

Mayors for Peace Joint Appeal

January 20, 2026

The milestone year of 2025—marking 80 years since the end of World War II and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the first use of nuclear weapons in human history—has come to a close, and a new year, 2026, has begun. Over the past year, Mayors for Peace undertook a wide range of peace initiatives. In particular, in August, the 11th General Conference of Mayors for Peace was convened in Nagasaki City, where member cities from around the world engaged in extensive discussions and renewed their shared determination to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

Yet today, as power struggles over territory and economic influence initiated by nuclear-armed major powers intensify, the global situation is growing ever more precarious. Distrust among states is deepening, regional tensions are worsening in Europe, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia, and armed conflicts continue to spread, claiming the lives of countless innocent civilians. Moreover, as the long-standing taboo against the use of nuclear weapons is being seriously eroded, momentum toward nuclear disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons has stagnated.

Under these circumstances, the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START Treaty)—the only remaining nuclear disarmament and arms control treaty in force between the United States and the Russian Federation—is set to expire in February 2026. We strongly urge both governments, which together possess approximately 90 percent of the world’s nuclear warheads, to continue to honor the limits of the treaty on an agreed basis and to demonstrate commendable leadership by advancing nuclear disarmament. At the same time, we are gravely concerned that the collapse of this significant arms control framework between the world’s nuclear superpowers could trigger an intensified global arms race, including in nuclear weapons.

January 22 of this year marks five years since the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force in 2021. This treaty, a powerful international norm that prohibits the development, testing, use, and threat of use of nuclear weapons, is a ray of hope amid the present depressing situation. It was born from the heartfelt appeal of the *hibakusha*—“No one else should suffer as we have.” We call upon all states to acknowledge the catastrophic and inhumane consequences of nuclear weapons and to sign and ratify the treaty without delay.

Comprising local government leaders responsible for protecting the safety and security of their citizens, Mayors for Peace now includes approximately 8,600 member cities in 166 countries and regions worldwide and has worked for over 40 years toward the abolition of nuclear weapons. We urge all policymakers to make every possible diplomatic effort to pursue the peaceful resolution of conflicts through dialogue and to take concrete steps toward the realization of a peaceful world free from nuclear weapons.

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