

Nagasaki Peace Declaration

On August 9th, 1945, a single atomic bomb dropped by a U.S. Army Air Forces bomber devastated the city of Nagasaki in a moment, with the casualty count amounting to 150,000, or two-thirds of the city's population, by the end of that year. The late Mr. YOSHIDA Katsuji, who was exposed to the atomic bomb at the age of 13, described this hellish tragedy as follows:

"While I was walking toward the hypocenter, I saw people with their bodies charred and blackened, those with their eyeballs bulging out, those with their internal organs spilling out, and those missing limbs, all wandering around in confusion. When I reached the Urakami River, I saw many people suffering severe burns dying one after another while drinking the oil- and blood-contaminated river water. I myself was completely covered in blood, with my skin peeling off and hanging limply from my body. Although the skin on my face still remained attached, it was burnt and charred black."

Mr. Yoshida was left with a large scar from the burns on his face for the rest of his life, and he continued to suffer from the stares of those around him. Even those who narrowly escaped death have suffered deep physical and mental wounds, and are forced to live with the worry and fear of the effects of radiation exposure, including the onset of cancer or other diseases.

Currently, more than 12,000 nuclear warheads exist on Earth.

Why are some countries so obsessed with possessing such brutal weapons?

Against a backdrop of mutual distrust, confrontation, and division which permeates the international community, the rule of force has run rampant amongst the major powers. What will happen in the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, where nuclear states are involved, still remains unpredictable. Furthermore, trends running counter to nuclear disarmament, including the modernization and enhancement of nuclear weapons, are accelerating. These factors further fuel a vicious cycle of even greater mutual distrust, confrontation, and division.

This is illustrated clearly by the fact that now, three consecutive Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) have failed to adopt a final document toward nuclear disarmament.

Countries that rely on nuclear weapons advocate the theory of nuclear deterrence, arguing that by possessing nuclear weapons they can deter other countries from attacking them, even if they do not use those weapons. However, in an extreme wartime situation, when urged to make a decision that could determine the very survival of their own nation, who can affirm that they would never press the "nuclear button"?

The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki confronted the world with the reality that humans can cross the line to use nuclear weapons against other humans.

The hibakusha and the atomic-bombed cities experienced first-hand that the destructive power of nuclear weapons could rip both human life and dignity to shreds. Based on this experience, the hibakusha and the atomic bombing sites affirm with absolute conviction:

The theory of nuclear deterrence is extremely dangerous and fragile. Nuclear weapons are not a "necessary evil" but an "absolute evil," and can never coexist with humanity.

To all global citizens who share this Earth, there is something we can do to create a peaceful world.

"Peace begins when we empathize with other people's pain."

This is what Mr. Yoshida used to say every time he shared with others his experience surviving the atomic bombing.

Empathizing with the perspective and suffering of others, and trying to understand one another, are a significant step towards avoiding confrontation and conflict. It serves as a foundation for fostering trust and building friendships, both between people and between countries.

Let us take Mr. Yoshida's words to heart and put them into action.

To all the national leaders of the world, please act with urgency to restore multilateralism and the rule of law, in accordance with the values of the United Nations Charter. Please return to the United Nations' founding spirit of protecting human dignity and fundamental human rights, as well as achieving lasting peace and the shared prosperity of all humanity through international cooperation.

To all leaders of the nuclear states and nations relying on nuclear deterrence, you must face the reality that the more you rely on nuclear deterrence, the more you increase the risk of a nuclear war. I strongly urge you to fulfill your obligations under the NPT and take steady steps toward nuclear disarmament.

In particular, the Japanese government must attend the first Review Conference of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to be held later this year, and fulfill its historical responsibility as the only country to have suffered atomic bombings in war. I call on the government to uphold the ethos of peace enshrined in the Japanese Constitution, which embodies a determination to forever renounce war, as well as the country's Three Non-Nuclear Principles. In addition, I call for the strengthening of diplomatic efforts towards disarmament and the easing of tension in the international community. I also request that the government shift to a security policy that does not rely on nuclear weapons, through such measures as realizing the Northeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone.

Furthermore, I strongly urge the Japanese government to provide enhanced support for the hibakusha, whose average age now exceeds 86, and offer relief as soon as possible to those who experienced the atomic bombing but have not yet been officially recognized as hibakusha.

I would like to express my deep sorrow for all those who lost their lives in the atomic bombings, and all the victims of war.

We are now in a critical moment where we can still listen directly to the voices of the hibakusha. Therefore, we are determined to hand down the memories of the atomic bombings and the thoughts of the hibakusha to future generations. Nagasaki must remain the last atomic bombing site. In order to turn this resolve into an eternal reality, I hereby declare that Nagasaki will work in solidarity with the peace seekers of the world to persevere in our movement towards the total abolition of nuclear weapons and the realization of everlasting world peace.

SUZUKI Shiro
Mayor of Nagasaki
August 9, 2026