

Statement by MATSUI Kazumi
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Good morning, everyone. My name is MATSUI Kazumi, Mayor of Hiroshima and President of Mayors for Peace. It is a great honor to address you here.

Today, armed conflicts continue to unfold, claiming the lives of innocent civilians and destroying vital infrastructure. We are also worried that neglecting the rule of law, including the UN Charter, could trigger even more conflicts. Even if conflicts are fought with conventional weapons, the involvement of nuclear-weapon states heightens the risk of nuclear weapon use, causing inhumane consequences, up to extreme levels. As ordinary citizens, we are forced to live our daily lives with a profound sense of anxiety.

In every age, it is innocent civilians who fall victim to war. I strongly urge policymakers around the world to address issues rationally, rather than labeling others as either good or evil and arguing over whether attacks are justified.

Now, more than ever, we must reaffirm the value of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework. The NPT has underpinned the international order through its three pillars: nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In recent years, however, we have seen little tangible progress toward nuclear disarmament. Having reviewed the achievements to date, we call upon all policymakers to return, with strong determination, to good-faith negotiations as required by Article VI of the Treaty.

The Mayors for Peace initiative is being based on the ardent desire for peace of the *hibakusha* who rose from the ashes of devastation. Today, it has grown into a global network of approximately 8,600 cities. Even amid severe international conditions, we will never give up. By deepening dialogue and solidarity among citizens, and strengthening grassroots-level efforts, we will support peace initiatives at the national level.

Ladies and gentlemen, all participants, I believe that you can understand the importance to overcome the current reliance on fragile nuclear deterrence and wish for true peace. Once again, I urge all policymakers to advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation through diplomatic efforts based on dialogue.

Thank you.