

**2023 World Conference against A and H Bombs
International Meeting – Session 1**

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Greetings on behalf of the Hibakusha

I am Hamasumi Jiro, Assistant Secretary General of the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo). Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak here.

This summer, we mark the 78th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Conflicts are continuing in many parts of the world today. It's been a year and half since Russia launched an invasion of Ukraine with threats to use nuclear weapons. Russia has deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus in rivalry with NATO, further increasing the risk of nuclear weapons being used. NATO member countries are continuing arms supply to Ukraine. The United States recently announced it would provide Ukraine with cluster bombs. All this raises a concern that the war might be dragged into a prolonged quagmire.

The G7 Summit took place in Hiroshima in May and issued "G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament." In this document, there was no reference to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Nothing was mentioned about Hibakusha or the inhuman nature of nuclear weapons. It simply disappointed the Hibakusha. The G7 leaders instead focused their discussion on nuclear deterrence, arguing that achieving a world without nuclear weapons is their ultimate goal. They are making the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons ambiguous while keeping the NPT regime intact. At the NPT Review Conference in August 2022, the Nihon Hidankyo representative said, "We are frustrated by the fact that the nuclear weapon states are disregarding the unequivocal commitment they made at the 2000 Review Conference and reconfirmed in 2010 to achieve the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The nuclear weapon states and their allies should recognize that all humankind is at the brink of nuclear war due to their insincerity and arrogance."

I was exposed to radiation from the atomic bomb in utero. My mother was 3-month pregnant with me when the first atomic bomb in history was dropped on Hiroshima at 8:15 a.m. on August 6, 1945. My father died on his way to his office near ground zero. Families, who were our relatives, came from around the city to take shelter at my home, which escaped collapse. Our home was filled with about 30 people.

Only my father did not come home. On the day after the bomb attack, my pregnant mother and my sisters looked for my father at ground zero. In the scorching heat and the bad odor from the dead bodies, they looked around for him with compelling feelings for him. But he was not found. Next day, they went to ground zero again and at last found his buckle, a bunch of keys, and the clasp of his coin purse.

I was born in February of next year, 1946, at home where 30 people lived. My mother and her seven children were left by my father. I grew up looking every day at the photo of my father hanging in the room. My mother and brothers were breadwinners. Aware that my life was given in return for my father's death, not a single day went by that I didn't think about my father. The war has not ended because there still exist 2,500 nuclear warheads in the world. Today, 78 years after the atomic bombings, the Hibakusha continue to be affected both physically and mentally in everyday life.

Although I was exposed to radiation during my mother's pregnancy, I cannot escape the damage. On the contrary, fetus could be affected by radioactivity to an immeasurable degree. Hibakusha who were exposed to radiation in womb became hibakusha before they were born. Some of those who were exposed to radiation in utero in the early stage of pregnancy near the hypocenter had microcephalus that caused physical or intellectual disabilities. I know a person who is taken care of by his sister after the parents' death. In his childhood, he was sent to the ABCC (Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission) for examination, not for treatment. There was an elementary school which did a comparative study about children's development in a class that put together children who were exposed to radiation in utero and those without such radiation exposure. I was very infuriated about children being treated as guinea pigs. There was a person who killed himself leaving a letter to his parents, saying, "I will bid farewell to the days of illnesses. I also read a report saying, "A woman who was exposed to radiation in utero had liver and eye diseases. Her mother died three years after the atomic bombing. Her father ran away from home. She lived with her grandmother and two sisters. The 19-year-old woman committed suicide due to the hardships and poverty she had to endure." Today, there are about 6,600 people who were exposed to radiation in utero. The Hibakusha's suffering, uncertainty about their own illnesses, and anxiety about their children and

grandchildren will never go away.

The atomic bombs annihilated two cities in an instant with the heat rays, blasts, and radiation, indiscriminately taking the lives of so many people. More than 140,000 people died in Hiroshima and about 70,000 people in Nagasaki by the end of the year. Many people were crushed under collapsed houses or burned alive. All around were people like ghosts walking with their peeled skin hanging down. Many people were unable to rescue their children or parents or even to give water to people wandering between life and death. The atomic bomb did not allow people to die as humans or to live. More than 10 years after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Hibakusha, who had been abandoned in the absence of any relief measures, faced diseases, poverty and discrimination against them.

Nuclear deterrence is the State's deception of the Hibakusha. It's a tricky argument. For the Hibakusha, nuclear deterrence stands for the atomic bomb and its mushroom clouds.

The Bikini tragedy gave rise to the Movement against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, which encouraged the Hibakusha to meet in Nagasaki on August 10, 1956 to found the Japan Confederation of Atomic- and Hydrogen-Bomb Sufferers Organizations. In the founding declaration, entitled "Message to the World," we pledged one another to "reassure our will to save humanity from its crisis through the lessons learned from our experiences, while at the same time saving ourselves." Over the last 68 years since then, we have held on to this pledge, telling people at home and internationally that no one in the world should be forced to face what the Hibakusha have experienced—calling for no more Hibakusha, no more nuclear wars; for nuclear weapons to be eliminated; and for State compensation for the A-bomb damage.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted at a United Nations on July 7, 2017, with 122 countries voting in favor after discussions at the United Nations and other international conferences. It is an historic treaty that is derived from the first resolution of the UN General Assembly calling for "the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction." The TPNW came into force on January 22, 2021 and became an international law, rendering nuclear weapons illegal in all senses of the word.

It should be the mission of the Hibakusha and of everyone in the world to pass a blue sky without nuclear weapons or war, on to our children around the world.

Nihon Hidankyo is promoting the signature campaign urging the Japanese government to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We will make the UN A-Bom Exhibition which was held last year, available online as part of the effort to inform the world of the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons and call for their elimination.

Let us work together. Thank you.