

## **Hibakusha's Appeal**

**NGO Session of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, May 1, 2015**

Hibakusha Reject Security Policies on Assumption of Possible Use of Nuclear  
Weapons:

We Call on All States to Start Negotiations on Legally-binding Framework to Ban  
and Eliminate Nuclear Weapons

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(Nihon Hidankyo)

Chairperson, government representatives and NGO friends,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak before you as an NGO representative.

The A-bomb attacks by the US on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945 destroyed the two cities in an instant, killing more than 100,000 people immediately. A total of more than 200,000 lives were lost by the end of 1945.

The Hibakusha (the A-bomb survivors) continued to suffer from the after-effects of the bomb radiation, fear of death and various forms of discrimination. Up to date, several hundred thousand more people have perished from the A-bomb related causes.

I was caught by the atomic bomb in Nagasaki at age 13. I was upstairs in my house, located at 3.2 kilometers from the blast center. Suddenly I was engulfed in a brilliant flash. Frightened, I ran downstairs. As soon as I laid myself on the floor, I lost consciousness. After a while, hearing my mother calling me, I came to my senses and found myself under several panes of glass doors blown by the blast. I don't remember at all, but the blast might have blown through my house. Miraculously, the glass was not broken and I did not suffer any major injuries.

Three days later I entered ground zero area, trying to find the whereabouts of my relatives, and was shocked at the terrible situation. I found one of my aunts and a cousin burned to death on the ground. Another aunt and my grandfather suffered heavy burns. Three

days later, with my own hands I cremated the body of the aunt in the field. My grandfather who was in a critical condition followed her a few days later. My uncle, who had survived the bombing without external injuries and went away from the city to seek help, later developed a high fever and died after about 10 days. His body cells were destroyed by radiation.

The way they died was so painful and inhuman. Even three days after the bombing, within 2 kilometers radius of the blast center, many dead bodies were scattered unattended, and still more survivors with serious injuries and heavy burns were left without any relief.

Since that day, the souls of the surviving Hibakusha have continued to cry out, "Such atrocious crime should never have happened in human world, and must never be repeated."

However, under the 7-year occupation of the Allied Forces, the Hibakusha were prohibited from telling the truth. Were the occupation forces afraid that the inhumanity of the atomic bombing would be known to the world, or to the people of Japan?

People's movement against nuclear weapons both in Japan and in the world, triggered by the damage of the hydrogen bomb test conducted at Bikini Atoll in 1954, encouraged the Hibakusha living across the country to stand up and get together, which led to the founding of Nihon Hidankyo, the organization of the Hibakusha in 1955.

For nearly 60 years since then, out of their own experiences the Hibakusha have continued to inform the public of the atrocious and inhuman nature of nuclear weapons both in Japan and internationally. Many Hibakusha travelled around the world to join demonstrations and mobilizations in the height of the global anti-nuclear movement in the late 1970s onwards. They appealed that the same suffering should never be repeated on anyone anywhere in the world, and nuclear weapons must be abolished even one day earlier.

Despite repeated crises in which nuclear weapons might be used, human community has fortunately been spared of their actual use. A number of intellectuals have pointed out that the Hibakusha's appeals have contributed to preventing their use.

However, many Hibakusha leaders who worked in the frontline of the movement have already passed away without seeing the abolition of nuclear weapons. The average age of

the surviving Hibakusha reached 80. Now the Hibakusha who were very young on that day are trying to inherit and speak the experiences of their parents and elder siblings, and their sufferings and hope for the future as Hibakusha.

In recent years, in the form of joint statements at the U.N. General Assembly and through the “International Conferences on the Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons”, overwhelming majority of the countries in the world have agreed that “nuclear weapons must never be used under any circumstances.” The appeals and stories of the Hibakusha are getting to have more and more weight in growing the international current for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Now that nearly 70 years have passed, the Hibakusha cannot wait any longer. We refuse to accept any attempt to maintain and use nuclear weapons in the name of national security. We urge the nuclear weapon states and their allies to break away from their security policy based on “nuclear deterrence” and start negotiations on a legally binding framework to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons are human invention. We can and must abolish them with human wisdom. Now is the time for us to mark a major step forward to abolish nuclear weapons without delay.

No More Hiroshimas! No More Nagasakis!

No More Hibakusha! No More War!