

Message from the Mayor of Hiroshima

It is an honor and a pleasure to send this message on the occasion of Hiroshima Day Candle Float.

On August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb used in human warfare reduced Hiroshima to rubble in an instant, claiming countless innocent civilian lives. Despite suffering deep physical and emotional scars, the *hibakusha* who managed to survive continue to tell their stories, continuously appealing for peace with their conviction: "No one else should suffer as we have."

However, more than 13,000 nuclear warheads still remain around the world and nuclear disarmament is at a standstill. Furthermore, despite global solidarity becoming ever more important in the fight against COVID-19, a new kind of threat to all of humanity, we see self-centered nationalism in ascendance and tensions heightened by international exclusivity and rivalry around the world today.

To achieve a peaceful, sustainable world, each and every one of us must confront our current situation head on, transcend differences of status or opinion, and strive together in the spirit of tolerance toward our ideal. To accomplish this, we must never dismiss the atomic bombings and the war as mere events of the past. It is vital that we internalize the progress the *hibakusha* and others have made toward a peaceful world and drive steadfastly forward.

In order for world leaders to move forward together with them to advance civil society's ideal, it is of increasing importance that we raise the number of people in civil society who empathize with the plea of the *hibakusha*. A world free from nuclear weapons is the first step toward peace on Earth and this concept must become a universal value shared by all humankind. In this context, it is truly significant that you have organized Hiroshima Day Candle Float to call for a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons and I extend to you my deepest respect.

The City of Hiroshima, together with over 7,900 Mayors for Peace member cities from 164 countries and regions, intends to create an environment that encourages world leaders to take steps toward nuclear abolition. I would like to ask all of you to mobilize with us and strive to eliminate the absolute evil that is nuclear weapons to realize lasting world peace.

In closing, I extend my best wishes for the great success of this event as well as the good health and happiness of all concerned.

August 6, 2020

MATSUI Kazumi
Mayor
The City of Hiroshima