

Statement by Mayors for Peace  
General Exchange of Views  
Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons  
New York, USA  
March 5, 2025

[Secretary General Kagawa]

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Takehiro Kagawa, and I am the Secretary General of Mayors for Peace. It is our great pleasure to have an opportunity to speak on behalf of Mayors for Peace at this meeting attended by those dedicated to realizing a world without nuclear weapons.

Regrettably, the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were unable to attend this meeting due to their participation in city council sessions discussing budget planning for the next fiscal year. However, we place great importance on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

As you know, last year Nihon Hidankyo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and *hibakusha* and citizens in both the atomic bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki not only celebrated this, but also again reaffirmed their commitments to their activities for the abolition of nuclear weapons. This award recognizes *hibakusha*'s unique contribution and further demonstrates to the entire international community, including nuclear-armed states, that the use of nuclear weapons is never acceptable. Awareness about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of using nuclear weapons has continued to grow, and the TPNW along with other powerful international norms condemning their use as morally unacceptable have been established.

Now, I will give the floor to Mr. Belit Onay, Mayor of the City of Hannover and Vice President of Mayors for Peace, who leads our delegation on behalf of the two mayors. Thank you very much.

[Mayor Onay of Hannover]

Thank you very much, Mr. Kagawa, for your kind introduction, and good afternoon, everyone. I am Belit Onay, Mayor of Hannover. Our city, Vice President of Mayors for Peace, and Hiroshima -its President - have deeply connected through our initiatives and sister-city relationship for a long time, and I greatly appreciate this opportunity.

During the Second World War, my city was severely destroyed by conventional weapons. In the many conflicts today, we see a similar destruction of cities that brings enormous suffering to the civilian population. In the war against Ukraine, threats of nuclear weapons were even used. At a time when international law is being violated by big powers, security guarantees are being suspended and a global arms build-up has begun, the risk and threat situation is increasing.

The basis for disarmament and security should be a functioning system of collective security as foreseen in the UN Charter. Obviously, we are clearly moving from a rules-based order to a world in which the might of the strongest applies. Increasing tensions can lead to the view that nuclear weapons would bring

more security. Some states therefore seek protection in nuclear deterrence, whether direct or extended. However, there is no evidence that nuclear deterrence has saved us from nuclear war, conversely it poses high risks to us all. The only way to save mankind from those risks is nuclear disarmament with the aim of abolishing nuclear weapons. The TPNW has opened a way to achieve this goal.

The Mayors for Peace city network has been campaigning for the abolition of nuclear weapons for more than four decades. City diplomacy opens up space for international exchange and cooperation at a subnational level. This is an opportunity to give a voice to the concerns of local people on the global political stage. My city supports the work of Mayors for Peace with broad public relations work, lobbying at national and international level and educational opportunities for young people such as youth encounters. As Hiroshima's Sister city, we are very aware of our special responsibility for peace.

Together with nearly 8,500 member cities around the world, Mayors for Peace promotes the culture of peace.

We call on all states to join the TPNW and initiate a foreign policy shift towards a peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue in good faith. Thank you very much.