
Appeal for Nuclear Disarmament from Nagasaki

"Standing on the threshold of a new century, we concerned global citizens have gathered from throughout the world in Nagasaki, the last city of the departing century to suffer the devastation of a nuclear attack.

"Some half-century ago, humanity embarked on the development of nuclear weapons. These indescribably destructive instruments are capable not only of robbing millions of people of their lives at a single stroke, but also of inflicting life-long physical and mental anguish on any survivors. The damage resulting from the use of nuclear weapons would extend far beyond the boundaries of the belligerents, having extremely serious consequences for the environment and all living things. Nevertheless, these criminal weapons are still being used by some states for political purposes.

"It is our duty to provide a worthy response to the voices of the hibakusha—the atomic bomb survivors; voices tinged with anxiety stemming from the knowledge that death from not yet fully explained causes may come at any time; voices that say, *'Such a tragedy cannot be allowed to be repeated...Before the last of us leaves this world, nuclear weapons must be abolished forever.'* It is the sincere desire of the citizens of Nagasaki, that Nagasaki should remain the last city to suffer the calamity of the dropping of an atomic bomb.

"Despite the fact that it has been over a decade since the collapse of the Cold War standoff, there are still over 30,000 nuclear warheads in existence on our fragile planet. The United States and the Russian Federation each continue to maintain several thousand nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert.

"The International Court of Justice, the world's supreme legal authority, has ruled that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is a violation of international law. These weapons...are nonetheless claimed by the few governments which possess them, and by the countries sheltered by the 'nuclear umbrella,' as necessary for their security.

"Expectations were raised ...at the 2000 Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference when the nuclear weapon states agreed to 'an unequivocal undertaking...to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.' However, the phrase, 'undertake to engage in an accelerated process of negotiations,' had to be eliminated from the draft document in order to avoid the breakdown of the talks.

"The continued existence of nuclear weapons poses a threat to all of humanity, and their use would have catastrophic consequences. The only defense against nuclear catastrophe is the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

"We have learned from the stories of many who have suffered from the nuclear age: the hibakusha and downwinders from Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Semipalatinsk, Nevada, and Moruroa; Chernobyl and Tokaimura. The world's citizens must now be mobilized to form a potent global movement, and it is this force that will compel governments to fulfill their promises. All sectors of the global community must be involved, including women, youth, workers, religious communities, and indigenous peoples.

"The myriad small steps taken by concerned citizens in every conceivable setting will no doubt lead to new and giant strides forward. Let us begin renewed and concerted action directed at the rapid realization of a 21st century free of war, in which the scourge of nuclear weapons is finally removed forever."

—Excerpted from a Nov. 20, 2000, statement from the Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly, Nagasaki, Japan. For a copy of the complete statement and its 5 recommended actions, contact:

Tri-Valley CARES
2582 Old First St., Livermore, CA 94550;
www.igc.org/tvc

To take action locally to abolish nuclear weapons, contact Ground Zero at the address below.

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