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*Setsuko Thurlow, centre – seating, and Beatrice Fihn, centre – standing, will accept the Nobel Peace Prize on ICAN's behalf in Oslo on 10 December
(Image by Xanthe Hall for ICAN)*

AFP have reported that ambassadors of nuclear weapons states, with the exception of Russia and Israel, will boycott the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony, due to take place in Oslo, Norway, on the 10th of December in which ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) will formally receive the Prize from the Nobel Institute.

Beatrice Fihn, as executive director for ICAN, and Setsuko Thurlow, as a survivor of the bomb on Hiroshima, will receive the award together for efforts to ban the bomb which in reality go back as long as nuclear weapons have existed.

The impulse for this year's award was the recently signed Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which ICAN did so much to achieve and which nuclear weapons states did so much to try to prevent. Their failure has now turned into sour grapes as their ambassadors are to stay away from the ceremony which normally gathers together the highest level diplomats in Oslo.

According to the piece in the AFP, "They clearly received instructions to express their reservations towards ICAN and the global treaty" to ban weapons of mass destruction, said the head of the Nobel Institute, Olav Njolstad.

This is not a surprise given that the US, UK and France issued a statement at the time of the approval of the treaty text which began: "France, the United Kingdom and the United States have not taken part in the negotiation of the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. We do not intend to sign, ratify or ever become party to it. Therefore, there will be no change in the legal obligations on our countries with respect to nuclear weapons."

According to the Nobel Institute, the ambassadors of India and Pakistan will be travelling at the time of the ceremony, while China has not attended the prize-giving since 2010, when a Chinese dissident was awarded the honour. North Korea does not have an embassy in Oslo.

The award ceremony comes at another moment of heightened nuclear tension, with North Korea testing various components of a nuclear bomb and sounding increasingly confident of being able to hit any target in the US it chooses.

