
TREATY FOR THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (TREATY OF TLATELOLCO)

Opened for Signature: 14 February 1967

Entered into Force: 25 April 1969.

Number of Signatories: 33 states.

Number of Ratifications: 33 states.

Duration: The treaty is of a permanent nature and shall remain in force indefinitely.

Treaty Text

On 23 October 2002, the Tlatelolco Treaty came into full force throughout the region when Cuba, the only state which had not ratified the treaty, deposited its instrument of ratification. Currently, all 33 states in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean have signed and ratified the treaty. The Tlatelolco Treaty has served as a model for all future nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) agreements.

Background: Costa Rica was the first regional state to propose a Latin American nuclear arms control arrangement at an [Organization for the American States \(OAS\)](#) Council meeting in 1958, which sought to prevent the manufacture of nuclear arms or their acquisition from the nuclear weapon states (NWS). Other proposals were unsuccessfully floated within the OAS context during 1958-1960.

French nuclear weapon testing in the Sahara in 1960, together with the South African apartheid regime's interest in nuclear arms, led the African states to issue a call for an [African NWFZ](#), which was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 1961. Alone among Latin American states, Brazil supported the African NWFZ resolution and proposed a similar zone within its region. The efforts of Alfonso Garcia Robles, as Mexican ambassador to Brazil, eventually led, in March 1963, to Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador joining Mexico in supporting a Latin American NWFZ.

Treaty Obligations: The treaty aims to prohibit and prevent in the region: (a) the testing, use, manufacture, production, or acquisition by any means whatsoever of any nuclear weapons, by the Parties themselves, directly or indirectly, on behalf of anyone else, or in any other way, and (b) the receipt, storage,

installation, deployment, and any form of possession of any nuclear weapons, directly or indirectly, by the Parties themselves, by anyone on their behalf, or in any other way. The Parties also undertake to refrain from engaging in encouraging or authorizing, directly or indirectly, or in any way participating in the testing, use, manufacture, production, possession, or control of any nuclear weapons.

Treaty Zone: The treaty covers the region and large sectors of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

Verification and Compliance:

Verification: Verification is accomplished by concluding multilateral or bilateral agreements with the [International Atomic Energy Agency \(IAEA\)](#) for the application of its safeguards to nuclear activities of States Parties to the treaty. In addition, the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean ([OPANAL](#)) is an inter-governmental agency created by the Treaty of Tlatelolco to ensure that the obligations of the treaty are met.

Compliance: The General Conference, the supreme organ of the OPANAL agency, will take note of all cases in which any Contracting Party is not complying fully with its obligations under this treaty and shall draw the matter to the attention of the Party concerned, making such recommendations as it deems appropriate. If such non-compliance constitutes a violation of this treaty which might endanger peace and security, the General Conference may report simultaneously to the United Nations Security Council and the General Assembly through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and to the Council of the Organization of American States. The General Conference shall likewise report to the IAEA for such purposes as are relevant in accordance with its Statute.

Additional Protocol I provides for the application of the status of denuclearization in territories for which, *de jure* or *de facto*, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States are internationally responsible, and which lie within the limits of the geographic zone established by the treaty. All four states have acceded to Protocol I. Signed: France on

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2 March 1979, the Netherlands on 15 March 1968, United Kingdom on 20 December 1967, and United States on 26 May 1977. Ratified: France on 24 August 1992, the Netherlands on 26 July 1971, United Kingdom on 11 December 1969, and United States on 23 November 1981.

Additional Protocol II obliges all NWS to respect the status of denuclearization of the relevant geographic zone and commits them not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against parties to the treaty. All five NWS acceded to the protocol. Ratified: France on 22 March 1974, China on 2 June 1974, United Kingdom on 11 December 1969, United States on 12 May 1971, and USSR on 8 January 1979.

Developments:

2010: On 30 April, the Second Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia was held in New York. The conference adopted the [Outcome Document](#) which reiterated the final declaration of the 2005 Conference and welcomed the entry into force of the African and Central Asian NWFZs as well as the efforts of Mongolia to institutionalize its nuclear weapons free status. It further called on the nuclear-weapons states to sign all relevant protocols and withdraw existing reservations.

On 31 October, the General Secretariat of OPANAL recommended that Article 18 of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which permits peaceful nuclear explosions for the purpose of technological development, be studied and revised. In support of this recommendation, the General Secretariat memorandum observed that nuclear explosions had proven “unnecessary for the development of nuclear technology” and noted that the treaty’s 33 member states were opposed to nuclear testing of any kind.

2009: On 17 April, the Council of OPANAL passed Resolution [C/Res. 47](#), which notes with satisfaction the creation of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone in Central Asia and promotes cooperation with the new NWFZ in order to fulfill common objectives set forth by the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Central Asian NWFZ Treaty.

From 27-28 April, a Meeting of Focal Points of Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and Mongolia was held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Both the importance of universalizing the NPT and the necessity for entry into force of the CTBT were reiterated, Preparations for

the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and the Third PrepCom were also discussed. States parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco submitted a [working paper](#) to the PrepCom.

On 26 November, the XXI Regular Session of the General Conference of OPANAL met in Mexico City and adopted one resolution related to the Tlatelolco Treaty: [CG/Res.515](#) Interpretative Declarations of the Nuclear Powers to Protocols I and II of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

2008: On 8 February, the Organization of American States Permanent Council's Committee on Hemispheric Security convened in special session to consider OAS progress with respect to initiatives on the [CTBT](#) and related instruments. The session received briefings from the OPANAL, [CTBTO](#), and [UNODA](#), and reaffirmed the OAS commitment to the Western Hemisphere as a nuclear weapons free-zone and stressed its support for the CTBT.

On 14 February, OPANAL organized a seminar on the “Treaty of Tlatelolco” for the occasion of the 41st anniversary of the opening for signature of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

2007: On 14 February, members of the Treaty of Tlatelolco met in Mexico City to celebrate the Treaty’s 40th anniversary.

On 28 June, OPANAL adopted resolution C/Res.43 on procedural issues relating to the resignation of Secretary General Edmundo Vargas Carreno. The OPANAL council resolved to assume the duties of the Secretary General until a new one is elected.

2006: On 11 September, OPANAL adopted resolution C/Res.41. The resolution welcomed the establishment of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapons Free Zone and instructed the Secretary General to congratulate the relevant republics on its behalf.

On 7 December, OPANAL adopted resolution C/Res.42 on strengthening the organization. The resolution urges OPANAL members to promote campaigns to disseminate the principles and objectives of the Treaty.

2005: On 26-28 April, the Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones was held in Tlatelolco, Mexico. The Conference adopted a [declaration](#), reaffirming that nuclear weapons constitute a threat to humanity, urging nuclear weapons states to adopt negative security assurances, and stressing the importance of the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

2003: The XVIII Session of the General Conference of OPANAL adopted several resolutions related to the Tlatelolco Treaty: [CG/Res. 439](#) Status of the Treaty and its Additional Protocols, [CG/Res. 444](#) Prevention of Radioactive Contamination of the Marine Environment within the Framework of the Treaty of Tlatelolco: Transportation of radioactive material, and [CG/Res. 447](#) Declarations of Nuclear Powers to the Additional Protocols I and II of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

2002: On 23 October, Cuba ratified the Tlatelolco Treaty. With its ratification, the treaty came into full force throughout all 33 states within the region. Cuba had announced to the UNGA that it would accede to the NPT and ratify the Tlatelolco Treaty on 14 October.

1995: On 25 March, Cuba signed the Tlatelolco Treaty and subsequently signed its amendments in December. However, Cuba did not ratify the treaty. By this point in time, all 33 states in Latin America and the Caribbean had become signatories of the treaty. It took the treaty nearly 30 years to secure universality of membership in the region.

1992: General Conference [Resolution 290 \(E-VII\)](#) (1992) amended Articles 14, 15, 16, 19 and 20, reassuring the confidentiality of industrial secrets of Member States in nuclear matters and establishing how the IAEA shall intervene in the special inspections referred to in Article 12 and 13 of the Treaty.

1991: At the XII Session of the General Conference of OPANAL, [Resolution 268 \(XII\)](#) amended paragraph 2 of Article 25, following the wording of Article 8 of the OAS Charter, making possible the adherence to the System of Tlatelolco of those countries which previously impeded to do so.

1990: On 3 July, V Special Session of the General Conference [Resolution 267 \(E-V\)](#) (1990) amended Article 7, relating to the legal denomination of the Treaty. Once into force, the Treaty was to be titled "Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean" but was to continue to be recognized as Treaty of Tlatelolco.

1982: Alfonso García Robles, the former Mexican ambassador to Brazil, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts promoting the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

1969: The Treaty entered into force on 25 April, after 11 states of the region ratified it and exercised the right to waive requirements laid down in Article 28. Subsequently, it became effective for each additional

state individually after that state ratified the Treaty and exercised its right of waiver.

Point of Contact:

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