

Message from the Mayor of Hiroshima

It is both my honor and pleasure to send this message on the occasion of Hiroshima and Nagasaki Commemorative Candle Float 2022.

Seventy-seven years ago, a single atomic bomb instantly reduced our city to a scorched plain, bringing cruel death to countless innocent victims and leaving those who managed to survive with profound lifelong physical and emotional trauma due to radiation, fear of aftereffects, and economic hardship.

Rooted in their deep conviction that “no one else should ever suffer as we have,” the *hibakusha* tell their stories, conveying not only the horror and inhumanity of nuclear weapons, but also an intense yearning for peace, born of compassion. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into effect last January, is a culmination of the many long years of sustained activity by the *hibakusha* whose demands have moved the international community. It remains for us now to strive to increase the treaty’s effectiveness and pursue the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

However, the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine continues to fuel the dangerous idea that military forces are the only way to suppress violence committed by military forces. As long as we cling to the nuclear deterrence theory based on the assumption of rational decision-making by leaders, humanity will continue to live in fear of the dangers posed by nuclear weapons. To avert such a scenario, we should deeply reflect upon the horrific consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and strive to solve the problem at its source by eliminating such weapons, no matter how difficult the journey.

The road to abolition will not be smooth, but if each of us in civil society sustain an unshakeable conviction that nuclear weapons are totally unacceptable, and share that conviction persuasively with people around the world, we can compel world leaders to turn away from nuclear deterrence. It therefore could not be more meaningful that you have organized this event to call for a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons, and I extend to you my deepest respect.

The City of Hiroshima will never stop preserving the facts of the bombing, disseminating them beyond our borders, and conveying them to the future. Together with the City of Nagasaki and other Mayors for Peace member cities around the world, our city will work to allow a culture of peace that rejects all forms of violence to take root in civil society. In a global culture where peace is a universal value, world leaders will find the courage to correct their policies. I would like to ask all of you to act in solidarity with us as we strive to eliminate nuclear weapons and 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 in attendance.

August 6, 2022

MATSUI Kazumi
Mayor
The City of Hiroshima