

The 75th Nagasaki Peace Ceremony Governor's Message

On the occasion of the Nagasaki Peace Ceremony, I offer my heartfelt prayers to the victims of the atomic bombing together with the residents of Nagasaki Prefecture.

On August 9th, 1945, a single atomic bomb exploded over the city of Nagasaki. The brutal heat and savage winds destroyed the city in an instant and took the precious lives of 74,000 people. Those who barely managed to escape death were left with incurable scars on both their bodies and minds and continue to suffer from health complications due to the radiation exposure.

For 75 years, people have made untiring efforts to transform Nagasaki into a beautiful city that wishes for peace. Therefore, it is our duty to protect the peace that we enjoy today and to pass it on to future generations.

However, nuclear weapons pose an ever-increasing threat to the future of mankind. As the expiration of the New START Treaty approaches, the United States of America and Russia continue to develop new types of strategic arms. The nuclear arms race among other nuclear states is also mounting.

With the conviction to make Nagasaki the last place devastated by nuclear weapons, the *hibakusha*, the atomic bomb survivors, have continued to relay to the world the misery and inhumanity of the atomic bombing based on their own experiences. Unfortunately, 70 percent of them have passed away and the average age of those living now exceeds 83 years of age. We must make a concrete path to nuclear disarmament while they are alive; the time we have left is limited.

When Pope Francis made his historical visit to Nagasaki last year, for the first time in 38 years, he asked political leaders in his speech "not to forget that these weapons cannot protect us from current threats to national and international security," with a firm belief that a world without nuclear weapons is possible and necessary.

I ask political leaders around the world to visit Nagasaki in order to listen to the voices of *hibakusha*, and to fully understand the reality of the atomic bombing. Please bear in mind that we should never subject the world to nuclear devastation a third time. As a creation brought into existence by human will, I believe they can also be abolished by human will.

I ask the Japanese Government to make all possible efforts to realize a world without nuclear weapons by actively playing the leading role as the only country which has suffered nuclear devastation. I also ask the Japanese Government to further enhance support measures for the aging survivors as well as those affected by the atomic bombing.

I hereby offer words of prayer to the deceased victims of the atomic bombing, wish the survivors and those affected by the atomic bombing good health, and vow to make further efforts towards realizing a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons.

August 9, 2020

NAKAMURA Houdou, Governor of Nagasaki Prefecture