

## Message from the Mayor of Hiroshima

It is both my honor and pleasure to send this message on the occasion of Candle Float 2024.

Seventy-nine years ago, a single atomic bomb instantly reduced our city to a scorched plain, claiming countless precious lives. The lives of those who managed to survive are still impaired by the adverse effects of radiation on their minds and bodies.

Last May, the heads of state who attended the G7 Hiroshima Summit visited the Peace Memorial Museum and spoke with a *hibakusha*. After touching upon the realities of the atomic bombing through these events, they wrote messages for peace in the Museum guestbook. As they stood before the Cenotaph for the A-bomb Victims, I had the opportunity to convey the Spirit of Hiroshima underlying the inscription there: enduring past grief and overcoming hatred, we yearn for genuine world peace with all humanity living in harmony and prosperity. I believe they have taken this spirit into their hearts.

However, today, we see the world embroiled in a protracted war in Ukraine and escalating conflict in the Middle East, both of which have claimed the lives of countless innocent citizens. Many policymakers speak of the need to strengthen nuclear deterrence, and public opinion tends to be sympathetic. These conditions run counter to the desire for peace that the atomic-bombed cities continue to call for. Therefore, in civil society, each of us must embrace the generosity and love for humanity embodied in the *hibakusha* message, "No one else should ever suffer as we have." It is increasingly important for us to urge policymakers to abandon nuclear deterrence in favor of a peaceful world that refuses to compromise individual dignity and security. As such, it could not be more meaningful that you have organized this event in which lanterns filled with wishes for peace from the citizens of Salisbury and the students of Hiroshima will be floated down the River Avon to remember the atomic bomb victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and renew the wish for the realization of a peaceful world without nuclear weapons. For this, you have my deepest respect.

The City of Hiroshima, together with more than 8,400 member cities of Mayors for Peace, intends to promote the Culture of Peace globally through citizen-level exchange. Our goal is an environment in which our united desire for peace can reach the hearts of policymakers, helping to build an international community that maintains peace without resorting to arms. I would like to ask 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, 2024

MATSUI Kazumi  
Mayor  
The City of Hiroshima