

## MEMORIAL CEREMONY IN VOLGOGRAD ON 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2013

On the 6<sup>th</sup> of August 2013, Volgograd held a memorial ceremony paying tribute to the victims of the atomic bombing of 1945 in Hiroshima. The ceremony is traditionally organized in the Museum-panorama “The Battle of Stalingrad”, where the famous Bell of Peace is held, designed by Masahiko Katori.

The ceremony was attended by Mayor Valery Vasilkov; ex-Mayor Yuri Starovatykh, a honorary citizen of Volgograd and Hiroshima; ex-Mayor Vladimir Atopov, a honorary citizen of Hiroshima; members of the “Children of Stalingrad” society, pupils of Volgograd schools, and representatives of Volgograd municipality.

The event started at 8.15 AM with the toll of the Bell of Peace struck by Mayor Vasilkov and ex-Mayor Starovatykh, followed by a minute of silence. Children laid paper cranes at the foot of the Bell in memory of Hiroshima pupils killed in the bombing.

After that, the participants gathered in the Hall of Glory to watch documentary films on the bombing of Hiroshima and on the history of friendly relations between Hiroshima and Volgograd, that became twinned in September 1972. The presentation was followed by discussion of the events in question.

In his speech, Mayor Vasilkov pointed out how important it is to remember the day of the bombing and to make sure it never repeats. ‘Currently, the 8<sup>th</sup> General Conference of Mayors for Peace is held in Hiroshima’, he noted, ‘This organization is the biggest in the world with more than 5,000 cities-members, and it is pursuing a most noble goal, which Volgograd supports completely, – eliminating nuclear weapons by the year 2020.’

‘The ties of cooperation link Volgograd with many cities, but it is Hiroshima that stands out’, noted Mr. Atopov. ‘Through many years, Augusts have been marked by woeful or otherwise significant occasions, but as our poet said, the two dates we shall always remember are “the twenty-third, with Stalingrad in ashes, and the sixth, with Hiroshima in smoke,” he quoted.



‘Volgograd and Hiroshima have a lot in common. They both were founded on the rivers, and both destroyed by bombing – a single bomb and Hiroshima’s case, thousands of them – in Stalingrad’s. After the tragedy in Hiroshima, a new era opened – that of the deadliest weapons. Even the second pilot of the American B-29, when it all was over, asked in horror, “Guys, what have we done?” And I hope that by 2020 humankind will put an end to nuclear weapons,’ noted Mr. Starovatykh.

