

# Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League

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## **Groups Gather at Savannah River Site to Mark Historic Treaty Outlawing Nuclear Weapons, Call for Action**

Today, people living near the Savannah River Site participated in an historic day in the movement to eliminate nuclear weapons. Joining with scores of similar actions across the nation and around the world, local residents unfurled a 10-foot banner stating that “Nuclear Weapons Are Illegal.” At midnight, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons enters into force, establishing an international ban on nuclear weapons.

Rev. Charles Utley, a community leader and Associate Director of the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, said, “We call upon the new Biden Administration and Congress to right this wrong, break with the past, rejoin the world and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear weapons.”

The Treaty was approved at the United Nations in July 2017. Presently, the Treaty does not legally apply to the United States because it has not signed or ratified it. Today, the 50<sup>th</sup> nation to ratify the Treaty, Honduras, triggered enforcement.

The momentous occasion was marked by actions, events, and celebrations across the United States and around the globe. At nuclear weapons production sites in Tennessee, Kansas City, New Mexico and California, banners declaring NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE ILLEGAL were hung on fences at the plant entrance. Letters were

delivered to members of Congress. University campuses joined in support. Churches rang their bells.

“The entry into force of the Treaty is a turning point,” said Rev. Utley. “On the one hand, it is the end of a long process to outlaw nuclear weapons. On the other hand, it is just the beginning of a new movement to confront nuclear weapons states and demand they lift the dark shadow of nuclear annihilation that has loomed over the world for the last seventy-five years.”

In the photo below are Eugene Lowry, President Richmond County Neighborhood Alliance Association; Charles Utley, Associate Director BREDL; Claude Howard President Concern Citizens of Shell Bluff; Melvin Stewart, Hyde Park and Aragon Park Improvement Committee; and Richard Colclough, Call To Action.



For more information, see the facebook page Nuclear Ban Treaty EIF and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) events page at [www.icanw.org/events](http://www.icanw.org/events).

Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League’s project on the Savannah River Site weapons complex began in 1999.

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