

Events held around the world marking 75 years since the atomic bombings

Marking 75 years since the atomic bombings, commemorative events, including ones reported on below, have been held in member cities all around the world. Mayors for Peace sincerely appreciates the efforts of those organizing these events to console the souls of atomic bomb victims and pray for peace.

<Bangkok, Thailand>

The 2020 Peace Memorial Ceremony and Exhibition in Bangkok

(Report by Ms. Prangchai Sunvittayagul, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration)

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) hosted the 2020 Peace Memorial Ceremony and Exhibition at Bangkok Art and Culture Centre on August 6 - 9. This event was held in commemoration of 75 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the World War II in 1945 and was aimed at raising awareness of the horrors and inhumanity of the atomic bomb among people. The theme of the event is “No more Hiroshima! No more Nagasaki!”

On August 6, Pol. Gen. Aswin Kwanmuang, Governor of Bangkok, presided over the Opening Ceremony of the 2020 Peace Memorial Ceremony and Exhibition in Bangkok, with presence of H.E. Mr. NASHIDA Kazuya, Ambassador of Japan to Thailand. Both Governor of Bangkok and Ambassador of Japan delivered short speeches in the Opening Ceremony. They together signed the symbolic peace declaration. On the end of the opening ceremony, all the ceremony’s attendees stood in silence for 1 minute to pay respect to the dead while the Peace Bell rang.

The Peace exhibition displayed A-bomb posters regarding the atomic bombing incidents and damages, drawing posters from the memories of the Hibakusha in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The story of Sadako is also exhibited together with a corner for folding origami cranes in remembrance of Sadako and for writing messages of peace on the symbolic Carp. The event also included movie showing activities: “Hiroshima : Mother’s Prayer” and “On a paper crane”.



(Photos: Courtesy of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration)

<Belgium Chapter>

Flag Action and Poster Exhibitions

(Report by Mr. Filip Deheegher, the City of Ypres)

For the second year many cities and towns in Belgium reflected on the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by hoisting the Mayors for Peace flag on 6 August at 8.15 a.m. and lowering it on 9 August at 11.02 a.m. With this flag action the Belgian cities want to commemorate what happened 75 years ago in both cities, commemorate the victims and express solidarity with the survivors and relatives of the victims. With this action the cities also gave visibility to Mayors for Peace.

The Mayor of the city of Ypres has also called on the Belgian members to set up the poster exhibition in one of the public spaces on the occasion of this year's commemoration. 45 cities have responded. In the coming weeks residents of these cities and towns will be informed in this way about the consequences of the deployment of nuclear weapons.



(Photos: Courtesy of the City of Ypres)

<Berkeley, US>

Berkeley City Council Adopts Resolution: “On the 75th Anniversary of the U.S. Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; A Call to Prevent Nuclear War”

(Report by Ms. Jacqueline Cabasso, the Executive Advisor for Mayors for Peace)

On July 28, 2020, the City Council of Berkeley California unanimously adopted a resolution: “On the 75th Anniversary of the U.S. Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; A Call to Prevent Nuclear War”. The resolution was introduced by Mayor Jesse Arreguin, a member of Mayors for Peace and co-sponsored by Councilmembers Ben Bartlett, Susan Wengraf, and Sophie Hahn.

The resolution recalls that “the City of Berkeley has been a Nuclear Free Zone since passage of ‘The Nuclear Free Berkeley Act’” in 1986 which states: “The people of Berkeley find that: A. The nuclear arms race poses an intolerable threat to humanity.”

The resolution resolves that “the City of Berkeley calls on the President and Congress to step back from the brink and to lead a global effort to prevent nuclear war by renouncing the option of using nuclear weapons first; ending the sole, unchecked authority of any president to launch a nuclear attack; taking U.S. nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; cancelling the plan to replace its entire arsenal with enhanced weapons; and actively pursuing a verifiable agreement among nuclear armed states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.”

In so doing, Berkeley joins a grassroots movement called “Back from the Brink: The Call to Prevent Nuclear War”, that has been endorsed by 250 health, environmental, academic, peace, and justice organizations and has resulted in resolutions approved by the United States Conference of Mayors and 32 municipalities, including Los Angeles, Baltimore, Salt Lake City, and Washington DC, with more under consideration.

▼ Read the full text of the Resolution:

http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/whatsnew/activity/data/2020/Berkeley_Resolution_2020.pdf

▼ Learn more about the Back from the Brink; the Call to Prevent Nuclear War Campaign:

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

<Cervia, Italy>

Reading out Hiroshima Mayor’s “Peace Declaration,” and Pledging Peace

(Report by Ms. Bruna Rondoni, the City of Cervia)

Cervia is the Lead City for Mayors for Peace in Italy and has joined the campaign “Italia, Ripensaci ” (Italy, think it over), promoted by the Italian Disarmament Network and by Senzatomica in support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was adopted at the UN in July 2017.

On August 6 every year, Mayor Kazumi Matsui of Hiroshima, who also serves as the President of Mayors for Peace, sends Hiroshima’s Peace Declaration to each member city, one of which is the City of Cervia. The Declaration calls for a world without nuclear weapons, and spread the message of the hibakusha: “no one else should ever suffer as we have.” Its purpose is to reach a consensus in the local and international community, and for civil society to unite in working to nurture better conditions for world leaders to take the initiative for nuclear weapons abolition.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima (August 6) and Nagasaki (August 9), the City of Cervia organized a display of texts at the Municipal Library Maria Goia lasting until August 14. On August 9, the Peace Councilor Michela Brunelli read out Hiroshima’s Peace Declaration in Italian and in English, and also shared materials on the campaign Senzatomica to transform the human spirit for a nuclear-weapon-free world.



Printed "Peace Declarations" were distributed at the City Library
(Photo: Courtesy of the City of Cervia)

Brunelli's declaration: “Peace is not a value to which we appeal in times of conflict, war and destruction. Talking about peace means living it every day, translating it into thoughts, into acts which quietly can change our way of looking at others and at the world we are living in. Peace cannot be delegated; peace concerns each of us, beyond our ethnic origins, religions or life choices. That is why, 75 years after the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it makes more and more sense to speak of peace, so that the memory does not fade over time, but becomes the soil on which to cultivate values of brotherhood, equality and peace itself.

Mayors for Peace, ICAN, the Italian Disarmament and Non-Atomic Network, remind us that the world will finally live in peace and by peace only when the last atomic bomb is dismantled. Cervia has always been committed to promoting human rights and promoting the abolition of all nuclear weapons and all wars. No more Hiroshima! No more Nagasaki!”

<Edinburgh, UK>

Ginkgo planting at The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh 6th August

(Report by Mr. David Knott, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh)

Consul General Mr. Nozomu Takaoka, Head of Mission at the Consulate General of Japan in Edinburgh and the Capital's Lord Provost, Councillor Frank Ross marked the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima by planting three young Ginkgo trees at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) on Thursday, August 6.

In 2015, seeds from a surviving Hiroshima Ginkgo tree were gifted to the City of Edinburgh as part of the international Mayors for Peace project. These seeds came into the care of the Garden where horticulturists nurtured the trees.



(Photo: Courtesy of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh)

Consul General Nozomu Takaoka explained: “As we recognise the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of the City of Hiroshima, Covid-19 continues to claim the lives of many across the world. Planting these Ginkgo trees, grown from the surviving seeds from Hiroshima in 1945, gives us great hope that life is strong and can regenerate; as well as serving as a powerful reminder of the need for world peace. I would like to commend the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh for sharing the legacy of Hiroshima, promoting the spirit of world peace and fortifying the existing bonds between Scotland and Japan at this critical juncture”.

The ceremony was led by Dominic Fry, Chair of the Board of Trustees at RBGE, who said: “Grown on at RBGE from “seeds of hope”, originally derived from a Ginkgo tree that survived the bombing of Hiroshima, today’s trees represent the much valued partnership and strong links between the RBGE and Japan. They are also fine and beautiful symbols of resilience and survival in times of trial and uncertainty.”

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has long-standing partnerships in Japan and across the four Gardens of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh there are 531 species and over 4500 plants of Japanese origin cultivated. In an act of humanity, partnership and plant diplomacy this event recognised the past and current links between RBGE and Japan.

<Hannover, Germany>

Hiroshima Memorial Day in Hannover, Germany

(Report by Ms. Evelyn Kamissek, the City of Hannover)

As a twin city of Hiroshima, Hannover has special responsibility for peace. With numerous events entitled "Peace 2020+: take responsibility, preserve, make" Hannover commemorates the 75th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their consequences, but also addresses current issues of disarmament policy and civil peace work. Mayor Belit Onay of Hannover, a Vice-President City of Mayors for Peace and the Lead City of the German Chapter is the patron of the series of events.

On Hiroshima Memorial Day: Mayor Onay struck the peace bell in the Aegidien Church at exactly 8:15 am, followed by a mourning tea ceremony with the tea master and cultural ambassador of the city of Hiroshima Hiroyo Nakamoto. In the afternoon, there was time for prayers and meditation, ending with a multi-religious peace prayer at 5 pm.

In the evening at 9 pm Hannover held a reflective remembrance called "Message for Tomorrow" to call attention to the earnest wish of the *hibakusha* for lasting world peace. Floating lanterns on the pond behind the Town Hall closed the day of remembrance.



Morning ceremony with Mayor Onay and guests
at the Aegidien Church Hannover



Evening ceremony setting out lanterns
in remembrance of the *hibakusha*

(Photos: Courtesy of and the copyrighted material of the City of Hannover)

<Montreal, Canada>

Commemorative Event on August 6th

(Report by Ms. Lucie Lavoie, the City of Montreal)

On August 6th, so as to mark the very important commemoration of 75 years since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, the Mayor of Montreal, Mrs. Valerie Plante posted a short video on Facebook and Twitter in which she, alongside Consul general of Japan in Montreal Mr. IZAWA Osamu, sent a clear message for peace as well as nuclear weapons' abolition under the theme "No more Hiroshima! No more Nagasaki!".

As Mayor Plante could not travel to Japan to attend the Peace Memorial Ceremony, nor hold our own annual ceremony – due to the pandemic – at the beautiful peace bell situated within the Japanese garden of the Montreal botanical garden, it was decided that the bell, a magnificent gift received at our twinning ceremony in 1998, would nonetheless resonate 75 times on August 6th to mark this important anniversary.

A Mayors for Peace flag, along with the flags of the City of Montreal, Canada and Japan were hoisted on the balcony of our City Hall to call upon citizens to help raise and spread public awareness throughout the world toward abolition of nuclear weapons and the realization of a peaceful world.



(Photo: Courtesy of the City of Montreal)

<UK & Ireland Chapter>

Events held for the 75th anniversary of the use of atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki

(Report by Mr. Sean Morris, UK & Ireland Mayors for Peace Chapter Secretary)

Many UK and Ireland members of Mayors for Peace held events to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic weapon attacks, with many calls for a more peaceful and nuclear weapon free world. 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.
- 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.

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.

▼ Details of the events with photos are available in the UK and Ireland Mayors for Peace Briefing Paper No. 30: http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/whatsnew/activity/data/2020/UK_Briefing_No_30.pdf

<Volgograd, Russia>

Peace Memorial Ceremony held at the State Historical and Memorial Museum

(Report by Ms. Maria Deeva, the City of Volgograd)

Despite the pandemic, Volgograd residents managed to pay tribute to the people of our Japanese sister-city Hiroshima, who had perished 75 years ago in an atomic bombing.

On August 6, 2020, the “Stalingrad Battle” panorama museum hosted a Peace Memorial Ceremony. Due to the pandemic and the gathering limits, the number of its participants had to be cut short: among the persons present were the Museum’s staff members, city officials, the Chair of Volgograd City Council Mr. Kolesnikov and the Chair of the Volgograd branch of the Russian Peace Foundation Mr. Starovatykh – an honorary citizen of Volgograd and Hiroshima.



(Photos: Courtesy of the City of Volgograd)

At 08:15 sharp, the toll of the Peace Bell heralded a minute of silence. After that, participants of the Memorial Ceremony delivered short speeches and laid flowers to the foot of the bell.

Additionally, since the beginning of July, the City’s bilingual website “Welcome to Volgograd” had been posting a series of articles dedicated to Hiroshima’s tragedy, its restoration and peaceful initiatives.