

Messages of Solidarity from Political Party leaders of Japan

SHII Kazuo, Executive Committee Chair of Japanese Communist Party

I send this message of solidarity from the bottom of my heart to everyone who is participating in the 2021 World Conference against A and H Bombs.

On January 22 this year, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) came into force. For the first time, nuclear weapons have become identified as illegal under international law. This is a historic achievement made by the collective efforts of Hibakusha-led civil society and governments of many countries around the world. The number of countries that ratified the treaty has steadily increased, now reaching 55.

86 countries have already signed the treaty, which is nearly half of all UN member states. Let's further increase support for and participation in the TPNW, and drive the group of nations supporting nuclear weapons into a corner. With the normative power of the treaty, we must pave the way to the total abolition of nuclear weapons.

In order to move toward "a world without nuclear weapons", the role of Japan is crucial because Japan is the only nation that suffered from atomic bombs attacks in wartime. However, the coalition government of the Liberal Democratic and Komei parties led by Prime Minister Suga has turned its back on the treaty on the ground of their reliance on the U.S. "nuclear umbrella" or "nuclear deterrence". "Nuclear deterrence" theory presupposes the right to the actual use of nuclear weapons. As the only A-bombed nation, Japan must not be allowed to lend support to catastrophic disasters as inflicted on Hiroshima and Nagasaki onto other countries.

A general election will soon be held in Japan. We are determined to do our best to develop a joint struggle between concerned citizens and opposition parties, and to achieve a breakthrough in our party's influence, in order to establish a new coalition government composed of opposition parties that will join the TPNW.

At this time, although we can't see an end to the COVID-19 pandemic and increase in tensions between major powers, this world conference is a beacon of hope for a new world order where governments and civil society work together for a "just and peaceful world without nuclear weapons". I sincerely hope for the success of the conference.

Message from Yamamoto Taro, Leader of Reiwa Shinsengumi

Despite the explosive spread of the corona virus, continuing to ignore the human rights of the people of this country, the government forced the holding of the Tokyo 2020 Games. If we look back on history, the government of Japan has repeatedly infringed human rights, abandoning the victims of WWII air raids, Minamata disease, Hansen's disease and many more.

Among these, even though we are the only country to have experienced atomic bombings during war, there are still Hibakusha lawsuits seeking relief from the government, including the "Black Rain" lawsuit, which the government recently gave up appealing to the Supreme Court. Complete relief for the Hibakusha has not been provided even 76 years after the war. Furthermore, mindful of U.S. opposition, Japan has not even signed the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

We in Reiwa Shinsengumi believe that abandoning nuclear power generation and abolition of nuclear weapons are two sides of the same coin. We cannot hand over nuclear weapons and nuclear power to future generations, because they will inflict irreversible damage on the future of humankind and the environment of the planet. In earthquake-prone Japan, we call on the government to abolish nuclear power generation and to ratify the TPNW immediately. In the forthcoming meeting of the states parties to the TPNW, Japan should take proactive positions to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons, as is befitting the only country to have suffered the atomic bombing in wartime.

Shiomura Ayaka, Member of the House of Councilors, Constitutional Democratic Party

On the occasion of the Hiroshima Day Rally of the 2021 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, I would like to once again express my condolences to the hundreds of thousands of victims who lost their lives in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and my heartfelt sympathy to the many people who are still suffering from the aftereffects of the bombings.

I would like to express my heartfelt respect to all of you who are tirelessly working to prevent nuclear war, ban and eliminate nuclear weapons, and to support and stand in solidarity with A-bomb survivors, despite the severe situation caused by the coronavirus pandemic that has spread since last year.

In January this year, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force. The first meeting of the states parties to the Treaty will be held next year. Regrettably, Japan has not signed the TPNW, but many governments concerned have requested that Japan should attend the meeting of the TPNW states parties as an observer. If the government claims to be a bridge-builder between the nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states, it should attend the conference as an observer.

In the "Black Rain" lawsuit, the plaintiffs won the case, but there are many Hibakusha who did not participate in the trial. Therefore, it is essential to review the government's examination criteria for Hibakusha certification. I will call on the government to take immediate action, including a fundamental revision of the criteria for screening A-bomb disease applications.

I, Shiomura Ayaka, am a second generation Hibakusha of Hiroshima.

Together with the Hibakusha, who desire to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons in their lifetime, let us work together to bring a nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world into reality.