

International Meeting

2020 World Conference against A & H Bombs

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(Nihon Hidankyo)

I am a Hibakusha, a victim of the first nuclear war, who experienced the damage caused by the atomic bombing on that day. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak before you on behalf of the Hibakusha.

The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9 instantly destroyed the two cities, claiming so many lives mercilessly. Those who barely survived the initial attacks died one after another due to the aftereffects of radiation. Nuclear weapons did not allow us to live or die as human beings.

Having guilt for having survived and remembering the hellish scenes they saw, the sound and the voice they heard, and the stench they smelled on that very day that have been deeply imprinted on their memory, the Hibakusha have had to continue to fight against hardships of life, public prejudice and discrimination. The Hibakusha is still suffering deeply. Even though 75 years have passed since then, “that day” is still with us.

On August 6, 1945, I was inside a wooden school building. 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. They stuck into the walls, desks and the floor of the classroom, and into my skin. I fell unconscious. I don't remember how long passed before I came to my senses.

My father managed to come to the school to find me. On my way home, carried on his back, 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. More and more people tried to cling on to us, saying, “Give me water, water, water...” Unable to give

any kind of help to them, we just left them and hurried home.

My aunts, uncles, and cousins came to my house, which was 3.5 kilometers from the blast center. They looked completely different with their entire back and/or legs heavily burned. Their burns festered, and maggots crawled around their bodies, and they died one after another. My older cousin had minor injuries and suffered from diarrhea. One day he vomited blood clots and died suddenly. At age of 7, I was just staring at him in blank surprise.

The atomic bomb continued to afflict me in my later life. Whenever I tried to get a job or get married, I suffered from prejudice and discrimination just because I was a Hibakusha. My father and my mother died a painful death. In February 2011, the nuclear weapon took the life of my daughter, who was my second self. In 2017, my two younger brothers died one after another. They all suffered from cancer. I am filled with frustration and loneliness.

I can never forgive under any circumstances the atomic-bombing that suddenly attacked us 75 years ago. Those who died continue to encourage me to speak about my A-bomb experience no matter how hard it is.

Our hellish sufferings should never be inflicted on anyone in the world. We have appealed "No more Hibakusha," and "Don't start a nuclear war. Eliminate nuclear weapons," telling about the reality of the A-bomb damage inside and outside of Japan.

On July 7, 2017, the United Nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). It brought a great joy to us Hibakusha. A heavy door leading to the abolition of nuclear weapons is about to be opened by civil society seeking for global peace. It has been three years since the adoption. With 10 more countries ratifying it, the TPNW will come into force. We demand that the government of Japan, the only country to have experienced nuclear attacks during war, sign and ratify the treaty, change its nuclear policy, and lead the world's efforts toward the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The average age of Hibakusha has exceeded 83. There is not much time left for us. With nuclear weapons existing right now, the devastation that happened on the morning of that day could be repeated anytime, even tomorrow. If a nuclear weapon is used today, the earth could be completely destroyed and the lives of all living things be taken. The only way to prevent it is to abolish nuclear weapons.

This year marks the final year of the International Signature Campaign in support of the “Appeal of the Hibakusha” for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. Let us widely spread this campaign inside and outside of Japan. Calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons, we Hibakusha will continue to walk together with people around the world for the rest of our lives. Let us work together.

Thank you.