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Nagasaki Rally Day video speech
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Hello from New York! I'm Ray Acheson, director of the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this video message on this grave anniversary, and to remember with you this horrific event to which we say, Never Again.

The moments in time marked by the atomic bombings of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki are etched not only in history, but in the lives and stories and memories of those who survived.

But these moments and days, months, and years of suffering are not just historical, as you all know so well. They live on in our current world order.

In the 75 years since the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki, we have seen how these weapons have become part of the apparatus of violence and control that the US and other nuclear-armed states have sought to build.

This world, where nuclear weapons are meant to convey power and bestow privilege on their possessors and their allies, is a patriarchal world.

Patriarchy is more than about gender relations—it is about how power dynamics are shaped along lines of sex, gender, race, class, religion, ethnicity, ability, and more. Patriarchy is a culture of dominance of men, of white supremacy and wealth, of able-bodiedness and heteronormativity.

The dominance of the patriarchy in our world is what has led to prioritisation of profits over people and our planet. Patriarchy says some lives are worth more than others. It says that some people need to be protected, and the rest are expendable.

This is what underlies theories that posit nuclear weapons as “necessary” for security – when in fact nuclear weapons put our very survival at risk.

Nuclear weapons are constructed to incinerate human bodies and buildings. They are not magical tools of security.

Nagasaki experienced the horror of nuclear weapons. Hiroshima experienced this, too. All of the people, animals, land, and water who have been subjected to the brutality of nuclear testing have experienced this.

The assertion that nuclear weapons are about security is all about a particular kind of security for a particular kind of people—not for global security; and certainly not for peace, justice, or equity.

In case this was not clear before, it should be now.

In the midst of a global pandemic, the nuclear-armed states continue to sink vast fortunes into their nuclear arsenals. At the same time, their own citizens suffer from the lack of preparedness of their governments. Instead of hospitals, these countries built nuclear bombs. Instead of investing in nurses and doctors and first responders, they invested in missiles, bombers, and submarines.

Even now we are witnessing the nuclear-armed states continue to invest in not just the maintenance but also the so-called modernisation of nuclear weapons. They have deemed arms manufactures to be essential services during the pandemic.

These political and economic choices are absurd, dangerous, and immoral.

But we can make different choices.

The majority of countries in the world have made a different choice—to never pursue the development of nuclear weapons. To demand nuclear disarmament. To negotiate and join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Every day, we can make different choices. We can demand our governments join this Treaty. We can demand that they eliminate nuclear weapons and reject weapons as tools of security. We can remove our own money from banks that invest in nuclear weapons, and our city councils to do the same.

We can work with others for social change. We can say No to Patriarchy, No to Violence, No to Nuclear Weapons. We can live those choices ourselves, and we can build that world, together.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share this message with you today and all the best for the rest of your event!