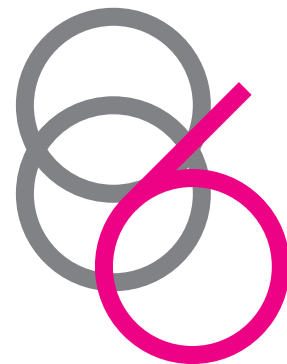


PEACE 平和文化 CULTURE



No.95 (semiannual)

Mayors for Peace Children's Art Competition "Peaceful Towns" 2025 Award-Winning Artworks



Mayors for Peace President's Award /
1st Place (Ages 6-10)

Kohei Hosoe (10)
Kawabe, Japan



2nd Place (Ages 6-10)

Ryo Mishima (8)
Hiroshima, Japan



2nd Place (Ages 6-10)

Anahita Boroumand Pour (10)
Shiraz, Iran



2nd Place (Ages 11-15)

Layan Jaradat (14)
Zarka, Jordan



2nd Place (Ages 11-15)

Nene Hatano (15)
Hachioji, Japan

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“I Know That I Know Nothing”: Reconsidering the Impact of Nuclear Weapons

Shizuka Kuramitsu

Research Analyst
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In early July 2024, when I was working for the Arms Control Association, we initiated a letter signed by eight renowned experts, former ambassadors, and former senior U.S. government officials. We sent it to then Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, as well as the country’s Parliamentary Vice-Ministers for Foreign Affairs, ambassadors, departmental and divisional directors of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Special Advisor to the Prime Minister in charge of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The letter urged the Government of Japan to undertake a bold initiative: the convening of a landmark two-day global conference on the human health and environmental impacts of nuclear weapons. The letter argued that Japan—the only nation to have experienced the unspeakable horrors of a nuclear weapons attack—is uniquely positioned to take the lead for such a conference in 2025 in commemoration of the solemn 80th anniversary of the nuclear weapons age and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Having just started working in Washington, D.C., I witnessed growing salience of nuclear weapons amid intensifying political tensions, particularly among nuclear-weapon states. I have also learned about the diplomatic efforts by non-nuclear-weapon states to push back against that trend. The Arms Control Association’s letter urged the Japanese government to consider our proposal ahead of Prime Minister Kishida’s last visit to the UN General Assembly meeting scheduled for September 2024, but none of the recipients of our letter replied.

Even today, 80 years since the world entered the nuclear age, most people have only the vaguest notion of the devastating impact nuclear war would have on humankind and the planet. We still have mountains of issues to study concerning the physical, psychological, and social effects of nuclear weapons, whether short-term or long-term, facing lingering uncertainties in information about the damage caused by nuclear weapons.

Reporting or describing the damage caused by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was prohibited for as long as about seven years thereafter due to strict control of speech and information under the Press Code for Japan issued by the Office of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers. Turning our eyes to the world, we see that nuclear development and testing have mostly taken place in areas inhabited by minorities,¹ with the severe nuclear damage caused to them downplayed and information thereon still withheld, resulting in their voices being hardly heard in the rest of the world.

Even though we humans do not fully understand the impact of nuclear weapons, the fate of the Earth, or whether or not it will even be able to survive, rests in the hands of the leaders of nuclear-weapon states.

The movement for nuclear disarmament focusing on the humanitarian impacts of such weapons, “Humanitarian Approach” began to attract attention in the 2010s. The humanitarian approach toward nuclear disarmament is based on the idea that, in light of their catastrophic impact, the very existence of nuclear weapons is a serious threat to the security of non-nuclear-weapon states, therefore the survival of humanity requires us to abolish nuclear weapons.

The development of this approach has yielded a significant product: the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). After a series of Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (HINW) and numerous joint statements on the humanitarian consequence of nuclear weapons issued at UN meetings, the treaty was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2017 and came into effect in 2021. This treaty was the fruit of the combined efforts of diplomats, governments, and civil society, with a keen awareness of and a deep sense of crisis over the devastating impact of nuclear weapons beyond national and generational boundaries. Hibakusha in Japan but also global hibakusha played a central role in mainstreaming their voices.

The first HINW conference was held in Oslo, Norway, in 2013, followed by the second in Nayarit, Mexico, in 2014, and the third and fourth in Vienna, Austria, in 2014 and 2022, respectively.

This series of HINW conferences, which helped increase momentum toward the conclusion of the TPNW was initially aimed at objectively examining the catastrophic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons from scientific and technological perspectives, which involve experts and various other actors in fact-based discussions.

The benefit of holding HINW conferences—which are separated from the Meetings of the States Parties to the

¹ Example test sites include the Algerian Sahara Desert, Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan, Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands, Nevada in the United States, Lop Nur in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, and Maralinga in Australia.

TPNW—for presentations on the latest research and discussions based on scientific evidence concerning the impact of nuclear weapons is that it enables effective encouragement of the participation and contribution of non-signatory states to the treaty. However, since the second Meeting of the States Parties to the TPNW in 2023, the panels on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons have been incorporated into the agenda of the meetings of the TPNW.

As long as the world remains under nuclear shadows, all states and human beings, regardless of whether or not they support the TPNW, must continue to discuss the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Former Japanese Prime Minister Kishida emphasized that “sharing the real consequences of the atomic bombings with the international community, including national leaders at the highest levels, is a critical starting point for all efforts toward nuclear disarmament,”² when the 2023 G7 Summit was held in his hometown of Hiroshima.

This statement heightened our expectations for Japan’s leadership in the international community’s efforts toward a world where all political leaders recognize the consequences of the production, testing, and use of nuclear weapons, so that future generations will become fully aware of why “a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.”³

In 2024, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution “Nuclear war effects and scientific research (A/RES/79/238)” under the leadership of Ireland and New Zealand with a positive vote of over 130 member states, leading to an establishment of a scientific panel on the effects of nuclear war for the first time in about 35 years. France and the UK voted against the resolution, while the United States abstained. These nuclear-weapon states—which have been increasing their salience on nuclear weapons in recent years—expressed their view that the devastating consequences of nuclear war are already well known, and therefore there is no added value in more in-depth studies.

What impact would nuclear weapons cause to humanity? Now that we face a real threat of nuclear weapons being used and nuclear testing being resumed, it is time for us to reconsider this question to ponder what we humans know and do not know about the real consequences of the atomic bombings, thereby acknowledging that we know so little. The International Group of Eminent Persons for a

World without Nuclear Weapons also recommends that all states “support and promote initiatives that raise awareness among leaders and publics about nuclear dangers, including the risk of proliferation and profound consequences of nuclear use.”⁴

With its first-hand experience in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan has resources for learning, researching, and sharing information concerning the impact of nuclear weapons. Japan also, has the capability and responsibility to lead international efforts to deepen understanding of the consequences of nuclear weapons. I believe that the above-mentioned proposal for the Japanese government to host an international conference on the impact of nuclear weapons, in which I was involved in 2024, still holds relevance and value today, not limited to the milestone year.

(November 2025)

4 “Stepping Back from the Nuclear Precipice: Urgent Actions in Pursuit of a World without Nuclear Weapons,” issued in March 2025 by the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons, whose establishment was announced by former Prime Minister Kishida in his policy speech in January 2022 and which formulated the recommendation after six meetings

Shizuka Kuramitsu

Research Analyst, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Shizuka Kuramitsu is a research analyst in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Previously, she worked as a research assistant at the Arms Control Association. She was also a graduate research assistant at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) as well as a Graduate Professional for the Weapons of Mass Destruction and Space Security Programmes at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). She holds a master’s degree in Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. She is from Hiroshima Prefecture.



The Impact of Nuclear Weapons on Children

Tim Wright

Treaty Coordinator at the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and the initiator of the Children’s Peace Memorial.



2 Prime Minister’s Office of Japan, “Responses to Written Questions Following Prime Minister Kishida’s Press Conference on June 13, 2023,” June 13, 2023 (in Japanese).

3 “Joint Soviet-United States Statement on the Summit Meeting in Geneva,” Ronald Reagan Presidential Library & Museum, November 21, 1985. This was reaffirmed in the joint statement of the United States, Russia, China, France, and the UK in January 2022

In their declaration of March 2025, the states parties to the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) noted the growing body of research on the “disproportionate impact” of nuclear weapons on children given their “particular vulnerability”.

The fact that children would suffer the greatest harm of all in the event of a nuclear attack against a city today must be central to discussions about the increasing global threat posed by nuclear weapons, and spur united action for their

elimination.

In the US nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki eight decades ago, more than 38,000 children were killed, according to official estimates, with countless more suffering severe physical scars and psychological trauma.

The burnt tricycle of three-year-old Shinichi Tetsutani, now on permanent display at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, has become a well-known symbol of the harm inflicted on children. At the time of the bombing, he was riding the tricycle and sustained major injuries. He died several hours later. His two sisters, Michiko and Yoko, were also killed.

“This should never happen to children,” their father, Nobuo, reflected years later. “Please work to create a peaceful world where children can play to their heart’s content.”

There is clear scientific evidence that, in a nuclear attack, children are more likely than adults to die from burn injuries, as their skin is thinner and more delicate; to die from blast injuries, given the relative frailty of their bodies; and to die from acute radiation sickness, as they have more cells that are growing and dividing rapidly.

They are also less able to free themselves from collapsed and burning buildings or take other steps in the aftermath of an attack to increase their chances of survival.

In the long term, children are more likely to suffer from cancers and other illnesses as a result of the delayed effects of radiation damage to their cells, and more likely to suffer privation and mental health disorders leading to suicide.

Furthermore, babies who were in the womb at the time of a nuclear attack are at greater risk of death soon after birth or in early childhood; intellectual disabilities given the higher vulnerability of the developing brain to radiation damage; growth impairment due to the reduced functioning of the thyroid; and cancers and other illnesses during childhood or later in life.

These horrifying realities should have profound implications for policy-making in countries that currently possess nuclear weapons and in those that support their retention and potential use as part of military alliances, including Japan.

Over the past two years, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) has made a determined effort to highlight the unique and disproportionate harm suffered by the children of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as children living downwind or downstream of the dozens of nuclear test sites globally.

In 2024, we published a detailed report on this topic, and in 2025 we launched the Children’s Peace Memorial – a website featuring profiles of more than 400 children killed

in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with heart-wrenching details of their short lives, agonising deaths and the grief of surviving family members.

The memorial’s creation was inspired by the lifetime’s advocacy of Setsuko Thurlow, who survived the Hiroshima bombing as a 13-year-old girl. In many of her public lectures, she holds up a large yellow banner bearing the names of the students and teachers from her school who were killed. This, she says, helps her audience grasp the sheer scale of death and destruction.

“As I show this to you, I want you to feel and imagine that each name here represents an individual human being, a real person who was loved by someone and who was engaged in his or her life until 8:15 that morning,” she implores.

One of the earliest efforts to disseminate the stories of children killed in Hiroshima was a 1954 publication titled *Our Recollections*, profiling 86 boys from the First Hiroshima Prefectural Junior High School. Most of the accounts were written by their grieving parents.

“As one of the bereaved, I would be more than happy if these essays, written by the families of the deceased, were read by as many people as possible, so that humankind could be spared a recurrence of such tragedy,” wrote Masayuki Akita in an introduction to the anthology.

It is in this spirit that we chose to retell these and other children’s stories through the online memorial. We hope that it will help to awaken the global public to the grave and growing threat posed by nuclear weapons—and ensure that no one else, young or old, ever suffers a similar fate.

This, of course, can only be guaranteed through the total abolition of nuclear weapons. We believe that the TPNW provides the most promising pathway towards that goal. It not only prohibits nuclear weapons in a comprehensive manner, but also establishes frameworks for their verifiable, irreversible elimination and for assisting victims of their use and testing.

A majority of the world’s nations have already joined it, either as parties or signatories, and more are poised to do so. Each new signature or ratification strengthens the global norm against the worst weapons of mass destruction, and creates pressure and momentum for their abolition.

In the words of the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, “Nuclear weapons are the most destructive power ever created. They offer no security—just carnage and chaos. Their elimination would be the greatest gift we could bestow on future generations.”

(January 2026)



Children's Psychological Responses to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum Exhibits — Toward new exhibitions for children —

Yuka Kamite

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The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum (hereinafter, “the Museum”) is often the first place elementary and junior high school students visit on school excursions. The Museum is a key venue for peace education for children in Hiroshima as well. While the exhibits are indispensable for conveying the reality of the atomic bombing, some content can evoke strong emotions, including grief and fear. Some students have reported being “too scared to look at the exhibits.” The sight of children waiting outside, unable even to enter the building, is not uncommon.

In the process of learning about the atomic bombings, some psychological impact is unavoidable. However, the strength of these reactions in children and the ways children perceive the exhibits have yet to be sufficiently studied. In recent years, as visitor numbers have increased dramatically, overcrowding has become a challenge. In particular, students on school excursions have found it difficult to engage fully with the exhibits in the limited time allowed.

Given all of the above, a review committee was established to consider the creation of a new peace studies exhibition on the museum’s basement level, with the aim of providing a calm and supportive environment for children.

As a committee member, I conducted a study to examine how children perceive the museum’s exhibits and what impact their perceptions have on their awareness toward peace.

The study was conducted in July and August 2025. The subjects were 29 elementary, junior high, and high school students living in Hiroshima City. Data was collected at three different times: before and after the exhibition visit, then approximately one month later. The study involved both questionnaires and individual interviews.

The questionnaire survey showed that immediately after viewing the exhibition, regardless of grade level, positive emotions such as “energy” and “motivation” tended to decline, while negative emotions such as “sadness” and “fear” tended to increase. However, by one month later, these emotions had returned to pre-visit levels. Across all grade levels, high scores for “valuing peace and life” were maintained both immediately after the exhibition and one month later. The survey conducted one month later revealed that, while high school students tended to show an increased desire to “see it again,” elementary and junior high school students

exhibited avoidance, expressing such sentiments as “I don’t want to because it’s scary.” Some expressed ambivalence as in, “I think I should, but I don’t really want to.”

Analysis of the interviews clearly revealed age-related differences in how the students perceived the experience. Elementary school students tended to react strongly to visual stimuli and to experience physical and sensory aspects of fear quite directly. They also demonstrated a close psychological connection to the suffering caused by the atomic bombing, often relating the experience to themselves and their family members through comments such as “What if it happened to my family?” On the other hand, among high school students a deeper interpretation was observed as they came to understand not only the immediate effects of the atomic bombing but also the long-term impacts of radiation exposure. This was reflected in comments indicating that the suffering and fear did not end on the day of the bombing.

One month later, no significant impact on daily life was observed at any grade level. However, elementary and junior high school students frequently recalled the exhibition spontaneously. In particular, elementary school students tended to recall it before going to sleep, even experiencing nightmares. In contrast, high school students reported fewer instances of spontaneous recall. Their recollections were more often triggered by external cues, such as the anniversary of the atomic bombing on August 6, the anniversary of the end of the war, or related media coverage.

These findings indicate that, while the exhibition does not significantly disrupt children’s daily lives, it does impose a certain degree of psychological stress. At the same time, sensory memories and fear tend to persist longer among younger children, and the level of stress depends on the content of the exhibit. However, it should be noted that the participants in this study may have been biased toward individuals with a relatively high level of interest in peace studies. Thus, these results should be interpreted as reflecting the reactions of children with such characteristics.

Based on these findings, the introduction of an “informed-choice approach” is being considered in peace studies exhibitions designed for children. This system allows children to choose whether or not to view certain exhibits, and includes design strategies such as the gradual introduction of emotionally intense materials. Making their own choices fosters active learning and helps children engage with exhibits while maintaining a sense of security. It is also expected that providing information on coping with feelings of anxiety or fear, as well as support available in schools and at home, will enable children to engage more safely and deeply with the realities of the atomic bombings.

It is difficult to arrive at a single correct answer as to what an atomic bomb exhibition should be like. Conveying the

true nature of the atomic bombings, protecting children's emotional well-being and ensuring opportunities for deep reflection on peace are all equally important, reflecting the overlap of diverse values and concerns. Given these complexities, I believe it is essential that learning about peace should not end in fear alone, but should foster understanding and empathy and ultimately connect to the future.

For this reason, I would like to continue reflecting on these issues myself.

(Original Japanese; translation by the Foundation.)
(May 2026)

Yuka Kamite

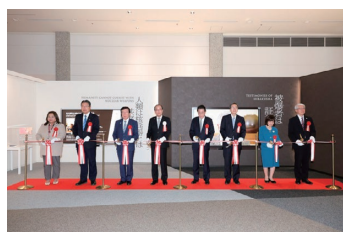
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"HIROSHIMA APPEALS" Corner Opens

On March 28, 2026, an exhibit entitled "HIROSHIMA APPEALS" was set up on the first floor of the East Building of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

This exhibit is designed to help visitors who have seen the exhibits in the Main Building deepen their understanding of the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and consider how they can work for the abolition of nuclear weapons and lasting world peace. Former Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, members of the Diet, and Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui attended the opening ceremony in the Memorial Hall of the museum.



The Opening Ceremony
Photo: The City of Hiroshima

A message from UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu was read aloud: "As visitors walk through this exhibit, they not only learn about nuclear weapons, but also witness the human consequences of nuclear weapons firsthand and come to understand why these weapons must be abolished." Vice Chairperson of the Foundation Shiro Tani then explained the purpose of this new exhibit, "HIROSHIMA APPEALS."

This exhibit begins with a photograph from the second Peace Festival held in 1948. The photograph shows the ceremony taking place in what was then known as Peace Plaza (now Peace



The "HIROSHIMA APPEALS"



A gigantic blast furnace
Painted by Hiromu Morishita
Source: Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

Memorial Park), on the opposite bank from the Atomic Bomb Dome, with a large "NO MORE HIROSHIMAS" sign displayed prominently. That image depicts the appeal for peace that Hiroshima has been conveying to the world since shortly after the war.

Next to the photo panel, we present the two large 86-inch monitors displaying video testimonies of hibakusha as well as a slideshow.

The first monitor presents a six-minute video titled "TESTIMONIES OF HIBAKUSHA," featuring personal stories recounted by nine hibakusha. Interwoven with "A-bomb Drawings" created by hibakusha, the video makes inescapable the devastating damage that nuclear weapons wreak on cities and people. Hiromu Morishita (then, 14) was mobilized for building demolition on the day of the bombing. Having experienced the explosion 1.5 kilometers from the hypocenter, he testifies in the video about that instant: "I felt as if everything had been thrown into a gigantic blast furnace, glowing red-hot." Next, Shunichiro Arai (then, 13), who was exposed to radiation when he entered the city that day and who is currently battling his sixth bout of cancer, says, "The effects of the atomic bomb didn't end 80 years ago. Even now, all hibakusha across Japan are affected in some way, as I have been." Teruko Yahata (then, 8), who was exposed to the bomb at home, 2.5 kilometers from the hypocenter, says, "I never want anyone to go through such a tragedy. I feel this with all my heart."

The second monitor presents a five-minute slideshow titled "HUMANITY CANNOT COEXIST WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS." It highlights the tireless endeavors of the hibakusha and the resulting developments within the international community, including the reference to the "catastrophic humanitarian consequences" of the use of nuclear weapons in the 2010 NPT Review Conference Final Document, the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, and the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo).

Despite all this, many nuclear weapons still exist in the world, and nuclear disarmament has stalled. At a time when the danger of nuclear weapons being used is becoming increasingly real, the video delivers Hiroshima's powerful call for everyone everywhere to join us in striving for a world without nuclear weapons.

Displayed next to the monitor is a replica of the Nobel Peace Prize medal awarded to the Nihon Hidankyo. At the end of the HIROSHIMA APPEALS exhibit, as one answer to the question, "How can I contribute to the movement?" we have installed a box for donations to our Foundation's projects promoting peace culture.

Since the renovation, visitors coming down the stairs from the second floor of the East Building have been seen stopping to watch the videos of hibakusha testimonies, while others exchange views as they look at the slideshow, including many visitors from overseas. We hope that, after learning about the reality of the atomic bombing through the Main Building exhibitions, visitors will use this corner as an opportunity to reflect profoundly on the hibakusha messages, to ponder what they can do for peace, and to be inspired to take action.

(Peace Memorial Museum Curatorial and Exhibition Division)

PEACE CREATION FACTORY: Museum Shop Reopens

On March 5, 2026, the museum shop was renovated and reopened as PEACE CREATION FACTORY on the first floor of the East Building of the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

This renovation was undertaken to accommodate the growing number of visitors while expanding the sales area and the merchandise available. The sales floor now spans about 80m², roughly double the previous shop. The interior features warm wood tones, Shop design unified by the warmth of wood creating a calm and welcoming atmosphere. The shop is the final stop for visitors after touring the museum. Here visitors can pick up peace-related items, deepen their thoughts about peace, and carry them into their daily lives.



Shop design unified by the warmth of wood

The sign for the PEACE CREATION FACTORY has a silver finish created with tin foil supplied by Rekiseisha in Misasa-machi, Nishi Ward, Hiroshima. The company's warehouse (the Hisanaga Kinshi Oshigami Factory), located 2.2 km from the hypocenter, survived the atomic bombing. The sign embodies the desire to cherish this connection to Hiroshima's history and memory.



Shop sign for PEACE CREATION FACTORY

The name is inspired by the words of Kenzo Tange, who designed the Peace Memorial Park and the Peace Memorial Museum. Tange stated, "Peace is not granted by nature or by God; people must actively create it. ... I see the facility we're building as a factory for creating peace." We named the museum shop "PEACE CREATION FACTORY," hoping its products will help create a "fortress of peace" in the hearts of visitors—reminding them to think about peace in their daily lives.

We have developed 12 new original products for the renovated shop. These include magnets featuring the Cenotaph

for the A-Bomb Victims and the Peace Memorial Park; ballpoint pens and stickers featuring origami crane designs; a map of the Peace Memorial Park with landmark stickers,



New original products

including the Cenotaph and the Atomic Bomb Dome; and transparent file folders featuring views of the Peace Memorial Park and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. All the new products were designed by Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation staff. Printed on the back of the folders is this message: "Let us create peace—not through force or threats, but by transcending our differences and cherishing the values we share as human beings." Through these products, we aim to convey the importance of peace.

A visitor to the shop commented, "The space got brighter and more spacious. It feels really good in here."

Museum shop sales reached 272.6 million yen in fiscal 2025, significantly exceeding the fiscal 2024 total of 198.04 million yen. These proceeds, representing our visitors' hopes for peace, will serve as an important source of funding and encouragement to strengthen the peace-related initiatives of our Foundation.

In addition to the exhibition at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, we will continue to share the message of peace through our products. By expanding our original product line with our visitors in mind, we aim to create a shop where they can take home the spirit of Hiroshima—the wish for peace.

(Peace Memorial Museum Planning and Administration Division)

Now on Sale: "We're Peace-Loving Citizens!" Badges that Spread a Message of Peace

Starting in fiscal year 2025, to help build a powerful movement for peace with peace-loving people in Japan and around the world, we have created badges bearing the slogan "We're Peace-Loving Citizens!" We distribute these badges to participants in peace-related events and sell them at the Museum shop, "PEACE CREATION FACTORY".

This year's badges are made of paper recycled from origami cranes offered to the Children's Peace Monument in Peace Memorial Park. We believe our badges carry the wishes for peace folded into those paper cranes. Each individually crafted badge embodies our resolve for peace.



We hope that by wearing this badge, more and more people will express their solidarity, carry forward the wishes of the atomic bomb victims, and help expand the movement for peace.

(Peace Studies Division)

Mayors for Peace Delegation Attends 11th NPT Review Conference

Mayors for Peace sent a delegation, including President Kazumi Matsui (Mayor of Hiroshima), Vice President Shiro Suzuki (Mayor of Nagasaki), and Secretary-General Takehiro Kagawa (Chairperson of our Foundation), to the 11th Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference held in New York City in April–May 2026.

Speech to the NGO Session

In his opening remarks, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres first outlined the purpose of the conference: “to stand together and safeguard humanity from the grave threat of nuclear annihilation.” He went on to say, “Today, a state of collective amnesia has taken hold.... The Treaty has been eroding.” He urged participants to “breathe life into the Treaty once more.”

At the NGO session, President Matsui and Vice President Suzuki made speeches as representatives of Mayors for Peace. President Matsui pointed out, “Today, armed conflicts continue to unfold...causing inhumane consequences, up to extreme levels. As ordinary citizens, we are forced to live our daily lives with a profound sense of anxiety.”

Against this backdrop, he went on to say, “We must reaffirm the value of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework.” He concluded his speech by saying, “Once again, I urge all policymakers to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation through diplomatic efforts based on dialogue.”



President Matsui and Vice President Suzuki at the NGO session

Meetings with Representatives of Nuclear-weapon States and UN Officials

Amid today's tense international situation, our delegates exchanged views with numerous government representatives, including those from four nuclear-weapon states. They also met with UN officials. Through these discussions, they confirmed a shared understanding, based on humanitarian impact that nuclear weapons have the potential to destroy humanity; that all nations aspire to a world without nuclear weapons; and that all therefore recognize the vital role of the NPT in pursuit of this goal. Mayors for Peace officially urged the nuclear-weapon states to fulfill their obligations under Article VI, emphasizing that this request represents the earnest wish of global civil society. Meetings with the UN Secretary-General António Guterres and other leaders reaffirmed the significance and importance of the international peace activities carried out by Mayors for Peace, as they

expressed their expectations for the organization's continued contribution to peace.

A Side Event with UNIDIR

With the assistance of Tsutomu Kono, a fellow at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and an Executive Advisor to our Foundation, Mayors for Peace co-hosted a side event with UNIDIR for the first time,



The Side Event

titled “Taking Stock of the NPT: Achievements, Persistent Challenges, and Emerging Opportunities.” We reviewed the achievements and challenges of efforts undertaken in past review processes and discussed the future direction for ensuring that the NPT remains a meaningful framework for the international community.

Moderator Robin Geiss, Director of UNIDIR, opened the meeting, then three panelists delivered presentations.

First, from UNIDIR, Chen Zak Kane, Head of Project, Middle East WMD-Free Zone, emphasized the need for safeguards to adapt to emerging technologies, noting that while AI could lower barriers to WMD development, real constraints remain on how far it enables new actors to build nuclear weapons.

Next, Shun Oshita, a lecturer at the Hiroshima Peace Institute of Hiroshima City University, said, “Technical cooperation to developing nations for peaceful nuclear applications, like radiotherapy, has eased their frustrations over the NPT's operation. One of the options to prevent it from masking the insufficient progress on the good-faith obligation to negotiate nuclear disarmament is setting up an NPT Secretariat under the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).”

Lastly, Randy Rydell, who formerly worked for UNODA stated, “There is a serious disconnect between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states. It is vital that this conference, at the very least, reaffirm each party's fundamental obligations.”

After the side event, President Matsui and Robin Geiss confirmed their shared commitment to intensified cooperation between Mayors for Peace and UNIDIR.

The Mayors for Peace Youth Forum

At another side event, Hiroshima Peace Institute's Shun Oshita moderated a Youth Forum. Two students from Hiroshima Nagisa High School quoted hibakusha Hiromu Morishita: “Humans create war, but humans can also create peace.” They went



The Youth Forum

on to urge the audience to "...keep taking action, and things will change." Two students from Notre Dame Seishin High School pointed out that, "Deeper mutual understanding through dialogue and international exchange should replace nuclear deterrence." Two students from Hiroshima University High School urged, "We have to keep warning people about the dangers of nuclear weapons from a scientific and empirical perspective."

During the discussion following the presentations, in response to a comment from an audience member that a platform was needed to share information about each other's peace activities, an official from UNODA emphasized the necessity of youth engagement in disarmament and the importance of strengthening connections among individuals and organizations. The official also stated that UNODA planned to establish a platform that would facilitate broad information sharing. In response to a question from a youth participant about how to bridge the gap between ideals and reality in nuclear disarmament, a trainee from UNODA offered words of encouragement. "Hiroshima and Nagasaki have launched wonderful initiatives, and your very presence here is having an impact on decision-makers." This led to a lively, meaningful exchange of views.

Through this exchange, youth participants were exposed to diverse perspectives on nuclear weapons and peacebuilding, reaffirming their understanding that peace must be built across national borders and political differences. Some participants expressed the idea that "precisely because the international situation is so challenging right now, we have to help Hiroshima raise awareness about the dangers of nuclear weapons." This side event was a valuable opportunity to reflect on their own roles and how they should engage with society. Mayors for Peace will continue to create opportunities for young people to learn, think, and act.

(Mayors for Peace and International Policy Division)



A New Role for Youth Peace Volunteers: Appealing for Peace at Home and Abroad

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The First Youth Peace Volunteer Specialized Training Program

More than 80 years since the atomic bombings, the hibakusha are quite elderly. For Hiroshima to continue conveying to people in Japan and around the world the facts of the atomic bombing and the "spirit of Hiroshima" (our desire to abolish nuclear weapons), we need urgently to involve younger generations.

In order to address this challenge, the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation conducted the "1st Youth Peace Volunteer Specialized Training Program" for the first time, targeting ten university students studying in Hiroshima, with the aim of enabling them to develop a deeper understanding of the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons and acquire the competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) needed to promote peacebuilding activities alongside people from diverse backgrounds.

The program comprised ten sessions beginning in November 2025, ending in March 2026. It featured lectures by experts on nuclear disarmament and international relations, as well as discussions and a field trip to Nagasaki. At the conclusion near the end



Presentation of recommendations (March 2026)

of March, participants produced a set of recommendations for promoting the abolition of nuclear weapons, then held a presentation attended by the mayor of Hiroshima, hibakusha, and members of Hiroshima Peace Volunteers.

The recommendations outlined specific initiatives for eliminating nuclear weapons, including raising awareness among young people through social media, and creating spaces where young people can meet and freely discuss peace. Based on these recommendations, we sent program participants Mako Ueda, a third-year student at Yasuda Women's University, and Iroha Kitazono, a third-year student at Hiroshima University, along with six high school students, to the 11th NPT Review Conference in New York as Mayors for Peace Youth delegates, where they advocated for the abolition of nuclear weapons before the international community.

At the 11th NPT Review Conference

During the NPT Review Conference at UN Headquarters, Ms. Ueda and Ms. Kitazono took the stage at the Mayors for Peace Youth Forum, a side event of the conference. They delivered their recommendations in English. They also visited local universities and other institutions to discuss how young people from different regions can work together to raise awareness about nuclear disarmament.



Youth Forum

They observed another side event organized by Mayors for Peace and the NGO session where they witnessed appeals from the A-bombed cities. They also met with key individuals on the front lines of nuclear disarmament and the peace movement, namely Izumi Nakamitsu, United Nations

Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Tomiko Ichikawa, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament. Both officials offered valuable advice about working for nuclear abolition.

Reflecting on the trip, Ms. Ueda commented, “This experience helped me think more profoundly about the nature of peace. I want to keep sharing my message and cherishing my mission: to inspire others to think about peace.”

Ms. Kitazono said, “I came to feel that if all of us keep pondering peace—even in the flow of everyday life—and if we keep raising our voices, we’ll gradually raise society’s consciousness and values.” Each took the experience as an opportunity to seriously contemplate the roles they have been called to play in the international community.

Outcomes of the Specialized Training Program

Throughout the Specialized Training Program, although all participants shared the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons, they often held differing views on the means of achieving that goal and on the current security environment. Through repeated discussions, they came to understand one another’s perspectives and, by patiently seeking common ground, developed a set of recommendations. Furthermore, by presenting their proposals at the NPT Review Conference and other events and exchanging views with young people from other countries, they were able to develop a shared understanding of the need to abolish nuclear weapons across national borders.

In a sense, these processes reflect and carry forward the progress that has been made by the international community toward nuclear disarmament and abolition of nuclear weapons, and they have led to the results achieved through the dedicated efforts of all participants in the Specialized Training Program.

Passing the peace culture baton to our youth

Encouraged by these experiences, we look forward to seeing the participants take leading roles in fostering a culture of peace among their peers. Regarding their recommendation that we “create places where people can freely discuss peace,” the Foundation is exploring the possibility of organizing an event as early as this fall. As well, we plan to hold the 2nd Specialized Training Program in October.

Hiroshima was designated a “Peace Memorial City” under the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law of 1949. During that process, over 90% of Hiroshima’s residents voted in favor of the initiative. However, a true “city of peace” is not built in a day; it is the younger generation who will carry this ideal forward. We believe our Youth Peace Volunteer activities are an effective way to pass the peace culture baton to future generations.

(Peace Culture Planning Division)

Dialogue with Hibakusha Certificates of Appreciation Presented to Hibakusha

To mark the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombing, the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation launched a peace education program for youth in collaboration with local governments across the country. That program received tremendous support from the hibakusha who shared their testimonies.

To express our gratitude for their lifetime contributions and to provide an opportunity to discuss our future initiatives, we held a “Dialogue with Hibakusha” on December 15, 2025, during which we presented Certificates of Appreciation. The ceremony took place at the International Conference Center Hiroshima.

Kazumi Matsui, Mayor of Hiroshima and President of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, began by expressing his gratitude for recent progress in promoting peace education among children across the nation. Following his remarks, a Certificate of Appreciation and a Peace Ticking Clock (a table clock made of wood from an atomic-bombed tree) were presented to Yoshiko Kajimoto, who accepted them on behalf of the hibakusha.

Among the various initiatives undertaken to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombing, a video highlighting the “Hiroshima Peace Studies Promotion Program” was screened, providing an opportunity to reflect once again on the contributions of hibakusha.

Next, we heard four participating hibakusha (Teruko Yahata, Fumiaki Kajiya, Kiyomi Kono, and Shunichiro Arai) share their thoughts on “how to pass the baton to future generations as the City of Hiroshima, the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, and groups of young people continue to convey the facts of the atomic bombing and promote peace.”

Toward the end of the event, messages for the hibakusha received from a wide range of people were read aloud. These touching messages brought home how deeply hibakusha testimonies resonate with the children who hear them.

- “They explained things I didn’t know in a simple, easy-to-understand way. They brought to life the things that happened back then. That helped me think about what I should do, and that’s what left the deepest impression on me.” (Student who participated in the 1st Japan Children’s Peace Studies Gathering)
- “With recent advances in digital technology, people easily select the content they want to see and skip over parts they don’t need. Against this backdrop, listening to vivid accounts of death, bones, sores, burns, screams, and walking over corpses has a profound impact on children. They never hear such stories in their daily lives. These experiences serve as catalysts for sharing the stories with people close to them.” (Chaperone of the 1st Japan Children’s

Peace Studies Gathering)

- “I felt the hibakusha entrusting their painful memories to us, and it was a moment when I realized that it was up to my generation to pass them on to the next.” “From now on, I intend to cherish life and live with respect and compassion for everyone.” (Youth Peace Volunteer English Guide)
- “I actually came to appreciate the fact that nuclear weapons and war take away countless people’s happiness and even their lives. I thought it was important to think about how to avoid repeating such mistakes in the future.” (A student who attended a lecture on the atomic bombing experience)
- “I’m a senior in high school and plan to move out of the prefecture next year. I’ve come to feel that, as someone from Hiroshima, I should be able to speak effectively about the atomic bombing when I’m in college. I hope you stay healthy and continue your work.” (A student who attended a lecture on the atomic bombing experience)

Finally, Mayor Matsui and Chairperson Takehiro Kagawa visited each table and, in the course of pleasant conversation, once again expressed their gratitude.

Messages of peace from hibakusha were also on display at the venue.

“How wonderful it is to live in a world without war. I entrust this peaceful Japan to you.”

“Peace comes from a heart filled with love. When we get to know others, show compassion, and put ourselves in their shoes, smiles come naturally. I want you to know and understand just how terrifying and tragic nuclear weapons are. Please tell those who don’t know. I pray that nuclear weapons will be completely eliminated so everyone can live a safe, secure and happy life.”

“Human survival and extinction. Let’s use our imagination to think about these possibilities.”

“Let’s eliminate nuclear weapons from the Earth through the ideas of young people. It could be anything—music, art, sports, whatever. Please help spread the messages of hibakusha.”

The Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation will continue its efforts to share these messages far and wide. We will work hand in hand with hibakusha and everyone concerned.



Hibakusha Meeting with Mayor Matsui and Senior Staff of the Peace Culture Foundation

(Peace Culture Planning Division)



Memoir of the Atomic Bombing: Wish for the Early Ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Masao Ito

Hibakusha registered with our Foundation

Profile

Born in 1941, he was exposed to the atomic bomb at the age of four in front of his home, located 3.2 km from the hypocenter.

He has served as a Hiroshima Peace Volunteer since 2010. In 2015, he began working as an Atomic Bomb Legacy Successor. That same year, he participated in the “Global Voyage for a Nuclear-Free World: Peace Boat Hibakusha Project.” Since 2022, he has been sharing his experience.

What prompted me to start giving testimony about my experience

At the time of the bombing I was a child, not even five years old.

When I retired at the age of 65, a pastor I knew said to me, “Mr. Ito, what are you going to do every day from now on? How about this?” He showed me an article recruiting Hiroshima Peace Volunteers. I visited the Peace Memorial Museum straight away and applied for it. The person in charge asked me, “Since you are a hibakusha, would you like to give your testimony as well?” But I declined, saying, “Even though I am a hibakusha, I was only 4 years old at the time, so my recollections of the bombing are limited.” Then I began to serve as a Hiroshima Peace Volunteer after undergoing the training program.

When the City of Hiroshima established the A-bomb Legacy Successor training program in 2012, I thought, “This may be something I can do.” I underwent three years of training as one of the first participants in the program and was commissioned as an A-bomb Legacy Successor in April 2015. As soon as I received my letter of appointment, I headed to Yokohama to participate in Global Voyage for a Nuclear-Free World: Peace Boat Hibakusha Project.

During this voyage, which marked the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing, we made port calls in member cities to give testimonies as a joint project with the Mayors for Peace. At that time, I was deeply moved by people’s reactions to my experience and to the stories I shared as an A-bomb Legacy Successor. In addition, learning about ICAN’s activities convinced me that the wish for the abolition of nuclear weapons is not limited to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but is the wish of all humankind. I think this became the starting point for my subsequent peace activities.

My A-bomb experience

I was exposed to the bomb in front of my house, 3.2 km from the hypocenter. I was playing on my tricycle in the street, when a bluish-white light flashed from east to west. At that moment, I was blown several meters away and lost consciousness for a brief moment. When I regained consciousness, I ran home crying. My mother was waiting for me at the front door. When I was about to take off my geta, traditional Japanese wooden sandals, to enter the house, she took me by the hand and said, “Don’t worry about taking them off. Come here quickly.” I thought that was because

the front door and all the windows were broken and shards of glass were scattered all over the house.

When my mother turned over one of the tatami mats in the back room of the house, there was an entrance to an air-raid shelter, and we rushed inside. I was so young that I had absolutely no idea what was happening.

Our house neither burned nor collapsed. It was in one of the areas that received the greatest amount of “black rain”, but we were in an air-raid shelter and were not directly exposed to it.

Meanwhile, I had a 12-year-old brother and a 10-year-old sister. My brother was at Fukuro-machi Elementary School and my sister was at my maternal grandparents’ lumber store in Sorazaya-cho. My parents ran a small factory and owned a small truck, so my father was immediately dispatched to help rescue people using the truck. However, the city was on fire, and he was unable to do as much as he had hoped. Late that night my father returned home with my brother, who was covered in wounds, and my parents continued to nurse him as best they could. My sister was less than 1 km from the hypocenter and was killed instantly, along with my uncle, aunt, and cousins. To this day, not even her remains have been found.

As a young child at the time, the most vivid and disturbing memories are not of my own family, but of the many people who fled from the city center. We had a large house, so we took in some people, but they died one after another. Because of the August heat, the bodies decomposed overnight, and a foul smell wafted through the air. The bodies were gathered in a nearby open area, where they were cremated. Around ten bodies were piled up, doused in kerosene, and burned. Such scenes appear to have continued for about a week. Those scenes alone have remained vividly etched in my memory and have never left me.

My brother, whom my father had brought home, took his last breath on August 29, three weeks later, despite my parents’ devoted care. With the help of our neighbors, he was cremated in the same open area where many bodies were cremated.

Suffering and hardships after the atomic bombing

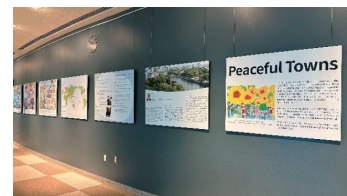
For those of us who survived, the real hardship came afterward. Five years after the bombing, when I was 10 years old, my father developed what was known as *genbaku burabura-byo* (atomic bomb fatigue syndrome), a long-term aftereffect of the atomic bombing. He was in and out of the Atomic Bomb hospital. He spent about half of the year in the hospital and the other half recuperating at home. My mother took over the family business, but things did not go well, and we finally had no choice but to move out in the middle of the night, leaving almost everything behind. I had to leave the high school I had just entered and took a live-in job. For a boy of fifteen or sixteen, the work was extremely harsh. Six months later, I developed tuberculosis and was sent to a sanatorium.

Although my life has been full of ups and downs since then, I am now living a peaceful life at a nursing home for hibakusha. As an expression of my gratitude for the life I have been fortunate enough to live, I continue my efforts as a Peace Volunteer and a hibakusha who shares my experience at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, hoping for the early ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as an important step toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

Children’s “Peaceful Towns” Spread Out Across UN Headquarters

Since 2018, Mayors for Peace has been holding a Children’s Art Competition “Peaceful Towns” to provide opportunities for young people to think about the importance of peace and to foster their peace-seeking spirit. To amplify the program, and to mark the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings, we held an exhibition of the children’s paintings at United Nations Headquarters from January 12 to February 20, 2026.

The exhibition featured 16 award-winning works from previous years, displayed alongside messages from the artists.



Part of the exhibit

The exhibited works portray “peaceful towns” as envisioned by children. One depicted a girl sleeping with a stuffed animal against the backdrop of a city under the night sky. Another featured a colorful urban scene of people joining hands around the world.

A third presented a view of a blue sea and a green island. The paintings conveyed the young artists’ longing for lives lived in safety and communities united across diverse backgrounds.

One piece was accompanied by the message: “War comes from ignorance. The only way to stop war is to gain knowledge, understand the impact war has on people, and create more humane and peaceful solutions to our problems.”

Izumi Nakamitsu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Kazuyuki Yamazaki, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, toured the exhibition



On the tour

and said, “The messages of peace conveyed through the children’s paintings moved us deeply.”

Throughout the exhibition period, many visitors stopped in front of each piece to gaze at it intently. Visitors made comments such as “Every piece is colorful and uplifting” and “I want to show these to my own children.” The global stage of the United Nations carried the children’s sincere wishes into the hearts of visitors from around the world.

For the 2025 art competition, 8,079 entries were submitted by children from 153 Mayors for Peace member cities in 19 countries; 52 of these were selected as prize-winning entries. (Selected prize-winning entries are featured on the cover.)



The 52 selected works

(Mayors for Peace and International Policy Division)