

Rev. Yoshinori Shinohara

Secretary General, World Conference of Religions for Peace - Japan

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak before you at this Hiroshima Day Rally of the 2021 World Conference against A and H Bombs. The World Conference of Religions for Peace (WCRP), which I represent, is a campaign body in which Shintoism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and various other religions in the world work together in solidarity in pursuit of building peace. It has national networks in about 100 countries at present, having started in Kyoto in Japan where it was founded 51 years ago. It was motivated by the reflection of religious people around the world on the history of the world's failure to prevent the outbreak of the tragic World War II. On the war that claimed innumerable victims, they undertook deep soul-searching, questioning themselves about the fact that they had not seriously raised their voices against the war, or that they had even taken active part in the war effort. Based on this review, they shared their determination that there should never be another war. This formed the start of the WCRC movement. Since our founding, we have placed a special emphasis on the campaign for the abolition of nuclear weapons, which we carry forward in solidarity with the Hibakusha.

We of WCRP extend our full solidarity with the World Conference against A and H Bombs. The goals put forward by the World Conference, namely, "achieving a world without nuclear weapons", "total elimination of nuclear weapons (by the nuclear weapon states)", and "support and participation in the TPNW", are the same goals that the WCRP has continuously appealed to governments in Japan and overseas and to the wider public.

In my presentation, today, I want to specifically emphasize an urgent need for the reexamination of nuclear deterrence doctrine. I believe that this nuclear deterrence doctrine is the major obstacle to the elimination of nuclear weapons. The very essence of nuclear deterrence, i.e., threat and intimidation posed on adversaries, arises from distrust between humans based on misgivings. Such a relationship of mutual suspicion, in turn, helps increase mutual hatred and is actually escalating the danger of the use of nuclear weapons. We, in the religious community, can never support nuclear deterrence doctrine. As a matter of fact, it is not due to nuclear deterrence, rather it is sheer luck that nuclear weapons have not been used in the postwar period. Even now, nuclear weapons pose real danger through the potential for misuse, accident, burglary or proliferation. I also believe that the problem underlying nuclear deterrence doctrine, namely, the acceptance of the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons in "an extreme circumstance where the very existence of the state is at stake" must be examined without delay. In such deliberations, the tragic consequences of the suffering from nuclear weapons, which Hibakusha have devotedly testified to, and the scientific predictions of the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons are priority factors which must be taken into consideration and from which we should never avert our eyes.

Before concluding, I want to reiterate my call on the Japanese Government to participate in the first meeting of the states parties to the TPNW. The TPNW is now in force as international law. The Japanese Government should pay respect to the treaty and sincerely face up to it, without

averting its eyes from it. The role that the Japanese government claims to play as a bridge can stand only if it recognizes the NPT and the TPNW as complementary elements of the same international law.

The WCRP will keep in heart both the heartfelt appeal of Hibakusha for “No More Hibakushas” and the critical reflection of the religious community on the past war, and we will continue to work with WCRP’s international networks to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Thank you for your attention.