

Positive obligations

June 20 this year in New York a major discussion of the States parties to the Conference on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, like the close attention of civil society, was brought about by Article 6 of the draft Convention.

It deals with **assistance on victims affected by the use or testing of nuclear weapons**, as well as **the environmental remediation** of areas.

And here it will be appropriate to recall the following short parable. Once the villagers decided to pray that it would rain. On the day of the planned prayer service, all the people gathered together, but **only one boy took an umbrella with him**.

In this context, the issue raised by Uganda during the negotiations is very reasonable. What kind of assistance and remediation can there be in the future, if the international community imposes the prohibition on nuclear weapons under this Convention?

Of course, Article 6 itself might be read in two ways – it is not clear whether there is assistance and remediation on the facts of the past, or, nevertheless, the humanitarian obligations of states on possible future conflicts are prescribed.

The question is of a fundamental nature, since the response to it is reflected in the very spirit of the Convention.

We are confident that in the course of negotiations the states will unequivocally fix in Article 6 the thesis that the assistance to the victims and the remediation of areas refer exclusively to the terrible past of mankind.

But then another question arises: how did the participating States in the first reading and generally agree **paragraphs 4 to 6 of the preamble**, in which **the language of the Geneva Conventions is directly used**.

And the Geneva Conventions, as it is known, regulate the conduct of armed conflicts and seek to limit their consequences.

Agreeing with such a tonality in the preamble, the States parties to the negotiations inevitably ran into its consequences in article 6 of the draft document.

The current situation pushes only one thought: it is time for the participating States of the Conference **to realize that they are creating a history and making the first real step forward towards a comprehensive and irreversible prohibition on nuclear weapons**.

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