

January 22, 2025

**Statement on the Candle Message
from Hiroshima Alliance for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons (HANWA)**

Today, January 22, 2025, marks the fourth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). To commemorate this day, 1,500 candles will be lit in memory of the souls of the deceased nuclear victims. These candles will spell out the message: "NUCLEAR & HUMANITY CAN'T COEXIST!", a call we send to the world from the front of the Atomic Bomb Dome.

The TPNW marks the first step toward ending the nuclear age. The upcoming Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty, scheduled for March, deserves recognition for defining the illegality of nuclear weapons and obligating assistance for nuclear victims. However, the world remains in crisis, from the quagmire of the Ukraine war, ongoing for nearly three years, and the genocide in Palestine and Gaza, persisting for over one year and three months. Coupled with Israel's territorial ambitions in the Middle East and repeated threats of nuclear weapon use by Russia and Israel, humanity is on the brink of nuclear war. It is imperative to extinguish the sparks of world wars, and the expanding war in the Middle East.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is rooted in the experiences of atomic bomb survivors and nuclear test victims, reflecting their fight to share the extreme inhumanity of nuclear war. However, challenges remain, such as the Treaty's narrow definition of nuclear victims as those affected only by "use or testing of nuclear weapons." This excludes many, including indigenous communities affected by the broader nuclear cycle. Additionally, the Treaty's recognition of the "peaceful use of nuclear energy" as an inalienable right and the lack of accountability for nuclear perpetrators are critical issues that must be addressed.

As humanity faces the reality of potential nuclear war, the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize spotlighted Nihon Hidankyo. While enduring the egregious horror of nuclear attacks by the United States—attacks that have engraved an indelible stain of indiscriminate genocide and unprecedented inhumanity into the history of humankind—the hibakusha, or survivors of the atomic bombings, continued to fight, carrying the souls of those who tragically did not survive. The Nobel Peace Prize was a call to the world to address the current situation, in which the nuclear taboo that has been built up is being shaken to its foundations.

The nuclear age began with the United States use of atomic bombings on people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This is when humanity gained the power to wipe itself off the Earth and faced the danger of extinction. The atomic bombings slaughtered countless innocent people in an instant, bringing unimaginable suffering to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Those who survived the horrors of hell continue to suffer from the long-lasting effects of radiation.

Today, nuclear-armed states and nuclear allies that control nuclear technology trivialize or conceal the health impacts of radiation exposure, leaving many A-bomb survivors, who were exposed to black rain or radioactive fallout, still fighting for official recognition as hibakusha.

The entire nuclear cycle—uranium mining, milling, nuclear weapon and fuel production,

nuclear weapons and depleted uranium weapons use and testing, power plant operation, accidents, reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel, and waste storage and disposal—causes extensive environmental contamination and devastating health effects.

The reality is clear: whether for military or commercial purposes, the nuclear fuel chain leads to irreversible harm on the planet. Radioactive contamination persists indefinitely, threatening humanity's future. We must completely abandon the entire nuclear fuel chain to ensure the survival of life on Earth.

The term "nuclear" in "Nuclear and humanity cannot coexist" extends beyond weapons; it encompasses the entire nuclear cycle. To this end, we will convene the World Nuclear Victims Forum on the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings, October 5–6, 2025, at Aster Plaza in Hiroshima. This forum will champion the absolute denial of the nuclear as in "Nuclear and humanity cannot coexist" and present guidelines for providing relief to nuclear victims worldwide. These guidelines will establish rights, compensation, and a path toward abolishing the nuclear cycle.

Let the 2025 World Nuclear Victims Forum shed light on the struggles of nuclear victims across the globe.

We call on the world from Hiroshima:

Stop the escalation of wars in the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

Protect the light of life for all people.

As long as the nuclear cycle exists, it creates hibakusha and nuclear victims, and perpetuates the threat of nuclear war.

Let us end the nuclear age!

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