

Anti-nuclear group plan to take defence minister to court

A GROUP of Powys residents are aiming to initiate a private prosecution against the Secretary of State for Defence for conspiring to commit a war crime, alleging that deploying Trident, the UK's nuclear weapon system, is a crime.

On Wednesday, the CND Cymru group handed in documents to the Merthyr Tydfil Combined Law Courts to start the process of issuing the Defence Minister with a summons to answer the charges.

A demonstration in support of the private prosecutors also took place outside the court at the same time as the documents were handed into the court, featuring a red dragon, symbol of Welsh justice and peace.

Last November the group wrote to the Minister asking him to sign a declaration on behalf of the government that it would fully comply with humanitarian law in relation to its nuclear weapons.

The group deemed the response to be unsatisfactory and have now prepared a "criminal information" - a collection of witness statements and other prima facie evidence relating to the allegation.

One of the group, Angie Zelter from Knighton, said: "The UK's refusal over the last 45 years to disarm its nuclear arsenal has undermined the Non-proliferation Treaty and encouraged more nations to acquire nuclear weapons.

"There are now nine nuclear weapon states and a dangerous new nuclear arms race is under way. The present Trident system, and any replacement, could never be used in accordance with international law, and it is time for our allegations to be judged by an impartial UK court.

"The lies and obfuscations of the nuclear weapon policies need to be examined and revealed in all their horror. This is why we are going to court," said Ms Zelter.

Probus Club