

Statement on the 75th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing:
We Call for the “Abolition of Nuclear Weapons at the Earliest Possible Date”

August 6, 2020

Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations
(Nihon Hidankyo)

In this 75th summer of the first atomic bombing by the U.S. military, we the Hibakusha of Hiroshima and Nagasaki reiterate our call to all the people and States of the world to achieve the “abolition of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date.”

World War II, fought over 6 years, destroyed numerous cities and towns and killed an untold number of people. Amongst all this carnage, the worst was from the atomic bombing. The A-bombs burned with a flash of light and blew people away with the blast. They completely destroyed the people and all living things as well as the two cities. It was a hell on earth beyond all imagination. Those who barely survived the moment later succumbed one after another to the destruction of their cells by the radiation from the bombs. By the end of 1945, altogether 210,000 people were killed. Most of these were civilians: the elderly, women and children.

During the 75 years since the atomic bombing, the Hibakusha have been tormented by “(A-bomb induced) diseases and the fear of them”, “lost jobs as a result of poor health”, “discrimination and prejudice”, “fear of illness and health conditions of their children and grandchildren”, “traumatic experiences of that day”, and other problems. Even today, the atomic bombing continues to inflict “physical, economic and emotional pains” on the Hibakusha.

Breaking the silence imposed by the Allied Forces’ press ban and the Japanese government’s policy of abandoning them, the Hibakusha rallied together to found the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo) in 1956, the 11th year of the atomic bombing. Since then, Hidankyo has continued working to achieve a nuclear weapon-free world, upholding its founding pledge “to save humanity from its crisis through the lessons learned from our experiences, while at the same time saving ourselves”.

In subsequent decades, the number of nuclear weapons, which was only a handful at the time of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, went on increasing and reached 70,000 at the peak time of the Cold War. It has dwindled to 13,000 since, but the destructive power of each warhead is far greater than the bomb used in 1945. If a third massacre and destruction is caused by nuclear weapons, the scope of the damage may spread globally and its consequences may lead to the annihilation of the human race.

The average age of the Hibakusha exceeds 83 years old and nearly 10,000 of them die year by year. We the Hibakusha, in order to prevent anyone, anywhere in the world from going through the same experience we had, have tirelessly carried out our movement, appealing, “No more Hibakusha!” and “Prevent nuclear war! Abolish nuclear weapons!”

In 2016, we initiated the International Signature Campaign in Support of the “Appeal of the Hibakusha” for the elimination of nuclear weapons. When the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted at the UN on July 7, 2017, we rejoiced with all our hearts and souls and felt so happy to have survived to that day.

Now the COVID-10 pandemic is raging across national borders, but it is expected that it will be brought under control in a few years. However, if a major nuclear exchange occurs, by the time it comes under control, there will be no humans or other living things left. Only a planet with heavy contamination from radiation will remain. No one will survive to be proud of their nation’s wealth, military strength, prestige or status. And there will be no one to dispose of the corpses of such ex-leaders of States.

The human race cannot coexist with nuclear weapons. These weapons of evil created by humans must be abolished by humans. We the Hibakusha call for the “abolition of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date” and dedicate what time we have left to working together with you to ensure the survival of humankind.