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First French referendum by shared initiative

Will France participate in the abolition of nuclear weapons? MPs are proposing a referendum "on shared initiative"

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- Homepage - News - News Articles -

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In March 2016, a dozen French MPs in favour of abolishing nuclear weapons have written to their fellow-parliamentarians (MPs and Senators) inviting them to join them in signing a Bill to organise a referendum on the following question:

« Do you want France to negotiate and ratify with all the States concerned a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective? »

They observe that « a poll conducted in October 2015 by IFOP on the request of Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucléaire (ACDN), found with representative sample of the population aged over 18, that 74% of those polled answered YES to this question. »

They note that « according to article 11 of the Constitution, there need to be 185 of us signing this bill, out of 925 MPs and senators (20%) », and they say « we are convinced that this is feasible. »

This is the first time since the constitutional reform of 2008 that the possibility of organising a referendum « on shared initiative » (shared by parliamentarians and citizens) has been taken. According to this provision, the bill must first garner 20% of parliamentary votes and then within 9 months must gain - by electronic means supervised by the Ministry of the Interior - the support of 10% of registered voters, i.e. over 4.5 million voters.

That threshold, *a priori* hard to attain, is not so difficult, since that same IFOP poll tells us that three of four French citizens declare themselves ready to support such a bill - 27% « certainly » and 47% « probably ». And we know by a recent experience that a national petition can gather over a million signatures in under two weeks.

Thus, in the words of these MPs, « the French citizenry can open the path to a world without nuclear weapons. We call on the Members of Parliament to give it the opportunity to do so, and we call on all French voters to support this initiative at the appropriate time by electronic means. Deliverance from the atomic « sword of Damocles » hanging over us will bring reinforcement both to our security and to our freedom, in the best tradition of France - that of Human Rights and of the republican motto : liberty, equality, fraternity. »

ACDN and The French Parliamentarians for Nuclear Abolition

BILL TO ORGANISE A REFERENDUM on France's participation in the abolition of nuclear weapons

Text of the Proposition

That on the proposition of a fifth of all parliamentarians and after receiving by electronic means the support of 10% of registered voters, a referendum will be organised without delay, in all French territory, on the following question:

« Do you want France to negotiate and ratify with all the States concerned a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear weapons, under international and mutual control that is strict and effective? »

FIRST SIGNATORIES

Catherine Quéré, MP in Charente-Maritime
Serge Bardy, MP in Maine-et-Loire,
Geneviève Gaillard, MP in Deux-Sèvres
Philippe Plisson, MP in Gironde
Suzanne Tallard, MP in Charente-Maritime
François-Michel Lambert, MP in Bouches-du-Rhône
Jean-Michel Clément, MP in la Vienne
Hervé Féron, MP in Meurthe-et-Moselle
Kheïra Bouziane-Laroussi, MP in Côte d'Or
Jérôme Lambert, MP in Charente
Véronique Massonneau, MP in la Vienne
Hervé Pellois, MP in Morbihan

CITIZENS' CAMPAIGN

We invite citizens of any country wishing to support this initiative to make themselves known, to sign the Appeal below and to send it to contact@acdn.net

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APPEAL FOR

A FRENCH REFERENDUM FOR FRANCE PARTICIPATING IN THE ABOLITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

[>](https://www.acdn.net/spip/IMG/pdf/appeal_for_a_french_referendum_eng-2.pdf "PDF - 323.2 kb")



Humankind is today threatened in its dignity and its very existence, and ought to be allowed to enjoy a fundamental right: **the right to survival**, along with its corollary: **the right of peoples to determine their own survival**.

This right implies the abolition of nuclear weapons. They are weapons of mass destruction, massacre weapons, arms for crimes against humanity. They are totally useless for throttling terrorism, yet they borrow the same contempt for human life and multiply it many times. They threaten to annihilate millions of people, entire populations, and humankind itself since a nuclear war would make the Earth uninhabitable.

This power to annihilate is concentrated in the hands of less than a dozen heads of state, who can choose to exercise it at any moment, without trial or appeal, and carry out the sentence themselves within a quarter-hour of their decision. Yet never have the citizens of the nuclear states been consulted (or those of the non-nuclear states) even though they have to finance them and thereby jeopardise their own survival - and the survival of other peoples.

France has possessed these weapons for 50 years. She has spent over 300 billion euros on them and continues to develop them. France's 300 bombs could kill about one billion people.

This situation flouts basic Human Rights, since, as Alain Peyrefitte said to President de Gaulle on 4 May 1962, a single atomic bomb would cause "hundreds of thousands of deaths, women, children, old people burned up in a split second, hundreds of thousands more dying in the following years after atrocious suffering. Isn't that what is called a

crime against humanity?"

It flouts International Law, which obliges those nuclear-armed states that have signed the NPT, including France, "to pursue in good faith and to bring to conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective international control," (Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, 8 July 1996.)

It flouts the French Constitution, which gives top priority to Human Rights and imposes a duty of respecting them, and also respecting treaties.

It defies good sense, since it is illogical

- ▶ to defend the values of the French Republic (including fraternity) while threatening to commit crimes against humanity;
- ▶ to link France's "vital interests" with the use of fatally suicidal weapons against any country that also possesses them;
- ▶ to claim to guarantee any nation's security with these weapons while forbidding others from obtaining them;
- ▶ thus to encourage proliferation while claiming to be combatting it;
- ▶ and to impose budgetary restraints while wasting billions on instruments of death which are unusable against other nuclear powers, incapable of deterring terrorists, and would be fearsome in terrorists' hands if they obtain some.

It is undemocratic, since the French people have never been consulted about it, yet we know from a recent poll that around 75% of French citizens would answer YES to this question :

"Do you want France to negotiate and ratify with all the other states concerned a treaty to ban and completely eliminate nuclear weapons, under mutual and international control that is strict and effective?"

Similarly, three quarters of citizens want to be consulted by referendum on this question and are ready to support a bill originating in parliament to organise the referendum.

Thus the French people can open the path to a world without nuclear weapons. We call on all French parliamentarians to give them the opportunity to do so, and we call on all French voters to support this initiative at the appropriate time by electronic means.

Deliverance from the atomic « sword of Damocles » hanging over us will bring reinforcement both to our security and to our freedom, in full respect of Human Rights and of the French Republic's motto: **liberty, equality, fraternity**.
