

The 2021 World Conference against Atomic & Hydrogen Bombs

Organizer's Statement

The 2021 World Conference against A & H Bombs, taking place shortly after the historic achievement of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), renews its pledge to move forward toward the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, at the time when people all around the world are deepening their concern for the dignity of human lives due to the coronavirus pandemic.

It will soon be 76 years since atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on Aug. 6 and 9, 1945 by the US forces. The two nuclear bombs totally destroyed the cities in an instant, and took the lives of about 210,000 people by the end of that year. Most of the victims were women, the elderly, children and other innocent citizens. Many were burnt alive and others were affected by radiation. The consequences were horrific, likened to "hell on earth". No other weapons had ever caused such massive and indiscriminate death and destruction. Those who narrowly survived later suffered from delayed effects and heart break, having lost their loved ones. Hibakusha, whose average age is now over 83, continue to talk about their tragic experiences and warn that "humans and nuclear weapons cannot coexist". With the Hibakusha we appeal to the world that this tragedy should never be repeated. Let us take action for the elimination of nuclear weapons to ensure the survival of the human race and our future.

Humanity is still threatened by the danger of nuclear annihilation. Even now there are about 13,000 nuclear warheads in the world. With confrontations and tensions between big powers, the danger of actual use of nuclear weapons is increasing. The US and Russia both maintain the policy of the first use of nuclear weapons, and it is reported that some 2,000 nuclear missiles are kept ready for launch on warning. China is said to be the only power among the Nuclear Five that has increased the number of its nuclear warheads; the UK recently raised the ceiling for the number of its submarine-launched nuclear warheads; and France is moving to promote EU's joint nuclear operation. Adding to these are regional nuclear hotbeds, such as ongoing tension between India and Pakistan, the unresolved Korean denuclearization issue, and Israel's increasing hostilities with the Palestinians. The solution of international conflict by peaceful means is the principle of the international politics. All parties should abide by the UN Charter and relevant international law and put an end without delay to all armed conflicts or any other actions leading to such conflicts. We further call on them to cancel the ongoing reinforcement, development and deployment of nuclear arsenals. There can be no such thing as a peace that can be safeguarded by nuclear weapons. Threatening one another with nuclear weapons only increases the danger of nuclear weapons being actually used. There can be no winner in a catastrophic nuclear war. Facing this reality, humans must get rid of the dangerous delusion of "nuclear deterrence".

With the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on January 22 this year, nuclear weapons are now not only immoral but also illegal under international law for the first time. We extend our deep appreciation and solidarity to all national governments, Hibakusha, anti-nuclear peace movements and other people that have contributed to the coming into force of the TPNW. The more countries sign and ratify the TPNW, the more firmly the illegality of nuclear weapons is established. Surrounded by

these international waves, neither nuclear powers nor their “nuclear deterrence” clients will be able to escape from the impacts of this development on their policies. We call on the national governments to support and participate in the TPNW and will make every effort for its expansion. Building on this treaty, let us move forward to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The nuclear powers must respond to the demand of the public opinion demonstrated by the entry into force of the TPNW. Above all, the Nuclear Five must implement without any further delay their obligation under Article 6 of the NPT to negotiate nuclear disarmament. Further, at the next NPT review conference planned for 2022, they should reaffirm their commitment to the agreements reached by past review conferences and implement them, including the “unequivocal undertaking” to achieve the “total elimination” of their “nuclear arsenals” pledged at the 2000 NPT review conference, the establishing of a “framework” to achieve a “world without nuclear weapons” in the 2010 review conference, as well as the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East. They should go even farther. They have repeatedly promised to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons. We call on them to sincerely fulfill all these agreements and obligations.

In order to move forward toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, while preventing their use, it is essential to work both to build international opinion in support of the TPNW and to change national politics in the nuclear-armed states and dependent countries. Since the TPNW took form, we have seen new positive developments linked to the growing public support of the TPNW among NATO members. It is time now to break away from the pro-nuclear weapon politics by building overwhelming public support to joining the treaty.

Particularly, the choice to be made by Japan, the only country to have suffered a nuclear catastrophe firsthand, will have a far-reaching impact. If the Japanese government supports the TPNW in response to the nationwide demand and breaks away from the reliance on “nuclear deterrence”, it will hugely increase the momentum of the current global movement towards the abolition of nuclear weapons. Such a development will certainly bring a positive change in the increasingly tense Northeast Asian situation. We appeal to all Japanese citizens to act now to build overwhelming public support beyond differences in thought, belief and political affiliation in order to change the current policies that keep rejecting the TPNW. We hope that the forthcoming general elections will become a turning point for it. Alongside this, we reinforce our solidarity with other ongoing campaigns, such as the opposition to the construction of new US base at Henoko, Okinawa, the revision of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, the development and deployment of new missiles designed to attack “enemy bases” and the opposition to every other move to turn Japan into a country that will wage war under the Japan-US military alliance.

In the COVID-19 pandemic, large numbers of people have lost their lives or health and are suffering from widening social gap, poverty and loss of their jobs. At the same time, the global spending on the military, including nuclear weapons, has reached 1,981 billion dollars (about 213 trillion yen), the highest expenditure since 1988, when the US-Soviet rivalry was rife. Conflicts are continuing in many regions. Military strength is useless against the coronavirus pandemic, which has claimed more than 4.2 million lives in the world. We need to concentrate our efforts on deep reduction of armament, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, end of the pandemic and on the protection of people’s lives and livings. We must establish a world where all countries cooperate with one another on an

equal footing and for peace as set out in the UN Charter. The TPNW now in force presents the prospect of a world that is changing and moving away from the superpower hegemony and towards an equal participation by all. This has been made possible by the cooperation between civil societies and national governments.

Let us stand up for action to break through nuclear power despotism and to free the world from the danger of nuclear catastrophe. We propose to launch the following actions with a view to attaining a “nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world”, a more hopeful world as we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic:

- Establishment of more events to hear testimonies from Hibakusha and nuclear test victims, and exhibit evidence and photo-panels of their sufferings, helping to make known throughout the country and worldwide the inhuman consequences of the use of nuclear weapons;
- Strengthening of campaigns to build up public opinion nationally and internationally, calling for support of and participation in the TPNW, especially in the countries possessing nuclear weapons or relying on the “nuclear umbrella”;
- As we approach the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly, the next NPT Review Conference and the upcoming first meeting of the states parties to the TPNW, let us promote cooperation between civil society movements and non-nuclear governments to support the above goals;
- Development of cooperation with multiple campaigns for peace and opposition to wars, including those working for the reduction in military expenditures, the dissolution of military alliances, the compensation and support for the victims of Agent Orange and of wars as well as the eradication of the damage and for the promotion of peace education;
- Ensure successes for the international grassroots action “Peace Wave 2021” for the elimination of nuclear weapons, taking place from August 2 to 9, 2021;
- Broaden solidarity with our movement for the “world without nuclear weapons” by reaching out to other wide-ranging movements of people such as those concerned with welfare, livelihoods and human rights, the prevention of climate change, for gender equality, and for freedom and democracy.

We convey to you our resolve that with the Hibakusha and with younger generations, including high-school and university students, we will keep working actively at the forefront of these efforts.

August 2, 2021
Organizing Committee of the World Conference against A and H Bombs