

Peace Message at 2026 Hiroshima City Peace Memorial Ceremony

On this day, which marks the 81st year after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, on behalf of all people of Hiroshima Prefecture, I wish to offer my humble and sincere prayers for the souls of those who lost their lives in the atomic bombing. I would also like to extend my deepest condolences to the bereaved families and express my heartfelt sympathies to the *hibakusha*, the atomic bomb survivors, who are suffering even today.

The beautiful waterside city of Hiroshima, where we are now, was the scene of a tragic reality caused by an atomic bomb dropped 81 years ago.

The tremendous destructive power of the bomb incinerated many people in an instant, demolished buildings and infrastructure, and blocked out the sun. The bomb claimed as many as 140,000 lives within the same year, and many more were lost in the years that followed.

Even those who survived the atomic bombing, or *hibakusha*, have since been suffering from pain inflicted by physical injuries, radiation exposure, and psychological trauma. Last year, 80 years after the atomic bombing, some *hibakusha* summoned the courage to voice their experience for the first time, with an intense urge to tell children what disastrous outcomes war produces. Many *hibakusha* describe the years after their own survival as a living hell. They have had extremely harsh experiences they can scarcely put into speech.

We must sincerely listen to the words and unspoken thoughts of *hibakusha*.

Is there any meaning in harming everyone and destroying everything with a nuclear weapon?

The fact that reliance on nuclear deterrence continues to play a significant role in security policy worldwide brings me a sense of deep sadness and fierce anger. As states make nuclear threats, refuse to rule out preemptive strikes, and expand their nuclear arsenals accordingly, the risk of nuclear weapons being used keeps rising. Nuclear deterrence can work only on the premise that nuclear weapons will ultimately be used. Therefore, it contains a fundamental contradiction as it fosters distrust among nations, fuels the arms race, and destabilizes the world. We must break away from nuclear deterrence, facing up to the reality that the very act of pursuing nuclear deterrence is triggering new wars.

Every human being wishes to live in peace and safety. That wish is common to all humanity. Why can't we help each other in the face of hostility and walk a path toward prosperity together?

A *hibakusha* said: “I haven’t felt the kindness and warmth of other people so deeply as I did right after the war.”

Immediately after the atomic bombing, many people began to enter Hiroshima City to rescue those affected by the bombing and closely supported those who were facing death and those who were narrowly escaping death, although they themselves were being exposed to radiation amidst the ruins. The spirit of mutual support among human beings ignited a beacon of trust and hope and drove reconstruction efforts forward, leading to what Hiroshima is today.

The world now also needs the very spirit of building peace through trust and cooperation, instead of conflict or violence.

We must gather all the wisdom of the world to overcome distrust and hatred, to achieve security through relationships of dialogue and cooperation not only between nations but also between people, and to build a world where everyone can live like human beings.

Mr. Shigeaki Mori, a *hibakusha* who passed away earlier this year, declared: "There are no national borders for the tragedy of an atomic bombing". A nuclear weapon does not harm only the nationals of a particular country. It gravely wounds all people who live there and even future generations.

Humanity and nuclear weapons cannot coexist.

I call on world leaders and people around the world to take action to ensure that nuclear weapons have no place in our future.

Let's work together to abolish nuclear weapons. I hereby pledge that Hiroshima Prefecture will continue our efforts to share the voices of people in the atomic-bombed area with people around the world and to realize a peaceful world without nuclear weapons. That concludes my message of peace.

August 6, 2026

Mika Yokota

Governor of Hiroshima Prefecture

"I haven't felt the kindness and warmth of other people so deeply as I did right after the war."

An abstract of a quote from a memoir of Takako Noumi on the "Global Network" website of the National Peace Memorial Halls for the Atomic Bomb Victims in Hiroshima and Nagasaki

(<https://www.global-peace.go.jp/taikenki/index.php>)

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