

Letter on Hunger Strike By Jean-Marie Matagne to President of France

Written by John Hallam

Tuesday, 19 June 2012 14:09 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 February 2015 22:31

PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT NUCLEAR FLASHPOINTS PROJECT
SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY CENTRE CHRISTCHURCH NZ

ANTI-NUCLEAR ALLIANCE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

FOOTPRINTS FOR PEACE

TEWA WOMEN UNITED

NUCLEAR AGE PEACE FOUNDATION NEW YORK

NUCLEAR AGE PEACE FOUNDATION SANTA BARBARA

TRI-VALLEY CARES CALIF, USA

HIBAKUSHA STORIES

INTERNATIONAL PEACE BUREAU

HEREFORD PEACE COUNCIL

SUSSEX ALLIANCE

IPPNW GERMANY

WORLD FUTURE COUNCIL

SWEDISH PEACE COUNCIL

INLAP

MAYORS FOR PEACE 2020 VISION CAMPAIGN

WORLD COURT PROJECT UK

LATIN-AMERICAN CIRCLE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNAL AMITY

PAKISTAN PEACE COALITION

Letter on Hunger Strike By Jean-Marie Matagne to President of France

Written by John Hallam

Tuesday, 19 June 2012 14:09 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 February 2015 22:31

PEACE DEPOT

François Hollande
Président de la République
Palais de l'Élysée
55 Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré
75008 Paris
cc
President Obama
President Putin

SYDNEY June 13, 2012

Mr President

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT HUNGER STRIKE BY JEAN-MARIE MATAGNE IN SAINTES

We write today in support of the remarkable and courageous action led by Mr Jean-Marie Matagne of the organisation Action des Citoyens pour le Désarmement Nucleaire (ACDN) based in Saintes, near Bordeaux.

Jean-Marie Matagne, a long-time campaigner for nuclear disarmament, has undertaken a hunger strike which is now in its 29th day. His organisation urges that the following question be put to the French people:

“Are you in favour of France participating, with the other states concerned, in the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, under a system of mutual and international monitoring that is strict and effective?”

As Mr Matagne rightly points out, the French people have never been consulted on this matter.

The complete elimination of nuclear weapons as you must be aware, is both mandated by article VI of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, reaffirmed by the 1996 ICJ advisory decision, and has been repeatedly reaffirmed as a goal for all nations in meeting after meeting of the parties to the NPT, most recently in Vienna in May 2012. In addition that meeting saw a declaration by 16 governments on the Catastrophic Humanitarian Consequences of nuclear weapons use.

We fully support the demand that the new President of the French Republic, the new government and the parliamentary candidates, commit France to negotiating a Nuclear

Letter on Hunger Strike By Jean-Marie Matagne to President of France

Written by John Hallam

Tuesday, 19 June 2012 14:09 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 February 2015 22:31

Weapons Convention. In doing so, France will be expressing the will to survive, of all human beings, expressed in repeated language from NPT review conferences in which France has been a prominent participant.

If France could take the lead in this matter so vital to human survival, it would be a way to reclaim the civilisational and moral leadership it has so often claimed.

The abolition of nuclear weapons is not an issue that affects French citizens or French voters alone. Nuclear weapons continue to threaten the entire world with mass extinction. Recent studies have confirmed that even a limited nuclear exchange would bring about, not only huge destruction by blast, fire, and radioactivity, but would also disrupt the global climate and agricultural production so severely that the lives of more than a billion people would be at risk. The language of human extinction vs human survival is now (not before time) becoming common even at the highest diplomatic levels, as this letter's author witnessed at the May 2012 Vienna NPT Prepcom.

One such study was released at the said May 2012 Prepcom, to a packed audience (the author of this letter was present) of diplomats and high-level NGOs, showing that the use even of 0.3% of global megatonnage in an India-Pakistan nuclear exchange could place a billion people at risk of dying of famine. A 'major' (US-Russia) nuclear exchange would be a global catastrophe that would place a question mark over human survival.

With stakes like this, the hunger – strike by Jean-Marie Matagne is an entirely reasonable and rational response, in the tradition of Gandhi.

We fully understand the argument, often advanced by nuclear proponents, that we live in an unpredictable and insecure world. But the continued possession of weapons of universal destruction by a self-selected group of states – whose possession is denied to all others – is itself one of the main sources of unpredictability and insecurity. We will never be able to tackle the problem of proliferation if those of us who live in the nuclear weapons states are not prepared to take the bold steps required to eliminate our own unacceptable weapons. Threatening the destruction of everyone and everything to bolster our own security while it may 'work' in the short term (and it is by no means sure that it has done so) risks the destruction of all over a longer period, and the risk – nay the certainty – of universal destruction and the possible end of humans as a species – is not an acceptable price to pay for short term security. Human survival does, and should, trump all other issues including the most dire issues of national security.

A collective effort is needed to shake ourselves free from this man-made threat. Efforts such as Mr Matagne's dramatic initiative merits at the very least a high-level political debate. International polling has shown that (often overwhelming) majorities of voters support the abolition of nuclear weapons.

I urge you to listen carefully to Jean-Marie and other voices of sanity, including the repeated calls for nuclear abolition and a nuclear weapons convention repeatedly made by all the world's governments, and to begin now a process to bring France, and the other nuclear weapons

Letter on Hunger Strike By Jean-Marie Matagne to President of France

Written by John Hallam

Tuesday, 19 June 2012 14:09 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 February 2015 22:31

possessors, official and 'unofficial', on to the path of elimination to which they are in any case legally bound under Article 6 of the NPT and in the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, 1996.

Yours sincerely

John Hallam
Campaigner,
People for Nuclear Disarmament
499 Elizabeth Street, Surry Hills (Sydney) NSW 2010
fax 61-2-9699-9182 p61-2-9810-2598 m0416-500-793
johnhallam2001@yahoo.com.au
jhjohnhallam@gmail.com,

Colin Archer, International Peace Bureau (IPB) Geneva,

Aaron Tovish, International Campaign Director, Mayors for Peace, 2020 Vision Campaign,

Cynthis Heanna, World Future Council, Brazil,

Dr Kate Dewes, Director Disarmament and Security Centre, Aotearoa/New Zealand: Member of UN Secretary General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Commander Robert Green RN (Ret'd), Director Disarmament and Security Centre, Aotearoa/New Zealand

Markus Atkinson, Anti Nuclear Alliance of Western Australia, Footprints for Peace

Jenny Maxwell, Hereford Peace Council, West Midlands CND, UK,

George Farebrother, INLAP, World Court Project UK, Sussex Alliance, Eastbourne for Peace and Liberty.

Xanthe Hall, IPPNW Germany, Berlin, Germany,

Agneta Norberg, Swedish Peace Council, member of International Peace Bureaus Steering Committee, member of the Board of Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space.

Kathy Sanchez, Tewa Women United, San Ildefonso Pueblo USA

Alice Slater, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation New York,

David Krieger, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation Santa Barbara,

Marylina Kelly, Executive Director, Tri-Valley CARES, Livermore, Calif, USA,

Letter on Hunger Strike By Jean-Marie Matagne to President of France

Written by John Hallam

Tuesday, 19 June 2012 14:09 - Last Updated Sunday, 08 February 2015 22:31

Dr Kathleen Sullivan, Program Director, Hibakusha Stories,

Luis Gutierrez-Esparza, President, Latin American Circle of International Studies (LACIS),
Mexico,

Sukla Sen, EKTA (Committee for Communal Amity), Mumbai, India

Abdul H. Nayyar, President, Pakistan Peace Coalition,

Hikomichi Umebayashi, Special Advisor, Peace Depot, Japan,