

Mayors for Peace News Flash (February 2016) No.74

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 February 1st, 2016
6,991 cities in 161 countries/regions with 26 new members

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Please also check our website and Facebook page:

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

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

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

■Release of Open Letter to UN Member States on Open-ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament

[January 22nd, 2016]

Last year, the UN General Assembly decided to convene an Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) in 2016 to substantively address concrete and effective legal and other measures to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons. The organizational meeting of this Open-ended Working Group was convened in Geneva, Switzerland on January 28th, 2016.

Prior to this January meeting, Mayors for Peace issued an open letter on January 22nd to call on all UN Member States to actively participate in this OEWG. The letter was sent to all UN member states, the UN Secretary General, the UN Under-Secretary-General and Acting High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, all Mayors for Peace member cities, and various NGOs.

The first sessions are scheduled to take place in Geneva from February 22 to 26, followed by the second and third sessions in May and August.

▼The Open Letter on the Mayors for Peace Website:

http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/activities/statement/request/160122_OEWG_en.pdf

■Chapter Meeting of UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts, and Leaders for Peace in Manchester
[Manchester, UK; February 5th, 2016]

The UK and Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Chapter met in Manchester Town Hall on the 5th February. Chaired by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Manchester, the meeting considered how the Chapter would now be developed in terms of building up capacity, seeking nominated representatives from member authorities, instituting voluntary invoices and recruiting new members.

It was also agreed that Manchester make approaches to a number of members to consider being Vice Chairs to the Chapter. Further discussion took place about the activities of the Chapter and it was felt important to broaden out to a number of peace, disarmament and humanitarian issues in order to encourage member authorities to become more active in its work.

There was some discussion about holding the next meeting in London and including a special seminar with the business meeting. This seminar would focus on some of the issues member authorities are interested in - the nuclear weapons issue, notable anniversaries which Councils should support, tangible ways to support Mayors for Peace and humanitarian issues of concern that affect local government in the UK and Ireland.

A number of disarmament and peace groups also attended the meeting and cooperation with such groups will be developed. The next Chapter meeting is planned for late June/early July.

■Comment of Protest by the Mayor of Hiroshima Against Launch of Missile Conducted by DPRK
[February 7th, 2016]

It was announced that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) launched a missile carrying what it calls a "satellite" on February 7th. Mayor Kazumi Matsui of the City of Hiroshima issued a comment of protest on the news.

▼Comment by the Mayor of Hiroshima on the Mayors for Peace Website:

[http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/topic/2016/160207Mayor's comment on DPRKmissile.pdf](http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/topic/2016/160207Mayor's%20comment%20on%20DPRKmissile.pdf)

■Visit to Vietnam by Honorary Mayor of Frogn (Norway), Mayors for Peace Vice President
[December 26-30, 2015]

Mr. Thore Vestby, Honorary Mayor of Frogn and a Vice President of Mayors for Peace, visited four Vietnamese cities; Ha Long, Hai Phong, Ninh Binh and Hanoi in late December 2015 to discuss the work of Mayors for Peace. Mr. Vestby requested the first three cities, which are not yet members, to join our organization.

▼Full report and photos on the Mayors for Peace Website:

<http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/activities/membercity/2016/Frogn/Vietnam.html>

■ [Announcement to Member Cities] Invitation for Applicants to the 2016 Youth Exchange for Peace: Support Program for "HIROSHIMA & PEACE" Course

At the Executive Conference in November 2015, Mayors for Peace designated "conveying the A-bomb experience to future generations through youth exchanges" as one of its intensified activities to promote nuclear weapons abolition for the next few years.

In connection, we have started a program to provide financial and other support to selected youth from member cities who would like to participate in the course, "HIROSHIMA and PEACE", at Hiroshima City University. This is an intensive summer course in which students from around the world study and discuss Hiroshima and peace in English.

In this regard, Mayors for Peace is now accepting applications for participation in this program from member cities. If interested, please refer to the Application Guidelines on our website and submit required documents by email by Thursday, April 14th, 2016 at 3pm in Japan Standard Time (UTC +9).

▼Details of the program on the Mayors for Peace Website:

http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/campaign/projects/Youth_Exchange_for_Peace/H_and_P.html

▼Please email completed application documents to:

mayorcon@pcf.city.hiroshima.jp

■“Peace News from Hiroshima” (Contributed by the Hiroshima Peace Media Center)

The Hiroshima Prefectural Confederation of A-bomb Sufferers Organizations (Hiroshima Hidankyo) is composed of A-bomb survivors living in Hiroshima Prefecture. The 60th anniversary of the group’s establishment will be marked this May. The survivors were forced to endure without assistance or the support of any group for the 10-year period following the atomic bombing, often referred to as “the lost decade.” Now members of survivors’ groups are aging, and many groups have been disbanded because of a decrease in numbers and lack of successors. How can we continue conveying to the world the memories of these survivors who, based on their firsthand experiences of the atomic bombing, stress that nuclear weapons are a threat to the entire human race? In late January, Hiroshima Hidankyo held a ceremony to commemorate the 60th anniversary of its founding. This should serve as a wake-up call for younger generations, who shoulder the responsibility of carrying on the movement pursued by the survivors.

Visit the following links for articles from the Hiroshima Peace Media Center.

- A-bomb survivors’ group holds 60th anniversary ceremony and pledges to continue efforts for nuclear abolition

<http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=56038>

- U.S. Arms Control Association names Setsuko Thurlow and A-bomb survivors as “2015 Arms Control Person of the Year”

<http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=55593>

- French ambassador visits Hiroshima, says French foreign minister will visit Peace Memorial Park

<http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=55595>

- Remains of excavated floor delays seismic reinforcement work on A-bomb Dome

<http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=56355>

- A-bomb survivors and citizens express worry after missile launch by North Korea

<http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=56331>

■Member City Activities

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Cervia, Italy

Commemorative events for the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings
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During 2015, the City of Cervia organized events to commemorate the landmark 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; a workshop for peace and planting of a ginkgo seedling that originated from Hiroshima.

▼Full report and photos on the Mayors for Peace Website:

http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/activities/membercity/2016/Cervia/70th_events.html

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Mirano, Italy

Event: "The bomb today without tomorrow"

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On January 29th, the City of Mirano held an event titled "The bomb today without tomorrow - for a world free from atomic bombs" in collaboration with some local groups in order to further contribute to the realization of a world without nuclear weapons.

▼ Full report and photos on the Mayors for Peace Website:

http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/activities/membercity/2016/Mirano/la_bomba_oggi_senza_domani.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 its URL:

mayorcon@pcf.city.hiroshima.jp

■ Mayors for Peace Information System

An online information system for Mayors for Peace has been launched in order to facilitate information sharing among member cities. This system enables searches for member cities' information, the renewal of records by each member as well as payment of membership fees by credit card without any transfer charges. We hope that each member city will utilize this system for their activities related to Mayors for Peace.

Please check your city's information on the system such as the name and contact information of the mayor, contact person, etc. If it needs revision, we ask that you log into the system and make corrections. We would greatly appreciate each city keeping its own information up-to-date.

Instructions on how to use this system are included in an email which was sent to each member city.

▼ Mayors for Peace Information System:

<https://www.mfpinfosys.org/>

▼ Mayors for Peace Information System Operating Manual:

https://www.mfpinfosys.org/manual/secure/pdfs/lec7/lm/07manu_pdf_en.pdf

▼ Please email us at the following address if you have any inquiries about the Mayors for Peace Information System:

mfpsystem@pcf.city.hiroshima.jp

■ Mayors for Peace Membership Fee Payment

At the 8th General Conference of Mayors for Peace in August 2013, introduction of an annual membership fee was determined in order to strengthen the foundation of Mayors for Peace and the sense of solidarity amongst member cities. Last year, we instituted an annual membership fee of 2,000 Japanese Yen per city (about USD15-16 / EUR12-15). We would like to thank everyone for their 2015 membership fee contributions. The funds raised by this fee will be utilized as a resource for the projects listed on the Mayors for Peace Action Plan (2013-2017).

The request for payment of 2016 membership fee will be sent in April. We deeply appreciate your kind cooperation.

■ Request for Reports on Commemorative Events for the 70th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombings

Last year, Hiroshima and Nagasaki marked the landmark 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings. In response to our request to hold commemorative events, many cities, municipalities and peace organizations around the world observed events during the year, which we sincerely appreciate.

The list of events commemorating the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings, as based on reports received from member cities, is available at the link below.

▼ List of commemorative events (As of February 12th) (PDF, Mayors for Peace website):
http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/campaign/projects/70th_anniversary/List_of_commemorative_events.pdf

If you have not informed us of your event, we would appreciate your doing so. We would be pleased to share the report on the Mayors for Peace website, etc.

▼ Please email event summaries to:
mayorcon@pcf.city.hiroshima.jp

We continue to encourage all member cities to hold commemorate events by the end of March 2016.

■ Request to Hold A-bomb Survivor Testimonies over Skype

The Mayors for Peace Action Plan (2013-2017) adopted at the 8th General Conference in August 2013 includes the promotion of holding A-bomb survivor testimonies over Skype. Please host an event connecting your city and Hiroshima by Skype in order to have the citizens hear the live voices of the A-bomb survivors and deepen their understanding of the reality of the atomic bombing.

▼ Please consult the Mayors for Peace Secretariat for details:
mayorcon@pcf.city.hiroshima.jp

■ Plea to Support Nuclear Weapons Convention Petition Drive

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. Mayors for Peace is promoting 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 included in the Mayors for Peace Action Plan (2013-2017) that was adopted at the 8th General Conference in August 2013.

Thanks to many supporters across the world, we have received 2,237,440 signatures as of February 1st, 2016.

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>

■ Visitor(s) 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.

*January 13th - H.E. Mr. Thierry Dana, Ambassador of France to Japan

*January 14th - H.E. Mr. Kazuya Ogawa, Ambassador of Japan to Bosnia and Herzegovina

■ Mayors for Peace Member Cities - 6,991 Cities in 161 Countries/Regions

Through your invaluable support, on February 1st, 2016, we added 26 new member cities, bringing total membership to 6,991.

Thanks to the continued efforts of the team at the Tehran Peace Museum, 20 cities from Iran joined this month and the total number of Iranian member cities reached 832. We also welcomed 2 cities from Germany and one from Indonesia.

We encourage further initiatives to promote membership and can provide support from Hiroshima as needed.

