

Text of Professor Arrojo's speech

First of all, dear friends, I thank the organization for the invitation to participate in this event, which is a great honour for me.

In these tough times of pandemic a tiny virus, the COVID19, is teaching us many lessons that we should learn. One of them refers to our vulnerability, and very particularly to what we must understand by security for our societies. I hope that those who did not understand in their hearts the inhumanity of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs, and continue to defend nuclear weapons as the key to preserving our security, will reflect, at least out of pragmatism, on this lesson that the virus gives us. I hope they understand where the real security problems lie for humanity, and especially for the most vulnerable people and societies. I hope that this public health crisis and the corresponding economic and social crisis allow us to understand what the challenges are that we must face, instead of spending huge public funds on nuclear weapons that, far from protecting us, threaten the very existence of humanity.

The vast majority of public opinion in Spain is against the existence of nuclear weapons. Forty years ago, my city, Zaragoza, rose, instead of “up in arms”, “up in peace” against nuclear weapons and the existence of a military USA base, building a *Bridge for Peace*, in the form of a 30 km human chain, to that military base that transformed us into a nuclear target, in the middle of the cold war.

During the last legislature in which I was a MP of PODEMOS in the Congress of my country, I promoted a network of parliamentarians in support of ICAN and the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)*, promoted by the UN. Almost one hundred parliamentarians supported this initiative; and they would have been more than one hundred and seventy, that is, a large majority of the Chamber, if the leadership of the Socialist Party had not ultimately deterred their MP's from signing it. Being a NATO country, we were very close to getting Spain to sign the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*. In fact, this was one of the points of the agreement between Pablo Iglesias and Pedro Sánchez, the General Secretaries of Podemos and the Socialist Party, shortly after Mr. Sánchez was appointed President of Spain with the support of both parties. Unfortunately, pressure from the United States and other NATO countries prevented it at the time and it is still delaying this decision. When this happens, and I am sure we will get there, we will offer an example of intelligence, coherence and humanity for many other countries that are uncertain to act when facing blackmail from the powerful. We all must face the challenge of realizing the democratic will of the people on an issue as fundamental as this. From Spain, I guarantee that we will continue working until we succeed.

For this reason, dear friends, brothers and sisters, it is time to return to that phrase that Mr. Federico Mayor Zaragoza, Director General of UNESCO for twelve years, always mentions, evoking the founding document of the UN to say today: “WE THE PEOPLES OF THE UNITED NATIONS ”and not simply our Governments, WE DECIDE TO DECLARE OUT OF LAW THE MANUFACTURE, POSSESSION, TRANSPORT AND EVEN THE EXISTENCE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. That is what we will begin to do when we get the first 50 ratifications of the UN *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear*

Weapons. I am sure we will not be long in achieving this, and on the day that it is so I hope that Hiroshima and Nagasaki will organize a great global party to celebrate the beginning of a new era of peace, justice, and planetary sisterhood and brotherhood all over the world. THANK YOU