

Mayors for Peace News Flash (March 2015) No.63

Dear member cities and supporters of Mayors for Peace,

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Below is recent news related to our activities.

If your city has any news it wishes to share with others, please feel free to contact us!

Mayors for Peace member cities as of March 1, 2015

6,585 cities in 160 countries/regions with 48 new members

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Please also check our website and Facebook page:

URL: <http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/index.html>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/mayorsforpeace>

"Like" our Facebook page to help spread awareness of our mission.

■Secretary General Komizo's visits to Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Germany [January 31- February 13, 2015]

Secretary General Komizo visited Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Germany mainly to request several cities to take on a lead city role.

He visited Brazil from February 2 to 4, and asked the mayor of Santos to become a lead city in Brazil. The Mayor clearly expressed the city's determination to work for peace and start preparations to be a lead city. Secretary General Komizo also requested the city of Sao Paulo, adjacent to Santos, for their cooperation in the activities of Mayors for Peace. He also met with the representatives from the Brazil A-bomb Survivors Peace Association and BANg: Ban All Nukes generation, a peace NGO. During these meetings, he explained the activities of Mayors for Peace and exchanged opinions with participants regarding future cooperation with their groups.

From February 5 to 7, Mr. Komizo visited Argentina and requested Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, to take on a lead city role. The cultural minister of the city of Buenos Aires met with Mr. Komizo, and responded that he would talk with the mayor about this request. Mr. Komizo also met with the mayors of Mercedes and Rosario and asked for their cooperation in the activities of Mayors for Peace. Mercedes joined Mayors for Peace in February, and Secretary General Komizo handed their Certification of Membership to the mayor during the meeting. In response, Mayor Selva of Mercedes pledged to work for the realization of lasting world peace as a responsibility of a Mayors for Peace

member city. Mr. Komizo also attended an event called "Dialogue with Hiroshima" organized by the NGO, Fundacion Sadako. At the event, he rang the Peace Bell together with other participants which is placed at the Palermo Japanese garden in Buenos Aires. During the event, he introduced the message of the A-bomb survivors that "No one else should suffer as we did". He also spoke about the activities of Mayors for Peace and called on the participants for their cooperation in working toward peace.

On February 9, Secretary General Komizo requested Montevideo, the capital of Uruguay, to take on a lead city role. Mayor Olivera expressed her determination to contribute in concrete ways if the city accepts the lead city role. The Hiroshima Secretariat will be informed of their formal decision via written form. Mayor Olivera also expressed her willingness to more actively promote their efforts for peace, strengthen their relationship with Mayors for Peace, and seek cooperation in the activities of Mayors for Peace through the Mercociudades regional network.

In Germany, on February 12, Secretary General Komizo requested the cooperation of the chairperson of Frankfurt City Council in the activities of Mayors for Peace. The mayors of Langen and Darmstadt, adjacent cities to Frankfurt, also attended the meeting. Mr. Komizo also met with IPPNW representatives who support the activities of Mayors for Peace in Germany and exchanged opinions with them regarding further cooperation in the future.

■Official agreement from 16 cities to take on a lead city role

Based on the Action Plan 2013-2017 adopted at the 8th General Conference in August 2013, Mayors for Peace has been selecting lead cities to promote regionalization and facilitate regional activities. The following 15 cities have officially accepted a lead city role:

Manchester, Granollers, Malakoff, Akron, Fremantle, Semey, Bangkok, Wellington, Sarajevo, Montreal, Cochin, Halabja, Volgograd, Fongo-Tongo, Santos and Hiroshima

■Postponement of Latin American regional meeting in Bogota to June 3 - 4, 2015

The first regional meeting of Mayors for Peace has been postponed by the City Hall of Bogota to Wednesday, June 3 and Thursday, June 4, 2015. The Latin American regional Mayors for Peace meeting will be combined with the "Summit of Safer Cities" (UN Habitat) and with the "Latin American Dialogue of Mayors", related with the international agenda of UCLG and Habitat III. The combination of these three meetings in the capital of Colombia, which will also be the host city for the 2016 UCLG World Summit, will offer interesting opportunities for participants.

■27th anniversary of Halabja chemical gas attack on March 16

[Halabja, Kurdistan, Iraq]

A memorial ceremony for the 27th Anniversary of Halabja to commemorate the chemical bombardment of the city and the massacre of its inhabitants was held on March 16. The ceremony takes place every year on March 16 in Halabja City. Several events throughout the city are also organized for three days from March 16 to 18.

The Halabja chemical attack occurred on March 16, 1988 and more than 5,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed. Many survivors are still suffering from symptoms derived from the chemical attack.

Halabja has been referred to as "Hiroshima in Kurdistan", and has been one of the Vice-President cities of Mayors for Peace.

On September 27, 2014, Halabja was nominated by the Parliament of Kurdistan as the "Capital of Peace" in Kurdistan and Iraq.

■3-day international conference "A Century of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Enough!"

[Ypres, Belgium, April 22-24, 2015]

REMINDER/UPDATE The City of Ieper, together with Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign Association, is organizing a 3-day international conference, titled "A Century of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Enough!" for April

22-24. The conference will include commemorations and high level speakers such as Christine Beerli (ICRC), Tibor Toth (former CTBTO) and Ahmet Üzümcü (OPCW) on the first day, a review by experts, for example Alyn Ware (PNND) and Paul Walker (Green Movement), on a century of WMD on the second day, and a focus on the theme “Cities are not targets!”, with large inputs from Mayors for Peace members, on the third day as well as high level speakers such as Raji Sourani (Gaza Human Rights Committee) and Martin Coward (Newcastle University).

▼ For conference information (program and practical guide) please go to:

www.gas1915.be/en/conference

▼ For conference registration please go to:

www.gas1915.be/images/filelib/Ypres100ConferenceRegistrationForm_44.pdf

■2020 Vision Campaign Director speaks to Conference on Disarmament

[March 19, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland]

At the first-ever informal session of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) with Civil Society, a 2020 Vision Campaign presentation drew the attention of disarmament diplomats to the central position of cities in the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapon use: both the immediate, local slaughter of a city’s citizenry and the long-term, global catastrophic climate disruption. As such, plans and threats to use nuclear weapons in any way which would cause mass destruction in populated areas should be treated by the United Nations as a “threat to the peace.”

▼ Full text of the article:

<http://www.2020visioncampaign.org/en/home/artikel/80477d4cf8f0d602e938885c8ce7b4bb/2020-vision-campaign-director-speaks.html>

■Express solidarity with the child-survivors on their "journey to the heart of the world."

We would like to bring your attention the 2020 Vision Campaign’s joint project with Peace Boat: Project “I was her age.” On 12 April, a special group of child-survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945) will board the Peace Boat to circumnavigate the world. Along the way, Mayors for Peace member cities will welcome them to their countries. Anytime from April to August you can send them a photograph or video of you and your office colleagues – or any other group of supporters – wishing them: “Bon Voyage, Child-Survivors!”

▼ More information on these activities and ways to show solidarity with the child-survivors can be found on the ‘I was her age’ project page.

<http://www.2020visioncampaign.org/en/i-was-her-age.html>

▼ See also the Facebook page /IWasHerAge

<https://www.facebook.com/IWasHerAge?ref=ts&fref=ts>

■“Peace News from Hiroshima”

- Contributed by the Hiroshima Peace Media Center

With this year marking the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing, the eyes of the world are again turning to Hiroshima.

We now often see people from other countries making visits to the city, including the grandson of John Hersey, who wrote about Hiroshima. His reportage, published in 1946, was one of the earliest descriptions of the horrific consequences of the Hiroshima bombing.

Though efforts to spread the message of nuclear abolition are active both in Japan and overseas, the A-bomb survivors’ group in Fukuyama, the second largest city in Hiroshima Prefecture, has decided to disband at the end of March. Due to the advanced age of survivors, this year is a turning point, in which more concerted efforts to hand down the A-bomb experience will be required.

For information on these and other topics, see the following articles at the Hiroshima Peace Media Center’s website:

▼ Related stories:

- Grandson of John Hersey, author of famous A-bomb report, visits Hiroshima

<http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=41824>

- U.N. choir to join August 6 ceremony to observe 70th anniversary of A-bombing

<http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=41811>

- Hiroshima to host “Group of Eminent Persons Conference” in August to discuss nuclear disarmament
<http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=41489>
- Charity concert in Hiroshima on August 11-12 to convey message of nuclear abolition
<http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=41775>
- JCCU holds meeting in Tokyo, will send 93 delegates to NPT Review Conference
<http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=41618>
- Sense of crisis over handing down A-bomb experience as another survivors’ group decides to disband
<http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=41495>

■Member City Activities

*Granollers and Barcelona, Spain

Yoshiko Kajimoto, an A-bomb survivor, visited Barcelona and Granollers in the framework of the exhibition “Hiroshima-Nagasaki. 70 Years from the Atomic Bomb”

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During her short stay in Catalonia, Ms Kajimoto delivered her testimony in 4 schools in Barcelona, Granollers and la Garriga. More than 300 students could learn from her experience and her strong commitment to peace and disarmament.

In Barcelona, Casa Asia hosted the lecture “For a World without Nuclear Weapons”, with the participation of Jordi Armadans from Fundipau (ICAN member organization) and Yoshiko Kajimoto, who delivered her testimony. The speakers invited the numerous people present in the hall to become aware of the danger that the stock of 16,000 nuclear warheads represents for the world and of the humanitarian impact of the use of the atomic weapons. The session became a strong call for a peaceful world where nuclear weapons are banned.

In Granollers, Ms Kajimoto was received in the city hall by the members of the city council. Mayor Josep Mayoral, vice president of Mayors for Peace, emphasized the importance of preserving the memories of those who experienced the tragic history of the two cities and transmitting their testimonies to the younger generations.

The exhibition titled “Hiroshima-Nagasaki. 70 Years from the Atomic Bomb” was open in the Museum of Granollers from February 11th to March 8th. In addition to the panels, a selection of 10 objects that were found in the remains of the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were displayed in the exhibition.

In the opening ceremony, Plèiade, the chorus group from Granollers, performed the song “Bells of Nagasaki” that they prepared for this occasion. The numerous people who attended the session could also listen to Ms. Kajimoto’s testimony and learn of her experience of the atomic bombing and the days after it.

Citizens of Granollers are aware of the importance of preserving the memory of tragic past events because the city, itself, suffered a bombing during the Spanish Civil War in which more than 200 people - mainly women and children - died. In the framework of the program of historical memory and peace building, testimonies of the bombing of Granollers play a large part in activities with schools and other audiences in transmitting survivors’ experiences of the war. The meeting of Ms. Kajimoto with people from Granollers who experienced the war and the bombing of the city when they were a child was especially moving.

The exhibition, “Hiroshima-Nagasaki. 70 Years from the Atomic Bomb”, was displayed in Barcelona from January 13th to February 8th and in the Museum of Granollers from February 11th to March 8th.

▼ Full text of the report (Mayors for Peace website):

<http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/activities/memberscity/2015/Granollers/exhibition2.html>

▼ Related information (the city of Granollers website, in Catalan)

<http://www.granollers.cat/noticies/ajuntament/inauguraci%C3%B3-expo>

Please visit the “Member City Activities” page on our website for event ideas to implement in your city.

▼ To see the “Member City Activities” webpage, click on the link below:

<http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/activities/memberscity/index.html>

<<PLEASE SEND US INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CITY’S PEACE ACTIVITIES>>

Please help us tell others about what you are doing!

We can create a link to your city's website or the website of your peace event to help you advertise. Please include comprehensive information including the date, venue, organizers and a description of the event. We look forward to receiving information from your city.

▼ Please email us at the following address with the name/title of your event and the URL for it:
mayorcon@pcf.city.hiroshima.jp

■ Mayors for Peace A-bomb poster exhibition

To commemorate the 5,000-city milestone of the Mayors for Peace membership numbers, we called for all member cities to hold a poster exhibition.

By holding these exhibitions in as many cities as possible, we hope to directly inform millions of citizens of the impact of nuclear war. We would like exhibition attendees to understand that even a limited nuclear war would cause catastrophic climate change resulting in global famine, and to consider the role that city leaders should strive to play.

We have heard from more than 250 cities around the world, such as London in the UK, Volgograd in Russia and Kabul in Afghanistan, that they held poster exhibitions in response to our request.

We ask that your city also hold an exhibition to help bring the issue of nuclear weapons to everyone's attention.

The posters are available in English, Spanish, Catalan, French, Dutch, German, Japanese and Russian. Persian translation is now ongoing. Updated posters can be downloaded from the Mayors for Peace website. We would be most grateful if you would continue to lend your support by using the newest posters available for your municipality's exhibition.

We would also appreciate notification of when you will hold a poster exhibition, and the submission of an event report afterwards to the Secretariat. The report format is provided at the Mayors for Peace website below.

>> Posters: A2 size (approximately 24 by 36 inches, or 61 by 91.5 cm); 18 posters.

▼ Related Information and download link to the posters:

<http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/campaign/projects/poster/index.html>

■ A plea to support the petition drive for a nuclear weapons convention

The next step in abolishing all nuclear weapons by 2020 is to negotiate a nuclear weapons convention. A nuclear weapons convention will prohibit the development, production, testing, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons and all related activities.

At our Executive Conference in Granollers, Spain in November 2011, Mayors for Peace members agreed to promote a global grassroots petition drive as a way in which all member cities can call for an immediate start to negotiations of a nuclear weapons convention. Promotion of this petition drive is also included in the Mayors for Peace 2013-2017 Action Plan 2013-2017 that was adopted at the 8th General Conference.

Thanks to many supporters across the world, we have received 1,452,070 signatures as of March 1, 2015. Let us gather millions more and make our voices heard.

(The petition is available to print or to sign online at the links below.)

▼ Petition form (PDF):

http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/data/pdf/01_monthly_updating/11_petitionform_en.pdf.

▼ Online petition:

<https://www.ssl-z.city.hiroshima.jp/pcf/en/form.htm>.

■ Financial contributions from member cities to the 2020 Vision Campaign

- Update for February 2015 [Ypres, Belgium]

In February 2015, the 2020 Vision Campaign received donations from cities in Belgium, Germany, Italy and Norway,

amounting to a total of 1550 euro in February.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the people behind every single donation for their continuing generosity in supporting our efforts to realize a nuclear-weapon-free world by 2020.

UPDATE: Special thanks must go this month to the Mayor and City of Montreal. Following our recent appeals for financial assistance, Montreal responded this week with an outstanding donation of 11,500 euro to the 2020 Vision campaign. Their support facilitates the continuation of our projects and functioning of our core office; but while this is invaluable, an infusion of funds from just one interested city cannot ensure the long term sustainability of our campaign. We hope that others will be inspired by Montreal's immense generosity to donate what they can on a regular basis to this most important cause.

▼ Full article including the list of cities that made contributions in February (2020 Vision Campaign website): <http://www.2020visioncampaign.org/en/home/artikel/8f85a36758ec1b86cda423e62814182a/contributions-february.html>

▼ How to make contributions: <http://www.2020visioncampaign.org/en/members/contribute-to-mayors-for-peace.html>

■ Visitors to the President of Mayors for Peace last month

President Kazumi Matsui welcomed the following visitors last month and asked them to support the activities of Mayors for Peace and cooperate towards membership expansion.

- *February 3- Delegation of the Chinese People's Association for Peace and Disarmament (CPAPD)
- *February 11- Dr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- *February 11- H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Uzumcu, Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
- *February 20- Delegation of nine U.S. Members of Congress from the Congressional Study Group on Japan
- *February 20- Delegation of 12 Members of the Council of Representatives of Iraq and Professor Ihssan A. Hussan Al-Daweri of Baghdad University
- *February 23- Participants in the German-Japanese Peace Forum

■ Mayors for Peace member cities - 6,585 cities in 160 countries/regions

Through your invaluable support, on March 1, 2015, we added 48 new member cities, bringing total membership to 6,585.

Thanks to the continued efforts of the team at the Teheran Peace Museum, 35 cities from Iran joined this month and the total number of Iranian member cities reached 585.

6 cities joined from Japan, making the total number of Japanese member cities 1,545. These Japanese member cities account for 88.7 percent of all municipalities in Japan.

We also welcomed three cities each from Germany and Italy and a city from France.

We encourage further initiatives to promote membership and can provide support from Hiroshima as needed. Please help us invite mayors who are not yet members to join Mayors for Peace.

▼ Related information (PDF): http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/data/pdf/2015/newmembers1503_en.pdf

If you have any comments, questions, or would like to unsubscribe or change your contact information, please contact us at:

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