

Message from the Mayor of Hiroshima

It is an honor and a pleasure to send this message on the occasion of Hiroshima and Nagasaki commemorative Candle Float 2021.

On August 6, 1945, a single atomic bomb destroyed our city, claiming countless innocent civilian lives. Having experienced the tragedy of the bombing, Hiroshima continuously appeals for a peaceful world without nuclear weapons based on the *hibakusha*'s conviction: "No one else should suffer as we have."

However, we see self-centered nationalism in ascendance, promulgated by world leaders and in particular those of nuclear superpowers, and tensions heightened by international exclusivity and rivalry. These trends, which seem to trivialize our appeals for peace, are on the rise: the continued intensification of self-centered nationalism as humanity faces its newest threat, COVID-19, serves as case in point.

Despite this, the world is currently working together to tackle the novel coronavirus; proof that we are capable of responding to this threat. In much the same way, I believe that the people of the world will be able to overcome the threat posed to humankind by nuclear weapons through coming together under the principles common to us all and remaining steadfast in our opposition. As the number of people who can speak of the horrors of these weapons from experience declines, it becomes increasingly important to pass their earnest wish for peace on to the next generation, establish as a shared value in civil society the idea that nuclear weapons and war should not exist, and make every effort towards realizing lasting world peace.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which went into effect in 1970 and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force in January 2021 are both critical to eliminating nuclear weapons. They comprise a framework that we must pass on to future generations, yet their future is opaque. For world leaders to strengthen their determination to ensure this framework functions effectively, it is vital that we create an environment that steers them towards transforming policy: we must continue to raise awareness of peace in civil society to generate a groundswell towards peace and nurture international public opinion for nuclear abolition. I therefore find it truly significant that you have organized Hiroshima and Nagasaki commemorative Candle Float to call for a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons and I extend to you my deepest respect.

Together with more than 8,000 Mayors for Peace member cities from 165 countries and regions, the City of Hiroshima intends to create an environment that encourages world leaders to take steps towards nuclear abolition. I would like to ask all of you to act in solidarity with us as we strive to eliminate the absolute evil that is 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, 2021

MATSUI Kazumi
Mayor
The City of Hiroshima