



RESOLUTION ON THE USE OF CHEMICAL AND OTHER INDISCRIMINATE WEAPONS

We, the members of PEN Intl. Peace Committee, assembled in Bled, Slovenia, on April 17, 2018 recognize the terrible legacy of the battlefield use of poisonous gasses that the Great War of the 20th century (1914-1918) has put on the shoulders of today's world.

We are also aware that the Geneva Protocol, which prohibited the use of chemical weapons in warfare, was signed in 1925. Nevertheless, the gas was again used during World War II in the Holocaust in Nazi concentration camps and in Asia.

We note that during the Cold War period an estimated 25 states were developing chemical weapons capabilities, and that after 12 years of negotiations, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) was adopted by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva on 3 September 1992. With the entry-into-force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) on 29 April 1997 the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was formally established. Currently over 190 nations have ratified the convention.

We note with frustration the limited terms of the 1980 UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, which fails to control adequately the deployment of aerial bombing and heavy artillery resulting in destruction of vast areas outside the immediate zones of conflict and a large number of civilian deaths.

With the above in mind we are resolved that:

- Since the UN Chemical Weapons Convention came into force in 1997 their persistent use cannot be justified by any party to conflict.
- Stockpiles and development facilities of chemical, biological and other indiscriminate weapons must be eradicated, as agreed under the CWC convention.
- While we note the continuing deployment of bombs and heavy artillery in the Middle East and in other undeclared theatres of war, we remain concerned at the potential of governments to ignore or sidestep international treaties on all weapons systems. We call on the UN to seek to further strengthen the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to give greatly increased protection to civilians and demand of the United Nations Security Council to live up to the hopes placed upon it by citizens and discharge its obligation to preserve peace with determination and a sense of urgency.
- We contend that the increasing tendency of governments to advance extreme interpretations of national interest and sovereignty is a serious threat to peace. Governments must respect and follow international law, and must not use national policy as a cloak for their own authoritarianism. We urge all governments to show restraint, mature and conciliatory leadership and to refrain from belligerent

action, whether against individuals, their own citizens or other nations. We implore them to take non-discriminatory measures to provide generous help to refugees and all those whose lives are disrupted by conflicts and, especially, to protect and give shelter to minors isolated from accompanying adults.