

# On the Occasion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons Coming into Effect, Nuclear Nations Must Ratify the Treaty and Dispose of Their Nuclear Weapons

November 18, 2020

On 24 October, 2020—75 years after humanity’s first use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and after many decades of survivors praying for a binding treaty that would abolish nuclear weapons—50 states have ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, ensuring that it will officially come into effect on 22 January, 2021. In addition to prohibiting the foolishness of deploying nuclear weapons, it also makes development, possession, and the threat of use unlawful. In other words, we will be entering an era when legally the global community will no longer have to coexist with nuclear weapons.

We Japanese and Korean atomic bomb survivors have experienced nuclear bombs with our own bodies. Our historic mission to create a world with no nuclear weapons comes from these horrors. Therefore, over these many years, we have spoken out, stressing that humans and nuclear weapons cannot coexist and working tirelessly with citizens from around the globe who treasure peace. At last we have successfully put into effect the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Still, the problem remains that nuclear states and those that depend on them refuse to sign the treaty. Moreover, this includes Japan and Korea, the nations whose people have been bombed by nuclear weapons during wartime. This is extremely regrettable.

The situation is especially dire in northeast Asia. In order to resolve issues related to the nuclear weapons program of the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK, North Korea), the Six Party talks were convened, but distrust between the related nations impeded progress. What remains the largest unresolved issue blocking the path toward peace in the region is the lack of commitment to normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan-DPRK and the U.S.-DPRK.

The novel coronavirus has spread throughout the entire globe, and humanity seeks to forge a world order based on cooperation in a manner which we have not witnessed before. Japanese and Korean atomic bomb survivors, through a “mask sharing” initiative, have created a new solidarity. If we were in the 20<sup>th</sup> century—an era dominated by imperialism and the threat of nuclear war—we would not have been able to achieve this kind of solidarity and peacefulness after the coronavirus calamity, and we would not be entering a nuclear-free 21<sup>st</sup> century exemplified by the successful passing of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

We, the Japanese and Korean survivors, aim to resolve concerns related to North Korea’s nuclear arsenal by calling on the Six Party nations to promptly sign the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, thereby paving the way to a “nuclear free world.”

To that end, the governments of Japan and Korea must first reopen peaceful discussions on justice for atomic-bomb victims. In the process of these discussions, they must avoid relapsing into earlier arguments. Instead they should earnestly seek to resolve the issues of fact-finding projects and atomic victims’ compensation (reparation), as well as the registration of atomic survivors’ records

in UNESCO's "Memory of the World Programme."

Korean Association of Atomic Bomb Victims

Japan Confederation of A- and H-bomb Sufferers Organizations