hawkins D., Sweeney D., Ruff T. ICAN's Origins – From Little Things, Big Things Grow... ICAN. October 2019. URL: https://www.icanw.org/ican_origins (accessed: 01.02.2022).

²¹ Final document NPT (Vol.II). Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to Review the Treaty. 2002. P. 721. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/451/51/PDF/N1045151.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed: 14.02.2022).

acting as the NGO coordinator at each. ICAN representatives were active in the UN OEWG sessions in 2016 aimed at formulating specific proposals to promote nuclear disarmament, and coordinated a series of meetings of NGO representatives during the second round of the UN OEWG's work in May 2016.²² The decision was made on the back of the work of humanitarian conferences and the recommendations of the UN OEWG to convene a UN Conference in 2017 to agree on the text of a legally binding treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons.²³ The discussion and development of the text of the TPNW took place at the UN Headquarters in New York in March, June and July 2017, with the participation of over 135 countries, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and members of civil society organizations. On July 7, 2017, a total of 122 states voted in favour of the TPNW. It was opened for signature on September 20, 2017 and, after ratification by 50 signatories, entered into force on January 22, 2021. In December 2017, ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. As of that year, ICAN included 468 partner organizations in 101 countries (Ruff 2018: 5–6); the number of partners had risen to 607 by December 2021.²⁴

Thus, ICAN, having latched onto the idea of developing the TPNW was able to bring most of the NGOs working in the NPT negotiation process together, and to successfully use network forms of work with civil society and official delegations.

What Makes ICAN Unique

The ICAN's work within the framework of the NPT negotiation process effectively began in 2010 when it took part in the NPC RC, where on the side-lines of official meetings countries expressed their "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons."²⁵ The anti-nuclear movement has existed for some time now, and a great many countries are involved in the negotiation process on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. As we noted earlier, different types of NGOs participate as observers – namely research NGOs and advocacy NGOs. In the context of the NPT negotiation process, NGOs can also be conditionally divided into those that support arms control (largely represented by research organizations) and those that call for nuclear disarmament (which include all anti-nuclear activists and some research NGOs). ICAN succeeded in uniting both of these groups by acting as a coordinator in conferences on humanitarian issues.

²² May Session of the 2016 Open-Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament. Reaching Critical Will. URL: <https://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/disarmament-fora/oewg/2016/may> (accessed: 14.02.2022).

²³ Resolution A/RES/71/258. Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations. 2016. URL: <https://undocs.org/ru/A/RES/71/258> (accessed: 27.02.2022).

²⁴ Partner Organizations. ICAN website. URL: <https://www.icanw.org/partners> (accessed: 01.12.2021).

²⁵ Final Document. Volume I. Part I. Review of the operation of the Treaty, as provided for in its article VIII (3), taking into account the decisions and the resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. Conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions. Part II. Organization and work of the Conference. New York. 2010. UN. URL: [http://undocs.org/NPT/CONF.2010/50%20\(VOL.I\)](http://undocs.org/NPT/CONF.2010/50%20(VOL.I)) (accessed: 01.12.2021).

This TAN emerged as a result of several factors. First, we have to mention the growing contradictions in the NPT negotiation process regarding the implementation of Article 6 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Not only did NGOs form to lobby for disarmament during the negotiation process, but a new discourse also emerged about the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Second, research institutes and NGOs started to formulate and promote the TAN for research purposes, thus strengthening the argument in favour of disarmament.²⁶ Third, a group of activist states has formed among those countries that do not possess nuclear weapons. Not only does this groups push humanitarian initiatives, but it also acts as donors for ICAN and those NGOs that support it. Norway, Sweden, Austria, Mexico and New Zealand have all expressed their support for this initiative. Finally, ICAN has brought the main coordinators of NGOs in the NPT negotiation process into the organizing committee – namely, the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and a number of other organizations that are active in this area. This is how the network was formed, and it, unlike INGOs and various pressure groups, has managed to bring together a diverse array of participants. The network was made up of ICAN, several NGOs that were part of the steering group, many of the states that signed the first Joint Statement on the Humanitarian Dimension of Nuclear Disarmament drawn up by the NPT Preparatory Committee in 2012, and a number of intergovernmental organizations and think tanks (such as the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Oslo-based International Law and Policy Institute) (Ritchie, Egeland 2018: 10).

The international campaign to ban nuclear weapons has acted as a creator of new norms which destroy rational interpretations in nuclear discourse. These include principles such as “nuclear non-use,” “nuclear non-acquisition,” “non-proliferation,” “disarmament” (Ruble, Cohen 2018) and “political restraint,” which implies refraining from the threat and use of nuclear weapons (Muller, Wunderlich 2020: 173). These norms were formed within the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Compliance with norms reinforces the identity of states and their status as legitimate members of the international community and/or as a certain kind of state (Price, Tannenwald 1996). The process of challenge norms continues within the NPT regime. Disputes between the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons arise with regard to many of its provisions, and different groups of states offer different options for how the non-proliferation regime should develop moving forward. The immorality of nuclear weapons, the dangers of offering up various theories of deterrence, and the patriarchy of the NPT regime, where certain “senior” states are responsible for the security of the entire world, now form the basis of ICAN’s discourse. Humanitarian discourse un-

²⁶ Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. UNIDIR. URL: <https://unidir.org/projects/humanitarian-impact-nuclear-weapons-2>; [http://undocs.org/NPT/CONF.2010/50%20\(VOL.I\)\(accessed: 01.02.2022\)](http://undocs.org/NPT/CONF.2010/50%20(VOL.I)(accessed: 01.02.2022)).

dermines the legitimacy of nuclear weapons, and gender analysis of nuclear discourse helps to deconstruct nuclear weapons as a symbol of power and an instrument of domination. The possession of nuclear weapons as an emblem of masculine power is a gendered social construct designed to maintain the existing order (Acheson 2018: 4). Not only does ICAN create humanitarian norms within the nuclear non-proliferation regime, but it also deconstructs the traditional foundations of the NPT regime.

The new discourse that has emerged within the NPT negotiation process developed as part of the initiative to ban nuclear weapons. ICAN started out its work by attending various conferences on humanitarian issues, where representatives of non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS) and members of research centres and institutes (as well as NGOs) took part. Many states saw participation in these conferences as necessary for identifying new forms of collective action to reduce inevitable nuclear risks. The organizing countries (Norway, Mexico and Austria) all attempted to bring states and NGOs together in order to pinpoint the risks associated with nuclear weapons, as well as to develop political and legal norms for the further elimination of nuclear weapons.²⁷ At the same time, nuclear-weapon states (NWS) and their allies expressed the need to act within the framework of the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan, which noted the reaffirmation by the nuclear-weapon States of their unequivocal undertaking to accomplish, in accordance with the principle of irreversibility, the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament.²⁸ Paragraph 81 of the document notes the proposals to “consider negotiations” on a framework agreement on nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom and the United States – both nuclear-weapon states – only attended the third conference on humanitarian issues in Austria in 2014. They refused to take part in any further discussions of humanitarian issues. The nuclear-weapon states insisted on a “gradual process” of disarmament “that takes into account the international security environment,” and therefore openly opposed the TPNW.²⁹ The task of including a discussion of the TPNW agenda of the 2018–2019 Preparatory Committees, and then at the 2020 NPT Conference, thus took on paramount importance for ICAN. However, the issue of nuclear weapons was pushed to the side-lines of the NPT Conferences in the discussion of this initiative.

ICAN operates in various ways. Using the classification put forward by Keck and Sikkink (Keck, Sikkink 1999: 95–98), we can see how it uses various practices that would qualify as symbolic politics, leverage politics and accountability politics at two levels: public awareness and diplomatic (Table 1).

²⁷ See Austrian Ambassador Alexander Kmentt’s take on the work of humanitarian conferences (Kmentt 2015).

²⁸ 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Final Document. Volume I. Part I. Review of the operation of the Treaty, as provided for in its article VIII (3), taking into account the decisions and the resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. Conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions. NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I). P. 14–16. URL: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N10/390/23/PDF/N1039023.pdf?OpenElement>

²⁹ P5 Joint Statement on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. URL: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/p5-joint-statement-on-the-treaty-on-the-non-proliferation-of-nuclear-weapons> (accessed: 20.01.2022).

The inhumanity of nuclear weapons is a strong argument in symbolic politics. ICAN has been disseminating information about the dangers of nuclear weapons, and calling on civil society to become involved in the formation of a nuclear-free world, since 2007. It regularly organizes conferences, seminars, exhibitions, and film screenings about nuclear weapons and their catastrophic consequences. An important area of ICAN's activities is building awareness of the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear explosion, which, in turn, is aimed at changing the psychological and emotional state of the public.³⁰ It also produces brochures and short videos (available for free) demonstrating the catastrophic consequences that a nuclear explosion would have and calling on people to become part of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.³¹ The landing page of the ICAN website featured a “meme” with actor ICAN supporter Martin Sheen, who claims that “if Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. were alive today, they would be part of ICAN” (Ritchie & Egeland 2018: 13).

Table 1. ICAN Working Methods

| ICAN Working Methods / Levels of activity | Information politics | Symbolic politics | Leverage politics | Accountability politics |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Public awareness | informational materials on the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons (website, booklets, social networks; conferences, seminars) | symbolism of resistance; symbolism of inequality; feminist discourse (the fight against the patriarchy in the context of nuclear weapons) | getting the media involved in covering important issues; getting famous people involved in the campaign; anti-nuclear demonstrations and meetings | work with members of national parliaments; coordinating work with other NGOs |
| Diplomatic | analytical work with research NGOs and preparation of joint materials; analytical materials for NPT Review Conferences | side-events at NPT Conferences with the participation of <i>hibakusha</i> (people who survived the 1945 atomic bombings) | joint work with diplomats of non-nuclear-weapon states to develop an algorithm to influence representatives of nuclear-weapon states; speaking on behalf of all NGOs on the prohibition of nuclear weapons at NPT Conferences | work within the framework of the UN Open-Ended Working Group (2016–2017); joint meetings with representatives of nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states on the side-lines of conferences; coordinating the work of NGOs, consolidating NGOs in the NPT negotiation process |

Source: Compiled by the author based on the classification of Keck and Sikkink (Keck, Sikkink 1999)

³⁰ Catastrophic Humanitarian Harm. ICAN. URL: <http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/CHH-Booklet-WEB-2015.pdf> (accessed: 10.01.2022); Unspeakable Suffering – The Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons. ICAN. URL: <http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Unspeakable.pdf> (accessed: 10.01.2022).

³¹ “Time to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.” Vimeo. 2010. URL: <https://vimeo.com/11047167> (accessed January 10, 2022); “Million Pleas.” Vimeo. 2011. <https://vimeo.com/14532530> (accessed: 10.01.2022).

The organization spends much of its time shining a light on what the consequences of a nuclear explosion would look like. The humanitarian initiative has come to be seen as “resistance diplomacy,” which aims to undermine “nuclear hegemony” through a “fundamental normative reset” (Ritchie, Egeland 2018). ICAN’s resistance diplomacy stands out for how it combines anti-nuclear rhetoric with gender issues. The injustice of the nuclear non-proliferation regime has come to be viewed, among other things, through the prism of feminist discourse, which states that nuclear weapons are an element of the patriarchy (Acheson 2019).

ICAN’s leverage politics and resistance diplomacy aims not only to change the discourse around nuclear weapons, but also to influence the behaviour of states. The idea is to involve the media in order to shape public opinion. The ICAN website has published detailed guidelines on how to talk to journalists about banning nuclear weapons. The key thing to remember when working with the media is to be as clear and concise as possible when talking about issues and problems (the guidelines note that the most logical way to shine a light on the main issues is through debates among activists, experts and journalists).³² The document also proposes a “message map,” which is a list of arguments in response to scepticism about the TPNW.³³

Accountability politics aims to engage more powerful players in order to promote ideas and norms (Keck, Sikkink 1999: 97–98). The ICAN website notes that almost 1600 members of parliament around the world have already joined the organization’s call for a ban on nuclear weapons.³⁴ Detailed instructions are also given here on how to defend the point of view of TPNW supporters within the framework of the activities of members of parliament in different countries. The organization’s website includes guidelines on how to join the ICAN Parliamentary Pledge, which is a “commitment by parliamentarians around the world to work for their government to join the Treaty [on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons].”³⁵ Any sitting member of a national, state/municipal or regional parliament or congress from any country in the world can sign this document.

At the diplomatic level, ICAN has used both analytical and lobbying methods during the Conferences themselves. Until 2012, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons focused exclusively on analytical work. In 2013–2015, ICAN representatives analysed information and prepared documents and reports on the possibility of getting the TPNW signed and ratified. During this same period, non-nuclear-weapon states started to actively exchange information with the organization. A key moment was ICAN’s joint work with governments and analytical NGOs, for example with Chatham House,³⁶ SIPRI and UNIDIR. At the 2015 NPT Review Conference,

³² Media. ICAN Campaigners Meeting. ICAN. URL: http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/WEB_media_final.pdf (accessed: 11.01.2022).

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Full List of Pledge Takers. ICAN. URL: https://pledge.icanw.org/full_list_of_pledge_takers https://pledge.icanw.org/full_list_of_pledge_takers (accessed: 11.01.2022).

³⁵ Parliamentary Pledge. ICAN Australia. URL: <https://icanw.org.au/pledge/> (accessed: 11.01.2022).

³⁶ Chatham House is recognized as an “undesirable” organization in the Russian Federation.

the chair of the event, Ambassador Taous Feroukhi attempted to create an informal group of leading countries that would be tasked with developing a section on nuclear disarmament. Faced with a complete lack of agreement, the president stopped the negotiations two days before the end of the conference and announced that she would produce a Final Document under her own responsibility. For many States, the text that was finally submitted by the chair fell far short of expectations with regard to nuclear disarmament and the importance of the humanitarian initiative (Kmentt 2015 : 703). Despite this negative outcome, the 2015 NPT Review Conference demonstrated that the humanitarian initiative was now firmly established on the international agenda and would thus have to be an integral part of future multilateral work on nuclear weapons (Kmentt 2015 : 704). After the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, a consensus appeared between the non-nuclear-weapon states and ICAN. Some started to tout the idea that nuclear disarmament could be achieved “even without nuclear arms states” (Mekata 2018: 82). All past efforts had been directed towards nuclear weapons states. There was an understanding of the need to “move forward, even if the nuclear arms states aren’t prepared or ready” (Mekata 2018 : 82).

At the diplomatic level, symbolic politics is implemented within the framework of side-events at NPT conferences. Anti-nuclear activists from Japan, *hibakusha* (people who survived the 1945 atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki)³⁷ are typically invited to these meetings and talk about their experiences and impressions of the consequences of the attack.

Leverage politics within the framework of the NPT negotiation process is implemented jointly with representatives of non-nuclear-weapon countries. The closed nature of ICAN suggests that meetings are held with diplomats from these countries to develop an algorithm for influencing representatives of nuclear-weapon countries.

ICAN representatives exert diplomatic pressure on behalf of all NGOs in their speeches on prohibiting nuclear weapons at NPC conferences.³⁸ In 2019, the ICAN speech was delivered in Russian by Alimzhan Akhmetov, the founder and director of a Kazakhstan-based NGO.³⁹ His words can also be considered an example of leverage politics used on diplomats in the post-Soviet space.

In 2016–2017, ICAN representatives carried out research, formulated positions and prepared analytical materials as part of the work of the UN Open-Ended Working Group. Non-nuclear-weapon countries that support the ICAN acted as negotiators at the meetings. ICAN acted as a consolidating body that provided arguments to those states that were directly involved in the negotiation process.

³⁷ See, for example: “Identifying Concrete Steps to Move Forward Nuclear Disarmament.” Calendar of Side Events for the 2018 NPT Preparatory Committee. URL: <http://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom18/documents/Hiroshima-Prefecture-side-event.pdf> (accessed: 20.04.2022).

³⁸ Statement of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) to the Non-proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee. Geneva, 25 April 2018. Delivered by Ms. Isabella Vargas. Reaching Critical Will. URL: https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmament-fora/npt/prepcom18/statements/25April_ICAN.pdf (accessed: 01.04.2022).

³⁹ Speech by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons on NPT Issues. Third Preparatory Committee for the Tenth NPT Review Conference. New York, May 1, 2019. Reaching Critical Will. URL: https://reachingcriticalwill.org/images/documents/Disarmamentfora/npt/prepcom19/statements/1May_ICAN.pdf (accessed: 01.02.2022).

A distinctive feature of ICAN as a modern TAN is that it combines traditional forms of activism, such as anti-nuclear demonstrations and rallies, with the use of information technologies in promoting ideas and covering important events. Twitter (now X), Facebook and Instagram⁴⁰ are important information tools for advocates of nuclear disarmament. Ray Acheson, a coordinator at the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and a member of the ICAN Coordinating Committee, uses the hashtag #NuclearBan in everything she posts.⁴¹

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons management team boasts numerous young and highly qualified professionals among its members, which allows for tech-driven approach to network management. While the ICAN meetings on the side-lines of the Preparatory Committees of the NPT Convention in 2018–2019 were closed, it was obvious that the decision was taken to divide the organization's members into regional areas of responsibility, and that those placed in charge of the individual regions had been tasked with liaising with the representatives of the NPT member countries in their respective zones/regions. The ICAN Coordinating Committee carries out significant organizational work using a wide range of tools, including modern technologies.

ICAN Diplomacy

ICAN became an influential and large-scale TAN thanks to the participation of its members in the work on the side-lines of the Preparatory Committees and the NPT Review Conferences. Dissatisfaction with the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, coupled with the emergence of a humanitarian discourse in 2010 and the lack of consensus on the results of the 2015 Review Conference paved the way for different players to consolidate around the idea of banning nuclear weapons. As an independent treaty, the TPNW cannot have serious significance, including in terms of the internalization of norms, if it is not recognized as an effective and important tool for the implementation of Article 6 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons by all the participating countries. This is why the ICAN's work at the United Nations is key. The influence of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, both on the discourse within the NPT and on the formation of diplomatic decisions, depends on the degree of involvement of member states in its work.

The negotiation process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a complex set of relationships between states, groups of states, NGOs, and intergovernmental and regional groups. Harald Müller and Carmen Wunderlich write

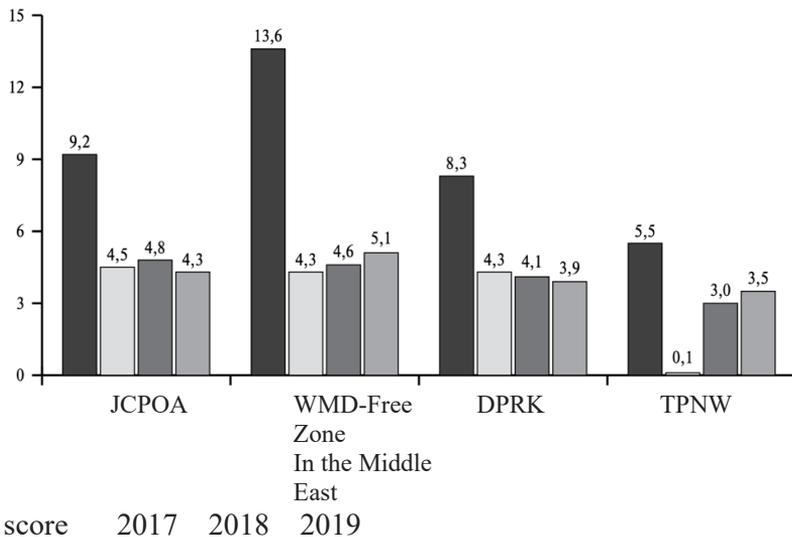
⁴⁰ Twitter, Facebook and Instagram are recognized as extremist organizations and are banned in the territory of the Russian Federation.

⁴¹ Reaching Critical Will on Twitter. URL: https://twitter.com/RCW_/status/1480887219007143937?t=TpaTtCbckEuKdNOWdRfQUA&s=08 (accessed: 11.01.2022).

about the split between the states parties to the NPT in terms of their values and intentions to reform the regime (Müller, Wunderlich 2018). Nuclear-weapon states fall into the category of countries that are driven by strategic interests. Their goal is to maintain the status quo. On the opposite side of the spectrum, as a radical reformer, is the Arab League. ICAN managed to attract those states that Müller calls “common good-driven bridge-builders” (Müller, Wunderlich 2018: 11–15). These are small and medium-sized states that, by their very nature, are interested in maintaining the NPT regime and thus seek a consensus. Activism in the field of disarmament and arms control is an integral part of their identity. These countries demonstrate a desire to carry out reforms rather than replace the existing normative structure of the NPT and are working to strengthen its norms from within. The data collected on the sidelines of the Preparatory Committees of the NPT Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2018–2019 indicated that the representatives of the latter were willing to be interviewed. Representatives of the delegations of Austria, Mexico, Ireland, South Africa and New Zealand reiterated their support for ICAN’s optimism, that they consider the TPNW an important treaty for establishing new norms for the prohibition of nuclear weapons and reinforcing Article 6 of the NPT, and that their interaction with NGOs had proven to be extremely productive. Behind the scenes, representatives of these delegations were busy carrying out explanatory work with the representatives of other delegations and were vocal in their support of the ICAN Coordinating Committee members. However, when ICAN Coordinating Committee member Tim Wright asked New Zealand representative Kate Donnelly to act more radically and take nuclear-weapon states out of their “comfort zone,” she replied that non-nuclear-weapon states would continue to work to promote disarmament and that “the discomfort already exists.”⁴² Representatives of nuclear-weapon states tried to avoid making any comments, as did the diplomats from African countries (except South Africa) and representatives of Middle Eastern states.

⁴² The question was asked at the “Panel Discussion on the Nexus Between the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty and Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty” during a discussion on April 25, 2018 at Maison de la paix in Geneva.

Figure 1. Frequency with which the TPNW was Mentioned at NPT Conferences in 2017–2019, %



Source: Compiled by I. Adami and E. Mikhaylenko based on an analysis of documents published by the NPT Preparatory Committee in 2017–2019 (Adami, Verbitskaya, Gileva et al. 2020: 156).⁴³

An analysis of documents from the NPT Preparatory Committees in 2017–2019 reveals an increase in the number of times the TPNW is mentioned (Fig. 1). Even so, it is mentioned significantly less frequently than other topics, for example the Korean nuclear problem, the creation of a WMD-free zone in the Middle East, and the Iranian nuclear programme. The first TPNW Review Conference is due to take place in 2022, which means there is a high probability that the topic of prohibiting nuclear weapons may become marginalized at the NPT Conferences. There is an understanding that non-nuclear-weapon states supporting ICAN are not interested in dramatically shaking up the negotiation process, although they will insist that nuclear-weapon states follow through on their disarmament obligations.

Nuclear-weapon states have not responded well to ICAN initiatives. They consider the TPNW to be a dangerous organization that undermines the foundations of the NPT, and call for a step-by-step disarmament process which takes modern security challenges into account.⁴⁴ None of the 50-plus states that have ratified the TPNW possesses nuclear weapons. The question remains: What is the future of nuclear weapons?

⁴³ Compiled using classic statistical analysis on text corpus performed with IRaMuTeQ software. The purpose here is to illustrate, by way of comparison, the dynamics of increasing or decreasing the relevance of the use of the term “TPNW” from one conference to another. The figures are the result of the intersection of various factors. Factor 1 (raw frequency) is vertical and indicates the intensity with which the term is mentioned. Factor 2 (text frequency) is horizontal and indicates the number of different speeches in terms of the number of different states mentioned. Factor 3 (text segments) is calculated by the software as a hybrid of the vertical and horizontal factors.

⁴⁴ Statement by China, on Behalf of the P5 States. General Debate. 2019 NPT PrepCom. 01.05.2019. URL: <http://statements.unmeetings.org/media2/21491982/china-behalfofthep5states-generaldebate.pdf> (accessed: 20.01.2022).

Banning nuclear weapons does not automatically mean they will be destroyed. The question of the fate of the TPNE and whether nuclear weapons will actually be eliminated is increasingly brought up in discussions.

ICAN is a wide-ranging TAN. One look at the people and organizations which make up its members is enough to realise this. The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons includes both individual NGOs and networks such as Abolition 2000. Our interviews with members of advocacy NGOs revealed that they continue their work independently of ICAN, and that they have their own interests and goals. For example, when interviewing Abolition 2000 Coordinating Committee Member Jackie Cabasso,⁴⁵ it became clear that many of the association's participants consider the idea of promoting the TPNW to be hasty. The proposal to establish a convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons in 1995 was based on the idea that nuclear-weapon states should be the main participants in the negotiation process. ICAN took hold of this idea and ran with it, simplifying the process of developing and ratifying the TPNW, and determining that the participation of nuclear-weapon states is not at all necessary for the treaty to be signed and ratified. Rebecca Johnson of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy NGO believes that the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons is doing everything right, and that the time of the Abolition 2000 network has passed.⁴⁶ Most of the representatives of NGOs were optimistic about the TPNW in New York in 2019.

It is difficult to predict how strong the alliance between anti-nuclear NGOs and research centres will turn out to be. While they collaborate with ICAN, they continue to operate independently through public activities and on the side-lines of the United Nations. As a rule, research NGOs formally or informally support the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. Even so, many of the works they have published on TPNW issues are cautious in their assessments of the treaty's potential, despite the timeliness and importance of the issue. For example, UNIDIR representative John Borrie, who is generally supportive of the humanitarian initiative, ICAN, and the TPNW, asks more questions about the future of the NPT regime than there are answers.⁴⁷ An analysis of papers published on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons reveals contradictory trends. Data on the number of publications in peer-reviewed journals shows a spike in TPNW-related papers in 2018–2019. The issue of the prohibition of nuclear weapons has steadily entered the analytical field. Even so, the number of TPNW-related publications has been on the decline since 2020, which suggests that researchers have turned their focus to other topics (Fig. 2).

What makes ICAN a successful TAN is its humanitarian component and saving the world from nuclear war continue which are important symbols that it can use to achieve its aims. Formally, it has fulfilled its mission by establishing the TPNW. Will

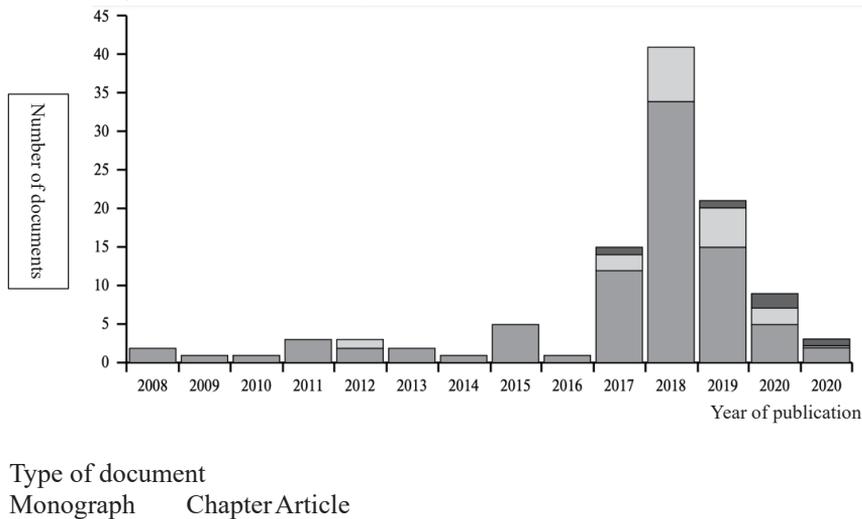
⁴⁵ Interview with Jackie Cabasso. 30.04.2018. United Nations, Geneva.

⁴⁶ Interview with Rebecca Johnson. 27.04.2018. United Nations, Geneva.

⁴⁷ Interview with John Borrie. 02.05.2018. United Nations, Geneva.

this TAN now fade away? We cannot say for sure, but in all likelihood the answer is yes. As a TAN, ICAN enjoys the support of a number of states sympathetic to the cause. However, the experience with Norway demonstrated that a change of government could mean the end of financial backing. Initially, the conservative government that came to power in the country following the autumn 2013 parliamentary elections promised to continue working to promote disarmament, but it soon became clear that the new government was distancing itself from the policies of the previous cabinet (Mæland, Akhtar 2019: 327). Grants to support the ICAN office in Norway were suspended in 2015 and have not resumed (Mæland, Akhtar 2019: 328). The non-nuclear-weapon states supporting ICAN are not eager to create an insurmountable conflict in the nuclear non-proliferation regime, but they do seek to put pressure on nuclear-weapon states in order to achieve nuclear disarmament. They are thus likely to adopt a more conservative position within the NPT negotiation process and allay the radicalism of anti-nuclear NGOs. Reduced funding for ICAN could also lead to a decline in campaign activity. The participation of states in ICAN’s activities has made it strong, but the dependence on the political course of these countries puts the existence of this TAN in jeopardy moving forward.

Figure 2. Number of TPNW-Related Papers



Source: Compiled by the author based in an analysis of research publication databases in the lens.org search engine.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ lens.org is an online research resource maintained by the Australian NGO Cambia. A wide range of citation databases (including WoS and Scopus) was used to analyse the data. The following search term were used: “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” OR “Nuclear Weapons Ban” OR TPNW.

The sustainability of transnational advocacy networks also depends on how flexible the work of the ICAN headquarters is. ICAN includes a large number of NGOs that disagree on a number of issues. Non-governmental organizations have come together around the issue of banning nuclear weapons, but it has proven difficult for them to reach a consensus on a number of other issues. Most NGOs will continue to work within the framework of the NPT review cycle and publish their own proposals and analytical papers. However, if the TPNW is taken off the agenda of the NPT Review Conferences, then the coordinating role of ICAN will diminish.

* * *

ICAN's activities in the field of nuclear non-proliferation, the mobilization of anti-nuclear NGOs, and the establishment of a transnational advocacy network are of undoubted interest to researchers. Social movements – their values and methods of working – are increasingly influencing global political practices. The purpose of the present paper was to expand the theoretical base of TAN activities. ICAN is a prime example of a campaign that has succeeded in mobilizing virtually all anti-nuclear NGOs. It is important to note that the success of this particular TAN is predicated on the involvement of diplomats and government representatives to promote their ideas.

The activities of modern TANs are characterized by a combination of socio-political activities and elements of diplomatic participation. Instruments of pressure are becoming more technologically advanced and vital. Modern TANs actively employ social services.

One of the stated goals of transnational advocacy networks is the creation of new norms. By introducing the norm of the prohibition of nuclear weapons, ICAN deconstructs the norm of the nuclear taboo and the traditional terms of “deterrence” and “strategic stability,” and also works to create a new “fair” discourse within the NPT negotiation process.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons is one of the most successful TANs working in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. The drive to ban nuclear weapons, and then to lobby for the signing and ratification of the TPNW, demonstrated that ICAN had moved from public activity and analytical work to direct diplomacy, including non-nuclear-weapon states in its network. ICAN's activities have led to the formation of a scientific discourse surrounding the TPNW and the promotion of the issue within the NPT negotiation process. Its success as a TAN was cemented with the Nobel Peace Prize in 2017. However, there is reason to believe that the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and its coordinating role in the NPT negotiation process may become less important as the focus and interests of states shifts back to public outreach activities.

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Conflict of interest:

The author declares the absence of conflicts of interest.

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Appendix

Interviews

In-Depth Interviews

1. Interview with Rebecca Johnson (Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy). April 27, 2018.
2. Interview with Janet Fenton (Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy). April 28, 2018.
3. Interview with Jacqueline Cabasso (Western States Legal Foundation, Abolition 2000). April 30, 2018.
4. Interview with a Representative of the Russian Pugwash Committee. May 2, 2018.
5. Interview with John Borrie (United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research). May 2, 2018.
6. Interview with Allison Pytlak (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, ICAN). April 25, 2019.
7. Interview with Sharon Dolev (British American Security Information Council (BASIC)). April 26, 2019.
8. Interview with Alimzhan Akhmetov (Center for International Security and Policy, ICAN, Kazakhstan). May 3, 2019.
9. Interview with Anthony Donovan (Pax Christi International). May 8, 2019.
10. Interview with Christian N. Ciobanu (PEAC Institute). May 8, 2019.
11. Interview with Ann Frisch (Rotarian Action Group for Peace). May 9, 2019.
12. Interview with Alice Slater (Nuclear Age Peace Foundation). May 9, 2019.

Surveys of Representatives of NGOs and Official Delegations

1. Tariq Rauf (Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) (April 27, 2018).
2. Yasuhito Fukui, Hiroshima Peace Institute (April 28, 2018).
3. Representative of the Delegation from Mexico (April 30, 2018).
4. Representative of the Delegation from Austria (April 30, 2018).
5. Representative of the Delegation from Ireland (May 1, 2018).
6. Representative of the Delegation from New Zealand (May 1, 2018).
7. Representative of the Delegation from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (May 3, 2019).
8. Representative of the Delegation from Argentina (May 9, 2019).
9. Representative of the Delegation from Australia (April 30, 2019).
10. Representative of the Delegation from Burkina Faso (April 30, 2019).
11. Representative of the Delegation from Japan (May 2, 2019).
12. Representative of the Delegation from South Africa (May 4, 2019).
13. Representative of the Delegation from Sweden (May 2, 2019).
14. Representative of the Delegation from the European Union (May 3, 2019).
15. Representative of the Delegation from the CTBTO (April 30, 2019).