

# STATEMENT OF THE MAYOR OF NAGASAKI AT THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

I am Iccho Itoh, mayor of the Japanese city of Nagasaki.

Fifty years ago, three days after Hiroshima, Nagasaki was subjected to the unimaginable devastation of an atomic bombing. I would like to express my gratitude for this opportunity to make a statement and to inform the people of the world about Nagasaki's atomic bomb experience.

It is my ardent hope to gain your understanding concerning the powerful aspiration for nuclear disarmament and lasting world peace embraced by the citizens of Nagasaki since the atomic bombing, and to request your rigorous inquiry into this matter so that the people of Nagasaki will be the last on Earth to suffer the devastation brought about by the use of nuclear weapons in war.

Since you have already been briefed by the Japanese government about the atomic bombings, I will focus my remarks on the atomic bomb experience from the point of view of the victims and describe Nagasaki's aspiration for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

First of all, please look at these photographs. This is how the hypocenter area of Nagasaki looked from the air on August 9, 1945, three days before the atomic bombing. This photograph shows the same part of the city three days after the bombing. As you can see, the bomb pulverized and burned everything standing and everything living.

The mayor of Nagasaki made the first official report on the damages caused by the plutonium atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki. He described the devastation in the hypocenter area as follows:

“Except for a few people who remained in the air-raid shelters at the time of the atomic bomb explosion, all people and animals within a 400-meter radius of the hypocenter were killed instantly. All buildings within the same radius, including those of sturdy construction, were totally demolished.”

This and many other testimonies, as well as the results of subsequent investigations, paint the following picture of Nagasaki immediately after the atomic bombing:

“The explosion of the atomic bomb generated an enormous fireball, 200 meters in radius, almost as though a small sun had appeared in the sky. The next instant, a ferocious blast and wave of heat assailed the ground with a thunderous roar. The surface temperature of the fireball was about 7,000°C, and the heat rays that reached the ground were over 3,000°C. The explosion instantly killed or injured people within a two-kilometer radius of the hypocenter, leaving innumerable corpses charred like clumps of charcoal and scattered in the ruins near the hypocenter. In some cases not even a trace of the person’s remains could be found. The blast wind of over 300 meters per second slapped down trees and demolished most buildings. Even iron-reinforced concrete structures were so badly damaged that they seemed to have been smashed by a giant hammer. The fierce flash of heat meanwhile melted glass and left metal objects contorted like strands of taffy, and the subsequent fires burned the ruins of the city to ashes. Nagasaki became a city of death where not even the sounds of insects could be heard. After a while, countless men, women and children began to gather for a drink of water at the banks of nearby Urakami River, their hair and clothing scorched and their burnt skin hanging off in sheets like rags. Begging for help they died one after another in the water or in heaps on the banks. Then radiation

began to take its toll, killing people like a scourge or death expanding in concentric circles from the hypocenter. Four months after the atomic bombing, 74,000 people were dead and 75,000 had suffered injuries, that is, two-thirds of the city population had fallen victim to this calamity that came upon Nagasaki like a preview of the Apocalypse.”

This is the effect of the explosion of a single atomic bomb. In February 1945, the German city of Dresden was subjected to indiscriminate bombing. It is said that large-size bombs were dropped on the city by 773 British aircraft, followed by a shower of some 650,000 incendiary bombs dropped by 450 American aircraft. Some records state that as many as 135,000 people died.

In Japan, the city of Tokyo suffered the greatest damage from conventional air raids. In March 1945, 325 American aircraft spent two and a half hours dropping a total of about 1,665 tons of incendiary bombs on the city and killing about 100,000 people. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki, however, a single aircraft dropped a single bomb and snuffed out the lives of 140,000 and 74,000 people, respectively. And that is not all. Even the people who were lucky enough to survive continue to this day to suffer from the late effects unique to nuclear weapons.

In this way, nuclear weapons bring enormous, indiscriminate devastation to civilian populations.

On August 9, 1945, the American bomber carrying the atomic bomb abandoned the primary target of Kokura (present-day Kitakyushu City) because of poor visibility and flew to the secondary target Nagasaki. Nagasaki was also covered by clouds, but the airplane was running short on fuel. When the bombardier caught a glimpse of the Urakami area through a crack in the clouds, he hastily released the atomic bomb over the city.

The Urakami district was home to a large Christian population that had kept the light of faith alive during the long period of persecution from the 17th to the 19th centuries. The atomic bomb laid the neighborhood to waste and instantly killed 8,500 of the 12,000 Christians living there.

It was discovered later that the original target for the atomic bombing had not been the Urakami district, which lies in the northern part of Nagasaki, but rather the very center of the city. If the atomic bomb had in fact exploded over the densely populated city center, it is likely that Nagasaki would have been erased from the face of the earth.

We see in retrospect that an unspeakable tragedy was visited upon, not only the victims of the atomic bomb, but even the people who managed to survive.

The exhibits in the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum include a poem written by a 10 year-old girl. Please refer to page 61 of the book "Records of the Atomic Bombing in Nagasaki."

The poem tells how the girl's younger sister was trapped under the ruins of their house, how fires were breaking out among the debris and how the mother of the two children--who had suffered severe burns in the bombing--squeezed out the last ounces of her strength to save the child.

According to the poem, the mother died before the end of the day. The author's two year-old sister died 13 days later and her five year-old brother died after about two months. Not even a trace remained of her grandmother or the seven-member family of her aunt. Her father died of cancer 13 years ago, and now the author herself is also sick in bed.

Now please look at this photograph, which you will find on page 27 in "Outline of

Atomic Bombing Damage of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.” The photograph was taken on the day after the Nagasaki atomic bombing.

The boy seems to be enjoying an afternoon nap on the sunlit veranda of his house. The boy, however, is dead. He had died instantly in the ferocious blast, probably not even noticing that a bomb had exploded or that he was falling into an eternal sleep.

Please look at this photograph, which you will find on page 28 of the book “Records of the Atomic Bombing in Nagasaki”. This photograph shows the carbonized corpse of a boy perhaps four years old who was exposed to the bombing near the hypocenter. What crime did these children commit? Did they take up guns and point them at the enemy?

When she saw this photograph in the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, Mother Theresa, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, said, “All the leaders of the nuclear states should come to Nagasaki to see this photograph.” Please allow me to make the same statement. All the leaders of the nuclear states should see this photograph. They should take a direct look at the reality of nuclear weapons and realize the nature of what happened in front of the eyes of these children that day. Let the leaders hear the silent screams of these children.

A friend of Yosuke Yamahata, the photographer who took these pictures, described Yamahata’s appearance at the time as follows:

“Only three days had passed since their departure, but Yamahata and his two companions were so strangely emaciated that they might have been mistaken for other people. It was an air almost of madness, as though their mental state had been damaged by some tremendous psychological shock. Although openhearted by nature, the three seemed terribly alarmed and upset, as though fleeing from something or possessed by some kind of demon. They seemed, quite literally, to have arrived back

from a visit to hell.”

Mr. Yamahata died of cancer of the pancreas 21 years after this severe psychological shock. He was only 48 years old.

A 14 year-old boy exposed to the atomic bombing two kilometers from the hypocenter described his experience as follows:

“The air-raid shelter in Sakamoto-machi was filled with the dead and injured. The area near the shelter was strewn with corpses, some scorched black and others half-naked with puffed-up faces and skin hanging off like rags. It filled me with sorrow to see, among these, the corpses a mother clinging to her newborn baby and her three other children lying dead nearby. I could do nothing for the people screaming for help from under the ruins of houses or the people crawling along the ground dragging their burnt skin and begging for water. These screams of agony in the throes of death echoed in the ruins all night. When my father found a pot in the ruins and used it to draw water from a stream, the injured drank it greedily but then lay down and died on the ground. The following morning the screams had subsided, leaving only a world of death like a hell on Earth.”

This boy’s four-year old sister died on August 10, and his mother, who had suffered severe burns, died on August 17. Then, 12 year later, his father died of stomach cancer.

Needless to say, there will never be enough time to introduce all of the tragedies of

Nagasaki.

It was not a life or repose that awaited the people fortunate enough to survive after experiencing these scenes of hell. It was only the beginning of a life of mental and physical suffering and anxiety over the threat of disease and death.

As you know, the most fundamental difference between nuclear and conventional weapons is that the former release radioactive rays at the time of explosion.

All people exposed to large doses of radiation generated during the one-minute period after the Nagasaki atomic bomb explosion died within two weeks. Induced radiation due to the absorption of neutrons by substances on the ground, as well as plutonium particles, products of nuclear fission and other radioactive fallout scattered by the wind, caused widespread, long-term radio-contamination. Therefore, not only directly exposed people, but also those who came into the hypocenter area after the bombing and those exposed to fallout carried by the wind suffered radiation-induced injuries.

A high incidence of disease was observed among the survivors exposed to large doses of radiation. Particularly noteworthy is the high frequency of diseases such as leukemia and malignant tumors appearing after long periods of latency.

It has been reported that leukemia appears two or three years after an atomic bombing and that the incidence declines after reaching a peak six or seven years after the bombing. Cancer meanwhile is said to appear after a latency of more than 10 years and then to increase in frequency over time. Support for these conjectures was voiced at the meeting of the Japan Cancer Society in October this year, when it was reported on the basis of follow-up studies on the atomic bomb survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that excess mortality due to leukemia and cancer is observed as a result of exposure to radiation.

It is said that the descendants of the atomic bomb survivors will have to be monitored for several generations to clarify the genetic impact, which means that the descendants will be

forced to live in anxiety for generations to come. I have shown from the above that, with their colossal power and capacity for slaughter and destruction, nuclear weapons make no distinction between combatants and non-combatants or between military installations and civilian communities, and moreover that the radiation released by these weapons cannot be confined to specific military targets. It can only be said, therefore, that nuclear weapons are inhuman tools for mass slaughter and destruction.

The people of Nagasaki and Hiroshima are not the only victims of nuclear explosions. It is said that many people have fallen victim to radiation exposure in the course of the development of nuclear weapons.

I met the mayor of Bikini this past May. Bikini Island was the site of more than 20 nuclear tests in the atmosphere and suffered contamination from radioactive substances. I was deeply moved to hear from the mayor how the residents were forced to leave the island because it had been made uninhabitable for nearly half a century, how they have been striving relentlessly to restore the natural environment and a safe life and how they hope finally to be able to return to Bikini next year.

It is my understanding that the free and unlimited selection of weapons is unacceptable in terms of international law concerning warfare, and that 1) attacks on civilian communities, 2) the infliction of unnecessary suffering and 3) the destruction of the natural environment are prohibited, even with regard to weapons that are not expressly banned. The use of nuclear weapons obviously falls under the scope of this prohibition and therefore is a manifest infraction of international law.

At the Nagasaki Peace Ceremony held every year on August 9 to commemorate the



atomic bombing, the mayor of Nagasaki delivers the “Nagasaki Peace Declaration” to convey Nagasaki’s aspiration for the abolition of nuclear weapons and for world peace.

Expressing Nagasaki’s position in this year’s declaration, I called upon the Japanese government to clearly assert that the use of nuclear weapons violates international law, to enact as law the “three-fold non-nuclear principle,” that is, Japan’s commitment not to build, possess or introduce nuclear weapons, and at the same time to strive for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Asia-Pacific region.

“Nuclear deterrence,” that is, the possession of nuclear weapons as a way to deter opponent countries from using their nuclear weapons, is simply the maintenance of a balance of fear.

The 1995 Nobel Peace Prize went to Joseph Rotblat and the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. Dr. Rotblat made the following statement at a symposium in Nagasaki this past August:

I would like to conclude my talk by reminding you of the long-range implications of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Nuclear weapons have put into peril the very existence of the human species. This peril will always exist; the Sword of Damocles will always hang over our heads. This puts on all of us, scientists and ordinary citizens, the duty to be eternally vigilant. We must abolish all war, because any war once begun may escalate into a nuclear holocaust.

I believe that the end of the Cold War between East and West has given us a rare opportunity to achieve the goal of a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons. However, the establishment of genuine peace based on international trust is impossible when countries rely on nuclear deterrence with its accompanying psychology of suspicion and intimidation.

It is my ardent hope that, in its review, this court will decide impartially about the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and their illegality in view of international law and in that way bring strength and hope, not only to the citizens of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, but to all the peace-loving people of the world. This indeed will contribute more than anything else to the repose of the souls of the 214,000 people who perished in the atomic wastelands of Nagasaki and Hiroshima 50 years ago.

Although 50 years have elapsed since the atomic bombing, 62,000 Nagasaki survivors continue to live in fear of late effects, watching as about 1,300 of their fellow survivors die every year.

Honorable judges, please let me end my statement with a repeated request for your understanding concerning Nagasaki's 50 year-long appeal for the abolition of nuclear weapons and its aspiration for world peace. The unspeakable atrocity and agony suffered by the citizens of Nagasaki must never be repeated in this world. I can say with confidence that the use of nuclear weapons again will wreak havoc on the global ecosystem and threaten the very survival of the human race.

To ensure that a curtain of darkness is not drawn on the development of humanity from time immemorial, I extend my heartfelt request for your decision based on the viewpoint of human love.

Thank you for your attention.