

On the Occasion of the Fiftieth Country's Deposition of Instrument of  
Ratification (Accession) of the Treaty on the  
Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

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On October 24 of this 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing, the fiftieth deposition of the instrument of ratification (or accession) of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been completed, meeting the requirement for entry into force of the treaty.

It is a remarkable accomplishment achieved 3 years since the treaty was adopted by 122 countries at the U.N. on July 7, 2017. The TPNW is to enter into force early next year, when 90 days have elapsed after October 24. With this, nuclear weapons will be prohibited by the treaty both in name and in reality. A sure path has been opened to achieving the Hibakusha's long-time aspiration of abolishing nuclear weapons. This day will be engraved in human history, together with the days on which the first nuclear weapons were detonated over our heads in August 1945.

Having long called for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, we the Hibakusha welcome this day with great joy, truly feeling that our survival has been rewarded. We would like to report this achievement to the hundreds of thousands of victims who were killed 75 years ago without knowing what had happened, as well as to our forerunners who have dedicated their lives to the cause of the Hibakusha movement. At the same time, we would like to share our joy with so many people and organizations, both in Japan and internationally, who have supported the Hibakusha and worked together with us over many years in the movement to abolish nuclear weapons and create a world free of nuclear weapons and war, and also with the governments and citizens of the countries who have committed to achieving the entry into force of the treaty.

However, the five nuclear powers, recognized as the nuclear weapon states in the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), their allies and 4 other nuclear-armed states continue to oppose the TPNW. To our great regret, Japan, the only country to have suffered from the use of nuclear weapons in wartime, remains among them.

To date, the Japanese government has argued, "Though nuclear weapons are contrary to the spirit of humanitarian laws, they are not illegal, as there is no positive law explicitly banning them" and "The International Court of Justice, while ruling that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was illegal, did not make a definitive conclusion in an extreme circumstance, in which the very survival of a State would be at stake." Based on these arguments, it has maintained that the use of nuclear weapons is not prohibited by

international law, and continues to uphold a security policy relying on nuclear deterrence.

But now, such excuses no longer pass muster. The Japanese government and its Diet should play a leadership role in achieving a total ban on nuclear weapons. Once again, we request the Japanese Government to change its nuclear policy immediately, sign and ratify the TPNW without delay and work in the forefront for the achievement of a nuclear weapon-free world.

We the Hibakusha have continued to work both in Japan and in other countries to bear witness to the fact that atomic bombs are weapons of absolute evil, which cannot coexist with human beings. Since 2016, we have promoted the International Hibakusha Appeal Signature Campaign, asking citizens of the world to support our appeal to all governments to conclude a treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons.

Today, many citizens in nuclear-armed countries have come to know that nuclear weapons are anti-human and unnecessary. With the TPNW coming into force, it would be illegal in light of international law to invest vast amounts of money, time and human resources to produce and possess them. But the danger of nuclear weapons being used is not yet eliminated. If that happens, the potential consequences would be immeasurable.

The aspiration of the Hibakusha is to ensure that “no more Hibakusha will be created”. Not much time is left for aging Hibakusha. With all our might, we will continue to walk with all of you peace-loving people towards a world without nuclear weapons or war.