

Statement by SUZUKI Shiro
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NGO presentations
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Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, civil leaders, I am SUZUKI Shiro, Mayor of Nagasaki.

First off, I would like to express my heartfelt sympathies in regards to the passing of Pope Francis, and pay my respects to him for his many outstanding achievements.

In 2019, during his visit to Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Pope Francis strongly appealed against nuclear weapons, asking us, quote, “not to forget that these weapons cannot protect us from current threats to national and international security, [and that] the use of atomic energy for the purposes of war is today, more than ever, a crime.”

He further described Nagasaki as a, quote, “city which witnessed the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences of a nuclear attack.”

Truly, a scene from hell unraveled that day 80 years ago: a city instantly reduced to ruins under the mushroom cloud, charred remains scattered amongst the rubble, mothers standing dumbfounded beside the charred bodies of their babies, people with their skin hanging from their bodies, wandering in search for their loved ones.

The difference, however, between atomic bombs and conventional weapons is the invisible damage caused by radiation. This radiation continuously erodes human cells, causing symptoms such as leukemia and cancer that have eaten away at *hibakusha* for years or decades. Even *hibakusha* with no symptoms must live in a state of permanent anxiety and fear, as they never know when they will become sick.

“Nuclear weapons are an absolute evil that does not allow us to live or to die as human beings; they cannot coexist with humanity.”

This dire warning from the *hibakusha*, based on their own personal experiences, is becoming ever more important. With the Doomsday Clock set this year at its closest point ever to human extinction, just 89 seconds to midnight, the existential risks we face are growing ever more apparent.

Therefore, I hereby appeal to you all with absolute conviction, as a representative of a wartime atomic-bombed city, that:

“Nuclear weapons must never be used. The only way for humanity to escape the nuclear risk is through abolition.”

To this end, I strongly urge all State Parties to maintain the NPT, the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures towards nuclear disarmament as called upon us by Article VI, to uphold the

irreversibility of nuclear disarmament promised through the NPT, and to continue working towards to the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

I also urgently request the United States and Russia, two of the world's nuclear superpowers, to act as quickly as possible in creating a successor to New START, which is set to expire in February of next year.

Before closing, I would like to share with you all the following message:

“Nagasaki must remain the last wartime atomic bombing site.”

Thank you.