

Nagasaki Peace Declaration

Today the bells of Nagasaki echo in the sky, marking 60 years since the atomic bombing. At 11:02 a.m. on August 9, 1945, a single atomic bomb was dropped from an American warplane, exploding in this same sky above us, instantly destroying the city of Nagasaki. Some 74,000 people were killed, and another 75,000 wounded. Some of the victims never knew what happened. Others pleaded for water as death overtook them. Children, so burned and blackened that they could not even cry out, lay with their eyes closed. Those people who narrowly survived were afflicted with deep physical and mental wounds that could never be healed. They continue to suffer from the after-effects of the bomb, living in fear of death.

To the leaders of the nuclear weapons states: Nuclear weapons must never be used for any reason whatsoever. This we know from painful experience. For sixty years we have repeated our plea, “No more Hiroshima! No more Nagasaki!” International society has also been exerting effort for the prohibition of nuclear weapons tests and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. In 2000, the nuclear weapons states themselves promised an “unequivocal undertaking” for the “elimination of their nuclear arsenals.”

Nevertheless, at the end of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons held at United Nations headquarters in May of this year, no progress was achieved. The nuclear weapons states, and the United States of America in particular, have ignored their international commitments, and have made no change in their unyielding stance on nuclear deterrence. We strongly resent the trampling of the hopes of the world’s people.

To the citizens of the United States of America: We understand your anger and anxiety over the memories of the horror of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Yet, is your security actually enhanced by your government’s policies of maintaining 10,000 nuclear weapons, of carrying out repeated sub-critical nuclear tests, and of pursuing the development of new “mini” nuclear weapons? We are confident that the vast majority of you desire in your hearts the elimination of nuclear arms. May you join hands with the people of the world who share that same desire, and work together for a peaceful planet free from nuclear weapons.

To the government of Japan: Our nation deeply regrets the last war, and our government has supposedly resolved not to engage in actions that might lead to the tragedy of war again. The peaceful ideals of our constitution must be upheld, and the threefold non-nuclear principle of neither possessing, manufacturing, nor allowing nuclear arms within our borders must be enacted into law without delay. The efforts of concerned countries for nuclear disarmament on the Korean peninsula, combined with the concomitant results of the threefold non-nuclear principle, will pave the way for a Northeast Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone. We urge you to adopt a stance that does not rely upon the “nuclear umbrella,” and to take a leading role in nuclear abolition.

We would also point out that the atomic bomb survivors have become quite elderly. We further call upon the Japanese government to provide greater assistance to those who continue to suffer from the mental anguish caused by the bombing, and to extend sufficient aid to survivors who now reside overseas.

Here in Nagasaki, many young people are learning about the atomic bombing and about peace, and are engaged in activities that they themselves have originated. To our young people: Remember always the miserable deaths of the atomic bomb victims. We ask each of you to earnestly study history and to consider the importance of peace and the sanctity of life. The citizens of Nagasaki stand behind your efforts. May you join hands with the world’s citizens and NGOs, that the bells of peace will ring loud and clear in the sky over Nagasaki.

Today, as we mark 60 years since the atomic bombing, we pray for the repose of the souls of those who died, even as we declare our commitment, together with Hiroshima, never to abandon our efforts for the elimination of nuclear weapons and the establishment of lasting world peace.

Iccho Itoh
Mayor of Nagasaki
August 9, 2005