

International Meeting, 2022 World Conference against A and H Bombs
Session 1, August 4

Facing the Inhuman Nature of the A-Bomb Damage, Hibakusha Call for the
Abolition of Nuclear Weapons

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Dear friends assembled in the International Meeting of the 2022 World Conference against A and H Bombs, thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak before you on behalf of the Hibakusha.

Seventy-seven years have passed since those days of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The first two atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945. They destroyed the two cities instantly, claiming so many lives mercilessly. Those who miraculously survived the initial attacks have inscribed the hellish scenes, sounds, voices and smells in their memories, and quietly endured the economic hardship, prejudice and discrimination in the society through these years until today.

I was inside a wooden school building in Hiroshima. I was 7 years old and a second grader of a primary school. Suddenly I felt a blinding flash. The next moment, the ceiling of the building collapsed, and sharp splinters of windowpanes flew all around. Fortunately I suffered only minor injuries from broken glass.

On my way home, carried on the back of my father, who managed to come to the school to find me, I witnessed hell on earth: I saw many people with their skins burned heavily and peeled off; A mother was carrying a baby, who was burned-black like charcoal; She, too, was heavily burned all over her body; Some people, whose eyeballs were popped out or who were holding their protruding intestines in their hands, desperately tried to take refuge. Many people tried to cling on to us, saying, "Give me water, water, water..." But we just left them and hurried home, unable to give them any

kind of help.

I should have lost my life that day. Until shortly before the bomb was dropped, my house was near the hypocenter, and I went to school about 350 meters from the hypocenter. But my family moved 3.5 km away from where the bomb was dropped, and I also changed schools. If we had not moved, my family and I would not have survived. I later heard that about 400 children and 11 teachers who were at the school that day were burned to death in an instant and their bones could not be found.

Those who barely survived the bombing died one after another of unknown causes: My female cousin, who was like my older sister, died in my arms. And my 10-year-old boy cousin, who was only slightly injured, died suddenly in front of my eyes in early September, vomiting up a mass of blood. The cruel sight of my cousins those days remains etched in my mind. The atomic bomb did not allow people to die as humans or to live as humans. 77 years have passed, but "that day" has remained with me.

Both my mother and father died from cancer. In the midst of discrimination and prejudice, I got married. When I became pregnant, I was in agony and wondered if radiation would affect my daughter, whom I raised after making the difficult decision to have her. In November 2010, she developed cancer and passed away in February following year. She was a cheerful and active daughter.

In 2017, the year when the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted, my youngest brother, who was born after the war, died in October from multiple myeloma. Another younger brother, who was 5 years old in 1945, died in December from multiple cancer. The atomic bomb killed my two brothers successively. I am filled with frustration and loneliness.

And every day, I am wondering if I will be the next to die. A-bomb survivors cannot escape the atomic bombing for the rest of their lives.

We the Hibakusha continue to convey the reality and aftereffects of the A-bomb damage to the people both in Japan and internationally, so that no one in the world should experience the same hellish suffering we have gone through.

However, the government of Japan, the only A-bombed country in the world, continues to turn its back on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Just because of this tragic experience, Japan instead must join the TPNW and take the lead

in abolishing nuclear weapons.

But by refusing to participate as an observer in the TPNW Meeting of States Parties, the Japanese government has missed an important opportunity to act as a bridge builder between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states, which it always claimed to aim. This was truly regrettable.

I hope that Prime Minister Kishida, who is participating in the ongoing NPT Review Conference, will proactively call for the immediate implementation of "the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon states to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals," which was reaffirmed in 2010. The NPT, which entered into force in 1970, has passed long 50 years in 2020.

Whenever I see reports of Russia's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, that day 77 years ago comes back to my mind, and I am filled with sadness and tears. For whom are they fighting a war in which families are being torn apart and the lives of children, the elderly, and other non-combatants are being lost one after another? Under the tense situation of nuclear threats, we cannot allow the A-bomb hell to reappear, for whatever reason. The very existence of nuclear weapons on the earth itself is inhumane.

We call for a major step toward the abolition of nuclear weapons by shifting from a security policy based on nuclear deterrence to a security policy based on mutual trust. We, the A-bomb survivors, appeal to you from the bottom of our hearts. If nuclear war breaks out, the human race will be annihilated. The only way to save humanity from extinction is to abolish nuclear weapons.

We are at a crossroads, whether to leave a safe and secure blue earth to the next generations who will be the bearers of the future world, or whether to choose the path of destruction. I appeal once again to all of you gathered here. The only way to protect the lives and safety of the human beings is to abolish nuclear weapons. Civil society members of all nations and regions of the world, let us work together to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We Hibakusha will continue to tell the reality of the A-bomb damage and appeal for the abolition of nuclear weapons to the best of our ability. Thank you very much.