



The City of Hiroshima

PEACE DECLARATION

August 6, 2025

Eighty years ago, Hiroshima was strewn with bodies too damaged to identify even their sex. One *hibakusha* (atomic bomb survivor) ignored the many glass shards piercing her body to cremate her father with her own hands. Elsewhere, a young woman begged, “I don’t care if I die. Please! Give me water!” Decades later, a woman who heard that plea still regretted not giving the young woman water. She told herself that fighting for the elimination of nuclear weapons was the best she could do for those who died. Another *hibakusha* spent his life alone because the parents of the woman he loved refused to let her marry anyone exposed to the bomb.

One *hibakusha* leader frequently reminded younger audiences, “Building a peaceful world without nuclear weapons will demand our never-give-up spirit. We have to talk and keep talking to people who hold opposing views.” Today, conveying the ardent pleas for peace derived from *hibakusha* experiences is more crucial than ever.

The United States and Russia still possess about 90 percent of the world’s nuclear warheads. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the chaos in the Middle East are accelerating military buildups around the world. Feeling the pressure of this situation, policymakers in some countries even accept the idea that “nuclear weapons are essential for national defense.” These developments flagrantly disregard the lessons the international community should have learned from the tragedies of history. They threaten to topple the peacebuilding frameworks so many have worked so hard to construct.

Despite the current turmoil at the nation-state level, we, the people, must never give up. Instead, we must work even harder to build civil society consensus that nuclear weapons must be abolished for a genuinely peaceful world. Our youth, the leaders of future generations, must recognize that misguided policies regarding military spending, national security, and nuclear weapons could bring utterly inhumane consequences. We urge them to step forward with this understanding and lead civil society toward consensus through expanded participation at the grassroots level. In this process, we must all remember to think less about ourselves and more about each other. Thinking of others is how humanity has resolved much conflict and turmoil on our path to the present day. Clearly, nations, too, must look beyond narrow self-interest to consider the circumstances of other nations.

In expanding grassroots initiatives, solidarity will be indispensable. Cultural arts and sports exchanges contribute enormously to the culture of peace we seek. And in fostering that culture of peace, young people can easily take the lead. All they need to do is conceive and initiate projects they can carry out in the course of daily life, such as peace-centered art and music projects or planting seeds and saplings from atomic-bombed trees. The City of Hiroshima continuously offers opportunities to experience the culture of peace built by Hiroshima’s *hibakusha* and other predecessors in their spirit of mutual support. The more our peace culture transcends national borders, the more it will pressure policymakers now relying on nuclear deterrence to revise their policies.

Policymakers around the world, can you not see that security policies derived from narrow self-interest are fomenting international conflict? Nations now strengthening their military forces, some including nuclear arsenals, must engage constructively in talks aimed at abandoning reliance on nuclear weapons. Please, visit Hiroshima. Witness with your own eyes what an atomic bombing does. Take to heart the peace-loving spirit of Hiroshima, then begin immediately discussing a security framework based on trust through dialogue.

Japan is the only nation that has suffered an atomic bombing in war. The Japanese government represents a people who aspire to genuine and lasting peace. Hiroshima demands that our government lead toward unification of our divided international community. As president of Mayors for Peace, already the world’s largest network of peace cities and still growing, the City of Hiroshima will collaborate with our more than 8,500 member cities worldwide to instill the culture of peace, which stands in firm opposition to military force. We will call on policymakers to revise their policies. We call on Japan, for example, to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Doing so would manifest the spirit of Hiroshima and begin to answer the supplications of our *hibakusha*, represented by Nihon Hidankyo, last year’s Nobel Peace Prize recipient.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is on the brink of dysfunctionality. The TPNW should serve as strong support for that treaty, helping it remain the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. We demand that Japan at least participate as an observer during the first TPNW Review Conference next year. Furthermore, in light of the intensified global challenges of coping with radiation damage due to nuclear testing, we demand that our government strengthen measures of support for all *hibakusha*, including those living abroad. With their average age now exceeding 86, they still face myriad hardships caused by radiation damage to their minds and bodies.

At this Peace Memorial Ceremony marking 80 years since the atomic bombing, we offer our heartfelt condolences to the souls of the victims of the atomic bombings. We renew our determination to work together with Nagasaki and with likeminded people around the world to reach humanity’s long-sought goal—the abolition of nuclear weapons leading to lasting world peace.

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The City of Hiroshima