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'A nuclear war cannot be won'

World powers make rare pledge to prevent nuke weapons spread

PARIS: Five global nuclear powers pledged to prevent atomic weapons spreading and to avoid nuclear conflict, in a rare joint statement setting aside rising West-East tensions to reaffirm a goal of a nuke-free world.

"We believe strongly that the further spread of such weapons must be prevented," said permanent UN Security Council members China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and United States, adding: "A nuclear war cannot be won and must

never be fought."

The statement was issued after the latest review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) – which first came into force in 1970 – was postponed from its scheduled date of Jan 4 to later in the year due to the pandemic.

Despite the major recent tensions between both China and Russia and their Western partners, the five world powers said on Monday that they saw "the avoidance of war

between nuclear-weapon states and the reduction of strategic risks as our foremost responsibilities."

The powers added: "We each intend to maintain and further strengthen our national measures to prevent unauthorised or unintended use of nuclear weapons."

The statement also pledged to abide by a key article in the NPT under which states committed to full future disarmament from nuclear weapons, which have only

been used in conflict in the US bombings of Japan at the end of World War II.

"We remain committed to our NPT obligations, including our Article 6 obligation" on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict control.

According to the UN, a total of 191 states have joined the treaty.

The provisions of the treaty call for a review of its operation every five years. — AFP

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