



# Briefing paper

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020

No.30

**Subject: Events held for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the use of atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Ireland ratifies the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and plans for a European Chapter webinar**

## 1. Introduction

This report has been developed by the Chapter Secretary and provides its members with an overview of live and online events held for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the use of atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It also considers positive developments with the ratification of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, of which Ireland became one of its most recent state parties to; and it provides ongoing progress with the European Chapter of Mayors for Peace, including a possible autumn webinar.

## 2. The Hiroshima and Nagasaki 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary Peace Ceremonies

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic weapon attacks were formally commemorated with poignant Peace Ceremonies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and a plethora of other events in the cities.

The Hiroshima Peace Ceremony took place between 8am and 8.45am on the 6<sup>th</sup> August. Due to the Covid-19 outbreak and social distancing rules, participation at the ceremony was reduced, but the usual format to the event was held. This centred on the ringing of a peace bell at 8.15am and a minutes silence at the exact moment 75 years ago that the first atomic bomb exploded in the centre of Hiroshima.

The annual Hiroshima Peace Declaration was read out by the Mayor of Hiroshima, Kazumi Matsui. Mayor Matsui urged the world to unite against grave threats to humanity -- be they nuclear weapons or the novel coronavirus pandemic -- by spurning nationalistic and isolationist policies. At a time when tensions between some world powers have heightened, Mayor Matsui said countries should put aside their differences and come together to overcome both human-made and natural challenges.

Mayor Matsui also said in his Peace Declaration that: "Hiroshima considers it our duty to build in civil society a consensus that the people of the world must unite to achieve nuclear weapons abolition and lasting world peace." The full text of the Hiroshima Peace Declaration can be found below at Appendix 1.

The Hiroshima ceremony also included an address from the Prime Minister of Japan, the United Nations (UN) Secretary General and the Governor of the Hiroshima Prefecture.

In his speech, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said all states must step up efforts to "remove a sense of mistrust through mutual involvement and dialogue," amid the severe security environment and widening differences between nations' positions on nuclear disarmament. Prime Minister Abe again said Japan would try to be a 'bridge' between these different policy views on nuclear weapons.

## THE UK & IRELAND CHAPTER OF MAYORS FOR PEACE

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In his video message to the ceremony, U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres, who had to cancel his initial plan to be part of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day events due to the pandemic, said, "The only way to totally eliminate nuclear risk is to totally eliminate nuclear weapons." The full text of his speech is attached as Appendix 2.

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary received considerable media coverage around the world. For example, the New York Times reported on it:

"Cognizant of the declining population of survivors of the two atomic bombings, which now stands at about 136,000, the Hiroshima government decided to focus this year's remembrance on mourning the dead and honouring the experience of those who remain. The memories of the hibakusha, who now average 83 in age, are an increasingly precious resource. As their numbers fall, they and their supporters are being forced to envision what the disarmament movement will look like without the people who have put a human face on the cost of nuclear war."

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/05/world/asia/hiroshima-japan-75th-anniversary.html>)

A core part of the Hiroshima Peace Ceremony, as it is of the work for the Mayors for Peace, is to encourage children to understand what happened and to be involved in the promotion of peace. The ceremony concluded with the 'Commitment to Peace' read out on behalf of schoolchildren in Hiroshima by children's representatives Natsumi Nagakura and Shunsuke Omori. The text of their address is attached as Appendix 3.

Many other events were held in Hiroshima across August 6<sup>th</sup>, including the conclusion of conferences by hibakusha (A-bomb survivors) and a 'Hiroshima – Peace, Art, Music' and the 'Hiroshima Global Peace Wave' which brought events all over the world in solidarity with the city on this important anniversary. The UK & Ireland Mayors, Provosts and Leaders for Peace Secretariat encourages you to watch the London part of the 'Peace, Art and Music' event which can be found at: <https://youtu.be/wbGA0F-wGSY>

The Nagasaki Peace Ceremony took place 3 days later on August 9<sup>th</sup>. It is held to a similar format as the event in Hiroshima, with some key differences, such as a Nagasaki Hibakusha Peace Declaration.

In his Peace Declaration, the Mayor of Nagasaki Tomihisa Taue appealed to the Japanese Government to take the initiative amid an absence of global leadership to create a world free of nuclear weapons. He specifically asked the government to sign and ratify the U.N. Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

Mayor Taue said: "If, as with the novel coronavirus which we did not fear until it began spreading among our immediate surroundings, humanity does not become aware of the threat of nuclear weapons until they are used again, we will find ourselves in an irrevocable predicament."

In his speech, the Prime Minister did not refer to the treaty, but in a subsequent press conference said Japan could not support this treaty, despite sharing the same aim with Nagasaki of a world free from nuclear weapons.

The Nagasaki Peace Ceremony also included signing from a youth choir and addresses from local hibakusha. Mention was made of Pope Francis's visit in late 2019 – part of the area that was destroyed in the atomic bombing was Urakami Cathedral, the largest Roman Catholic church in Japan. Multi-faith prayers for peace were held after the ceremony.

This year, Nagasaki has confirmed a further 3,406 deaths of survivors, bringing the number of deaths of people recognized as victims to 185,982. Hiroshima has registered a total of 324,129 such deaths. The combined number of hibakusha, or survivors of the atomic bombings, stood at 136,682 as of March 2020, which is down about 9,200 from a year earlier, according to figures from the Japanese Government. The average age of the hibakusha is 83 years old.

For many of the hibakusha there was disappointment that larger events could not be held, and frustration with the lack of progress in reducing nuclear weapons beyond the 13,800 that still

remain. In 2003, Mayors for Peace instituted their '2020 Vision Campaign' to seek to encourage a process for global nuclear disarmament by this date.

Despite much effort, this has not happened, though there is a welcome inclusion of the rights of the hibakusha and those who have suffered the radiation effects of nuclear weapon tests within the 2017 UN Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which is coming close to becoming international law, as noted below. The Mayors for Peace Executive and General Conference had planned to discuss the successor to this campaign, but it had to be cancelled due to the Covid-19 outbreak, as did the UN's Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. This campaign will be reconsidered over the next year, given the outcomes of the NPT Review Conference and the TPNW ratification process.

### 3. Local and international events held for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks, and of the end of the Second World War

Across the world, many events were held to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic weapon attacks, with many calls for a more peaceful and nuclear weapon free world.

A host of global events took place as part of the 'Hiroshima – Peace, Art and Music' strand and the 'Hiroshima Global Peace Wave' strand of events noted in Chapter Briefing 29. Many events were held online, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, but there were also a number of live events.

In the UK and Ireland, some of the most notable live events included:

- **Dublin** – The Lord Mayor of Dublin, a representative of the Irish Government Disarmament Office and the Japanese Ambassador to Ireland spoke at the Irish CND national event in Merrion Square.
- **Leeds** – The Lord Mayor of Leeds laid a wreath at the Mayors for Peace memorial tree at a Nagasaki Day event organised by the Council's Peacelink Group and Yorkshire CND, which also included speeches from the Chair of the UK & Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities and the Chair of CND-UK.
- **Liverpool** – The Lord Mayor of Liverpool laid a wreath in St John's Gardens at an event organised by Merseyside CND and multi-faith groups like Pax Christi.
- **Sheffield** – The Lord Mayor of Sheffield spoke at Sheffield's Hiroshima Day commemoration in the Peace Gardens by Sheffield Town Hall organised by Sheffield Creative Action for Peace.
- **Oxford** – The Lord Mayor of Oxford spoke at Oxford's Hiroshima and Nagasaki Day commemorations in Bonn Square organised by Oxford CND.
- **Glasgow** – Councillors, peace and multi-faith groups met for a Hiroshima Day vigil in the Peace Tree in Kelvingrove Park.
- **Stirling** – The Provost of Stirling and local peace group members attended a Hiroshima Day vigil event at the Peace Garden in Pullar Memorial Park.
- **Brighton** – The Mayor of Brighton was one of the speakers at a local Hiroshima Day event.
- **Keighley** – The Mayor of Keighley read the Hiroshima Peace Declaration at its event held in the town square.
- **Hebden Bridge** – The Mayor of Hebden Royd read the Nagasaki Peace Declaration at an event held in Calder Holmes Park.

Amongst the notable online webinars and events included:

- **Manchester** – A dedicated webpage to commemorate the Council's active support for the Mayors for Peace included readings from the Lord Mayor of Manchester, the poet and Chancellor of Manchester University, Lemn Sissay, and the Council's permanent representative on Mayors for Peace, Councillor Eddy Newman. There are also links to relevant projects organised by Manchester Museum and the Imperial War Museum. The weblink is at: <http://www.manchester.gov.uk/LetThereBePeace>. For Nagasaki Day, a special webinar was held called 'The Bomb on my Back' with presentations by Joseph Gerson and Reiko Masato organised by Greater Manchester & District CND.

- **London** – London’s main event included a webinar, chaired by Baroness Jenny Jones and it was attended by the Lord Mayor of Camden in Tavistock Square, CND Vice President and former Labour Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn, and CND Vice President Bruce Kent.
- **Bradford** – The Lord Mayor of Bradford and the Bishop of Bradford were amongst the speakers to a Hiroshima Day webinar organised by Yorkshire CND.
- **Musicians for Peace and Disarmament** – The group held a concert of music for peace with performances from Susanne Stanzeleit, Roger Vignoles and Guy Elliott, Julian Jacobson, Wissam Boustany, Frankie Armstrong.
- **Edinburgh** – A peace crane origami workshop was organised by Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre.

There were many other events across the country and the world. The Mayors for Peace Secretariat in Hiroshima and the Chapter Secretariat in Manchester sincerely thank you for your cooperation in supporting these events. A number of photos from some of these events are attached at Appendix 5.

Many UK and Ireland members of Mayors for Peace are also commemorating online the official 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War, which takes place on the 15<sup>th</sup> August. A national commemoration event will be held in the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire in the presence of the Prince of Wales. It will include a two minute silence and will be shown live on BBC1 between 9.30am and 11.30am.

In the evening on the same channel a pre-recorded broadcast will be shown coming from London’s Horse Guards Parade. The event will conclude with reflections from a veteran of the war, 98 year-old Arthur Lawson. He will speak to the terrible experiences of prisoners of war by the Japanese Army. And he will speak too of his horror that the atomic bomb was used to bring an end to that war saying: “I fail to see the logic in declaring chemical and biological weapons illegal, but not nuclear ones.” He calls for peace and unity today to truly remember one of the worst of all wars.

#### 4. **Ireland and three other states ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**

On August 6<sup>th</sup> the governments of Ireland, Nigeria and Niue all officially ratified the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). They were joined on August 9<sup>th</sup> by the government of St Kitts and Nevis. This takes up to 44 the number of states who have formally ratified the TPNW. A further 36 states have signed the treaty and are in the process of ratifying it. When 50 states ratify the treaty it will become a part of international law at the United Nations and be a focal part of the nuclear disarmament regime.

For the UK and Ireland Chapter, the ratification of the TPNW is particularly welcome. As the Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney notes in an opinion piece for the Irish Times, which is noted at Appendix 6, Ireland has a consistent history of support for progressive moves towards multilateral nuclear disarmament. Ireland played a crucial role in the creation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in the 1960s under the then Irish Foreign Minister Frank Aitken. In the past two decades, various Irish Governments have promoted at the United Nations disarmament initiatives as part of the New Agenda Coalition, which also included New Zealand, Egypt, Mexico, Brazil and South Africa.

Ireland has also been an influential member of the group of non-nuclear weapon states that worked with civil society to develop a number of International Conferences on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, a process which ended with the agreement of the TPNW. The Dail passed a bill to support this treaty in late 2019 with unanimous cross-party support. A delay took place in ratifying it due to a general election, so it was decided to formally ratify the TPNW on Hiroshima Day.

Ireland, Nigeria and Niue took part in a special event organised by ICAN on the 6<sup>th</sup> August. Ireland becomes only the fourth European state to ratify the treaty. Many European states are members of the NATO alliance, which has been an implacable opponent of the TPNW process, claiming that the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty process should remain the core part of the disarmament architecture. There remains a real challenge to bring such states into this process.

It is likely that the milestone of 50 state parties for the TPNW is reached later this year. When this takes place it will become a serious challenge to its opponents as previous arms reduction treaties, such as with landmines and cluster munitions, have created real momentum when they have become a part of international law. It remains to be seen what will happen with the nuclear weapon disarmament debate.

## **5. Short progress report on the European Chapter of Nuclear Weapons**

The European Chapter of Mayors for Peace is slowly being developed at a time when it is difficult to meet due to the Covid-19 outbreak. An officers Working Group has agreed upon a Chapter logo whilst a new website, a protocol for the issuing of statements and terms of reference statutes are close to being finally agreed.

Early discussion has now taken place with ICAN to hold a joint webinar in the autumn on the state of the debate on nuclear weapons in Europe, the ICAN Cities Appeal campaign, as well as the positive role all Councils can play in promoting safe, resilient, sustainable and more peaceful cities. It is hoped to try to hold this event close to the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Manchester's famous nuclear weapons free resolution.

The Working Group will meet remotely again next month to discuss progress.

## **6. Conclusion and recommendations**

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first use of nuclear weapons in war on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is a pivotal event to commemorate. It is pleasing that so many Mayors for Peace members have done so. The suffering of the hibakusha, as well as of other groups of people who have been affected by the thousands of tests of nuclear weapons, should also be remembered at this time as well. It is also important to remember the end of the Second World War, as many did for the previous centenary commemorations of the First World War.

What is important now is to find practical ways to reduce the amount of conflicts that take place in general, the need to find a process to remove the remaining 13,800 nuclear weapons and strategies to promote peace at the local level. That is what the UK & Ireland Chapter, the European Chapter and the Global Secretariat of Mayors for Peace are all seeking to do with many other like-minded groups and the large majority of UN member states.

Ireland, Nigeria, Niue and St Kitts and Nevis are to be warmly congratulated for formally ratifying the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic weapon attacks. With just 6 more states required for this treaty to become part of international law at the United Nations it will be intriguing to see how its accession may change the dynamic of the nuclear weapons debate. The past year has seen a number of unilateral decisions creating real tensions within the world, the abrogation of important arms control treaties and the continuing expensive modernisation of existing nuclear weapon stockpiles by the core nuclear weapon states, including the UK. The recent agreement of a global ceasefire at the UN is to be welcomed, but it is clear much work needs to be done to help make the world a more peaceful place.

The UK & Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter Secretariat is commencing a recruitment campaign in September following the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary events and prior to International Peace Day on the 21<sup>st</sup> September. It also encourages existing members to consider processing voluntary invoices to develop new events like a Chapter Flag Day. There is much work to be done, but it is important for Mayors for Peace to play its full part in this endeavour.

## Hiroshima Peace Declaration 2020



On August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945, a single atomic bomb destroyed our city. Rumour at the time had it that "nothing will grow here for 75 years." And yet, Hiroshima recovered, becoming a symbol of peace visited by millions from around the world.

Humanity struggles now against a new threat: the novel coronavirus. However, with what we have learned from the tragedies of the past, we should be able to overcome this threat.

When the 1918 flu pandemic attacked a century ago, it took tens of millions of lives and terrorized the world because nations fighting World War I were unable to meet the threat together. A subsequent upsurge in nationalism led to World War II and the atomic bombings.

We must never allow this painful past to repeat itself. Civil society must reject self-centred nationalism and unite against all threats.

The day after the atomic bombing, a young boy of 13 saw, "... victims lying in rows on the bridge. Many were injured. Many had breathed their last. Most were burned, their skin hanging off. Many were begging, 'Water! Give me water!'" Long after that horrifying experience, the man asserts, "Fighting happens when people think only of themselves or their own countries."

Last November, when Pope Francis visited our city, he left us with a powerful message: "To remember, to journey together, to protect. These are three moral imperatives."

Ogata Sadako, as UN High Commissioner for Refugees, worked passionately to assist those in need. She spoke from experience when she said, "The important thing is to save the lives of those who are suffering. No country can live in peace alone. The world is connected."

These messages urge us to unite against threats to humanity and avoid repeating our tragic past.

Hiroshima is what it is today because our predecessors cared about each other; they stood together through their ordeal. Visitors from other countries leave the Peace Memorial Museum with comments like, "Now we see this tragedy as our own," and "This is a lesson for the future of humanity." Hiroshima considers it our duty to build in civil society a consensus that the people of the world must unite to achieve nuclear weapons abolition and lasting world peace.

Turning to the United Nations, the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which went into effect 50 years ago, and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) adopted three years ago are both critical to eliminating nuclear weapons. They comprise a framework that we must pass on to future generations, yet their future is opaque. Now more than ever, world leaders must strengthen their determination to make this framework function effectively.

That is precisely why I urge them to visit Hiroshima and deepen their understanding of the atomic bombing. I further urge them to invest fully in the NPT Review Conference. They must negotiate in good faith toward nuclear disarmament, as stipulated by the NPT, and continue constructive dialogue toward a security system free from reliance on nuclear weapons.

To enhance its role as mediator between the nuclear weapon and nonnuclear weapon states, I ask the Japanese government to heed the appeal of the hibakusha that it sign and ratify, and

become a party to the TPNW. As the only nation to suffer a nuclear attack, Japan must persuade the global public to unite with the spirit of Hiroshima. I further demand more generous assistance for the hibakusha, whose average age exceeds 83, and the many others whose daily lives are still plagued by suffering due to the harmful effects of radiation on their minds and bodies. And once more, I demand the political decision to expand the "black rain areas."

At this Peace Memorial Ceremony marking 75 years since the bombing, we offer heartfelt prayers for the peaceful repose of the souls of the atomic bomb victims. Together with Nagasaki and likeminded people around the world, we pledge to do everything in our power to abolish nuclear weapons and open a path to genuine and lasting world peace.

Mayor Kazumi Matsui, Mayor of Hiroshima and President of Mayors for Peace  
Read out at the Hiroshima Peace Ceremony, August 6<sup>th</sup> 2020

**Speech to the Hiroshima Peace Ceremony of the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres**

I am honoured to greet the Peace Memorial Ceremony and to pay tribute to the victims of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Seventy-five years ago, a single nuclear weapon visited unspeakable death and destruction upon this city.

The effects linger to this day.

This city and its people, however, have chosen not to be characterized by calamity, but instead by resilience, reconciliation and hope.

As unmatched advocates for nuclear disarmament, the hibakusha have turned their tragedy into a rallying voice for the safety and well-being of all humanity.

The birth of the United Nations in that same fateful year of 1945 is forever intertwined with the death rained down on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Since its earliest days and resolutions, the Organization has recognized the need to totally eliminate nuclear weapons.

Yet, that goal remains unachieved.

Seventy-five years is far too long not to have learned that the possession of nuclear weapons diminishes, rather than reinforces, security.

Today, a world without nuclear weapons seems to be slipping further from our grasp.

The web of arms control, transparency and confidence-building instruments established during the Cold War and its aftermath is fraying.

Division, distrust and a lack of dialogue threaten to return the world to unrestrained strategic nuclear competition.

States possessing nuclear weapons are modernizing their arsenals and developing new and dangerous weapons and delivery systems.

The risk of nuclear weapons being used, intentionally, by accident or through miscalculation, is too high for such trends to continue.

I repeat my call for States to return to a common vision and path leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

While all States can play a positive role, the countries that possess nuclear weapons have a special responsibility.

They have repeatedly committed to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Now is the time for dialogue, confidence-building measures, reductions in the size of nuclear arsenals and utmost restraint.

We must also safeguard and strengthen the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

States will have an opportunity to return to this shared vision at next year's Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a further pillar of the disarmament regime, and I look forward to its entry into force.

The entry-into-force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty also remains a top priority in order to entrench and institutionalize the global norm against nuclear testing.

This commemoration takes place in the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought turmoil into our lives in so many ways.

The pandemic has also exposed so many of the world's fragilities, including in the face of the nuclear threat.

The only way to totally eliminate nuclear risk is to totally eliminate nuclear weapons.

Young people have an important role. They – and civil society as a whole -- have proved their power time and again in support of the cause of disarmament.

We should listen to their ideas and give them the space to make their voices heard.

The United Nations and I will continue to work with all those who seek to achieve our common goal: a world free of nuclear weapons.

## Commitment to Peace by the Children of Hiroshima

Hiroshima, where it was said that nothing green would grow for 75 years.  
Now, 75 years later, the city is full of greenery and of people busy living their lives.  
In this city, we laugh with our families, go to school with our friends, play in parks.  
We wake up refreshed and see so many people throughout the day.

The simple joys of everyday life are everywhere in Hiroshima.  
But not this spring.  
Our normal way of life was stolen by a devastating new virus.  
It made us realize that we must not take our way of life for granted.  
Now we realize just how lucky we were to live our lives as normal.

75 years ago, everyday lives which were spent laughing with loved ones were stolen.  
8:15 am on August 6, 1945.

There was a blinding flash of light; a great roaring sound that clawed at ears.  
People didn't look like people anymore, suffering terrible burns and dying.  
A horrible, indescribable stench like rotting fish permeates the city,  
Rendered into a blood-soaked, tragic sight by the atomic bomb.

"Never again."

These are the powerful words of the hibakusha, who raised the city up from the ashes, and they live on in our hearts.

To be rid of nuclear weapons made by human hands, we need human will.

Our future does not need nuclear weapons.

We will continue to hold in our hearts the kindness to recognize the value in others.  
We will build a peaceful future where we consider the feelings of others and live joyfully in peace.  
We, raised in the atomic bombed city of Hiroshima, will bring hope to the future; the same hope that was passed to us by those who refused to give up in the wake of the bombing.

### ***Children's Representatives of Hiroshima:***

Natsumi Nagakura (6th grade, Hiroshima City Yasukita Elementary School)

Shunsuke Omori (6th grade, Hiroshima City Yano-Minami Elementary School)

## Nagasaki Peace Declaration 2020



Exactly 75 years have passed since the day our city was assaulted by a nuclear bomb. Despite the passing of three quarters of a century, we are still living in a world where nuclear weapons exist.

Just why is it that we humans are still unable to rid ourselves of nuclear weapons? Are we truly unable to abandon these dreadful weapons that so cruelly take lives without even allowing for dignified deaths and force people to suffer for entire lifetimes as a result of radiation?

Songwriter Kino Fumio lost his wife and children to the atomic bomb on that August 9, 75 years ago and went on to express his sadness and feelings about peace through music. In his memoirs he wrote the following:

"The tragedy that unfolded beneath the reddish-black mushroom cloud that spread out on that day is deeply embedded in my heart. The awful sight of hideously burned people covered in flames; innumerable corpses scorched until they were almost carbonized and spread around the debris like logs; women wandering about with leaden eyes; phantasmagoric visions such as this vividly revisit my mind as the day of August 9th comes around each year."

In order to see that no one else ever goes through such a hellish experience, the hibakusha, or atomic bombing survivors, have fervently striven to inform us about what went on underneath that mushroom cloud. However, the true horror of nuclear weapons has not yet been adequately conveyed to the world at large. If, as with the novel coronavirus which we did not fear it until it began spreading among our immediate surroundings, humanity does not become aware of the threat of nuclear weapons until they are used again, we will find ourselves in an irrevocable predicament.

This year marks the 50th year since the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT, entered into force. This treaty, which promised that there would be no increase in nuclear-weapon states and that nuclear disarmament negotiations would be pursued in good faith, is an extremely important agreement for humankind. However, in the past few years motions by the nuclear-weapon states to go back on the promise of nuclear disarmament have been increasing, as evidenced by initiatives such as the scrapping of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, or INF Treaty. In addition to that, the development and deployment of newer, more sophisticated nuclear weapons and smaller, easier-to-use nuclear weapons, is proceeding. As a result, the threat of nuclear weapons being used is increasingly becoming real.

"Only 100 seconds remain." In order to symbolize this state of crisis, the "Doomsday Clock", an indicator of the time left until the Earth's extinction, was set at its shortest time ever this year.

Three years ago, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted by the United Nations. This treaty clearly states that nuclear weapons should be eliminated in accordance with the wishes of humanity. Among the nuclear-weapon states and countries under the nuclear umbrella there have been voices stating that it is too early for such a treaty. That is not so. Rather, nuclear arms reductions are far too late in coming.

It is now 75 years since the atomic bombings and the founding of the United Nations. Having reached this milestone, we should now be remembering that humanity itself promised to eliminate nuclear weapons in Resolution 1 of the United Nations General Assembly.

When the Pope visited Nagasaki last year, he said two things that may be keys. The first was that "To make this ideal (of a world of peace, free from nuclear weapons) a reality calls for involvement on the part of all." The second was that "There is a need to break down the (growing) climate of distrust."

I hereby appeal to everyone around the world.

There are innumerable ways that we can become involved in working for peace.

This year, many people have been applauding the continued efforts by those in the medical profession to battle the novel coronavirus. In the same way, let us now applaud with heartfelt respect and gratitude the hibakusha who, while enduring physical and mental pain, have spoken out about their painful experiences for the 75 years since the time of the atomic bombing until today in order to provide a warning to people around the world.

With this applause, an act of only 10 seconds or so, we are able to spread the circle of peace. The message of high school students which hangs in this tent today is also an expression of the desire for peace. Small acts such as the folding of paper cranes can convey feelings about peace as well. Let us proceed unceasingly and with conviction to lay down the roots for a culture of peace in civil society.

Young people of the world; the novel coronavirus disease, global warming and the problem of nuclear weapons share one thing in common, and that is that they affect all of us who live on this Earth. Are nuclear weapons necessary for the world of the future that you will live in? Let us clear a path to a world free of nuclear weapons and walk down it together.

I appeal to the leaders of countries around the world.

Please aim to break down the growing climate of distrust and instead build trust through dialogue. At this very time, please choose solidarity over division. At the NPT Review Conference which is scheduled for next year, I ask that you show a workable way towards nuclear disarmament which includes reductions in such weapons by the nuclear superpowers of Russia and the U.S.

I now appeal to the government of Japan and members of the Diet. As a country that has experienced the horrors of nuclear weapons, please sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and see to its ratification at the earliest possible date. In addition, please examine the plan to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Northeast Asia. And please adhere for eternity to the peaceful principles of the Japanese constitution, which includes the determination not to wage war.

Furthermore, in addition to providing increased support for hibakusha who are suffering from atomic bombing aftereffects, I ask that relief measures be extended to those who experienced the atomic bombings but have yet to be officially recognized as bombing survivors.

Nine years have now passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. As a city that has experienced the threat of radiation, Nagasaki stands in support of the people of Fukushima as they strive toward recovery.

Along with everyone who reluctantly could not attend today's ceremony because of the novel coronavirus, we offer our heartfelt prayers for those who lost their lives to the atomic bomb and hereby declare that Nagasaki will continue to work tirelessly with Hiroshima, Okinawa, and all the people in places where great losses of life were experienced due to war and where peace is longed for, in order to bring about eternal peace and the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Tomihisa Taue, Mayor of Nagasaki and Vice President of Mayors for Peace, August 9<sup>th</sup> 2020

Selected photos from 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary events



Hiroshima Mayor Matsui reads out the Hiroshima Peace Declaration (photo courtesy of the City of Hiroshima)



Hiroshima Children's representatives read the Children's Peace Commitment (photo courtesy of the City of Hiroshima)



Nagasaki Mayor Taue reads out the Nagasaki Peace Declaration (photo courtesy of the City of Nagasaki)



Nagasaki School Children's Chorus sing a peace song (photo courtesy of the City of Nagasaki)



The Lord Mayor of Dublin Hazel Chu reads out a speech at Dublin's Hiroshima Day commemoration (photo courtesy of CND Ireland)



A representative from the Irish Government Disarmament Office, the Lord Mayor of Dublin and the Japanese Ambassador to Ireland at the Dublin Hiroshima Day commemoration (photo courtesy of CND Ireland)



The Lord Mayor of Leeds lays a wreath at a Nagasaki Day commemoration (photo courtesy of Yorkshire CND)



The NFLA Steering Committee Chair reads out the Nagasaki Peace Declaration at the Leeds event (photo courtesy of Yorkshire CND)



The Lord Mayor of Liverpool speaking at a Hiroshima Day commemoration (photo courtesy of Merseyside CND)



CND Vice President and former Labour Party Leader Jeremy Corbyn speaking at the Islington Hiroshima Day ceremony (photo courtesy of London CND)



The Mayor of Hebden Royd reads the Nagasaki Peace Declaration (photo courtesy of Calder Valley CND)



Members of Coventry Pax Christi at Coventry Cathedral (photo courtesy of Pax Christi)



A Buddhist monk at the London Peace Pagoda on Hiroshima Day (photo courtesy of London CND)



The Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Oxford at a Nagasaki Day event (photo courtesy of Oxford CND)

## Opinion piece on Ireland ratifying the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

### **Simon Coveney: Risk of nuclear catastrophe is unacceptably high**

Irish Times opinion piece, 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020

<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/simon-coveney-risk-of-nuclear-catastrophe-is-unacceptably-high-1.4322906>

Exactly 75 years ago, at 8.15am, the United States dropped an atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima. The bomb exploded 2,000 feet above Hiroshima destroying five square miles of the city. The bomb killed an estimated 140,000 people. Three days later, a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, which is estimated to have killed over 74,000. More than a generation later many still suffer from the effects of radiation, with women and girls disproportionately affected. August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945, marked the dawn of the atomic age and one of the darkest days in human history.

Today we commemorate all those who died. We pay tribute to the dignity, courage and resilience of those who survived, known in Japanese as the hibakusha. They describe what they endured as a living hell. We recall other victims and survivors who continue to suffer the enduring aftermaths of thousands of nuclear tests that occurred in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Many of these survivors have spent decades telling their stories and campaigning against nuclear weapons. They include women such as Setsuko Thurlow, who experienced the horrors of the Hiroshima bombing as a 13-year-old schoolgirl; Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, poet and environmental activist who writes about the legacy of nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands and communities surrounding the former Soviet Semipalatinsk Test Site in Kazakhstan.

On this Hiroshima Day, I am proud that Ireland today ratifies the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This treaty, negotiated in 2017, sets a global norm prohibiting all nuclear weapons. It honours the memory of the victims of nuclear weapons and the key role played by survivors in providing living testimony and calling on us as successor generations to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Ireland's ratification of the treaty reflects our deep concern about the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear explosion and the sheer impossibility of any adequate humanitarian response. This has led us, as a country, to our deep-rooted conviction that we must ensure nuclear weapons can never be used again under any circumstance. Nuclear disarmament has long been a feature of Irish foreign policy. Ireland is closely associated with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which remains the cornerstone for nuclear issues and which celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

### ***Threat to life***

The new recent treaty builds on the framework of earlier treaty. It is the outcome of a two-year process led by states and civil society concerned at the increasing risks and catastrophic consequences of a nuclear explosion, as well as by lack of progress by the nuclear states on the disarmament provisions of the older treaty. Ireland, along with Austria, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa, took a leading role in the process that led to the adoption of the new treaty. In recognition of its historic contribution to global peace and security, the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize.

Although nuclear weapons stockpiles have significantly reduced since the heights they reached during the cold war, it is no exaggeration to say that nuclear weapons continue to threaten the future of life on this planet. Increasing geopolitical rivalry between nuclear-armed states raises the risk of nuclear weapons use, whether by accident, miscalculation or intentionally, to unacceptable levels. The proliferation of nuclear weapons technology and know-how is a grave threat.

Ireland will continue to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons and to ensure the most powerful and most indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction ever invented have no place in

the security doctrine of any state. The very existence of nuclear weapons threatens us all. There can be no right hands for the wrong weapons. The only guarantee of protection from nuclear weapons use is their complete elimination.

Despite public health restrictions, Hiroshima Day will be marked today, often virtually, in Japan and in locations around the world. An annual ceremony will be held in Merrion Square, Dublin, to commemorate the victims. And I am proud that this year, at the UN in New York, Ireland will deposit its instrument of ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, marking our contribution to a world free of nuclear weapons.

***Simon Coveney is Minister for Foreign Affairs***