

# *Cuba calls for total elimination of nuclear weapons*

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United Nations, November 27 (Prensa Latina)-- The danger of nuclear weapons can only disappear with their total elimination, in a transparent, verifiable and irreversible manner, assured today Cuba's First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gerardo Peñalver.

Speaking here during the second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the deputy foreign minister recalled the timely calls in this regard by the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro.

This instrument complements the international security, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, added the also permanent representative of the island to the United Nations.

Latin America and the Caribbean, the first Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in a densely populated area, has made the promotion of nuclear disarmament a priority, the diplomat emphasized.

Each new state that joins represents a new step forward towards the delegitimization of nuclear weapons, he said, while ratifying his country's support for efforts aimed at the universalization of the NPT.

Peñalver described as a milestone the adoption and entry into force of this instrument, which categorically prohibits the existence, use and threat of weapons and all types of nuclear testing.

The Treaty became the first international legal norm that codifies the illegitimacy and illegality of this type of weaponry in international law, he said.

The vice-titular warned, however, of the risks facing the planet with the modernization of nuclear arsenals and the deployment of new weapons systems for their potential use.

Military postures and doctrines based on nuclear deterrence and so-called strategic stability persist, as well as attempts to condition nuclear disarmament and legitimize the status quo, he warned.

The mere existence of nuclear weapons constitutes a threat to humanity, given the permanent risk that they could be used again, he emphasized.

In this sense, he considered Israel's declarations on the possible use of nuclear weapons against Iran and the Gaza Strip to be worrying.

The Cuban diplomat called for an end to the warmongering rhetoric in the Middle East, which only contributes to exacerbate tensions, while demanding an immediate ceasefire in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its humanitarian consequences.

A comprehensive, just and lasting solution, based on the creation of two states, that allows the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and to have their independence and sovereignty, he remarked, cannot be postponed.

At the same time, he urged achieving nuclear disarmament as a top priority in that effort for the UN.

"It is a matter of survival," he concluded.

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