

Greetings on behalf of the Hibakusha:

Hamasumi Jiro

Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bombs Sufferers Organizations
(Nihon Hidankyo)

I am Hamasumi Jiro. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you on behalf of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bombs Sufferers Organizations, or Nihon Hidankyo.

We are observing the 74th summer since atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I was exposed to A-bomb radiation while I was still in my mother's womb in Hiroshima.

I was three months in my mother's womb when the world's first atomic bomb was dropped over Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, at 8:15 a.m. My father had left home near Yaga Station on the Geibi Line early that morning as usual. He took a train at Hiroshima Station to go to the office. My family lived in a house about 4 kilometers from the hypocenter. My father's office was 500 meters from the hypocenter.

After the bombing, my cousin on my mother's side carried a soldier to our house, which barely escaped collapse. The soldier was left with horrific burns all over his body. Four members of my aunt's family in Hiroshima City also left their home to live with our family. The house was crowded with 30 people, including my own family.

Two of my sisters, 16 and 14 at the time, left home early on that morning to go to work at a munitions factory and came home safely. My brother and sister, aged 12 and 9 respectively, were on an evacuation program for school children and were staying in the suburbs of Hiroshima City. My mother and two other sisters, aged 7 and 4, were safe at home. Only my father did not return home. The following day, my pregnant mother and sisters entered a devastated area near the hypocenter to look for my father. Enduring the heat from the burns and the smell of dead bodies, they searched for him with unbearable emotions and love for him. But they were unable to find him. When they returned to the area the next day, they learned from his colleague where he was at the time of the bombing and finally found his belongings among the ashes: the buckle of his belt, a bunch of keys, and the metal frame of his wallet.

My sisters helped to remove maggots from the soldier's burns. As there was no plaster to apply, they had no choice but to use merbromin or grated potato for the burns. The soldier died after a few days.

My sisters developed fever and had diarrhea three days after they began the search. My cousin, who had taken shelter in my house, died after developing such symptoms as hair loss. My uncle, who had gone out to work in place of my pregnant mother, died three days later. The father and a sister of my childhood friend remained missing. There were 12 households in my neighborhood. Ten people from 8 households died. In the schoolyard near our house, 5 or 6 bodies were cremated every day for about 18 months.

I was born in February 1946 while 30 people were living in the same house. My father died leaving his wife and seven children behind. I grew up looking at the portrait photo of my father hanging at the lintel in our house. He was 49 years old. When I reached the age at which he died, I wrote a letter to my brothers and sisters, asking them to write about what they did on August 6, 1945. Thanks to their writings, I was able to learn about the atomic bombing that took place while I was in my mother's womb and develop

stronger love for my father whom I never met.

As I was born in exchange for my father's death, not a day has passed without me thinking about my father. War is not over yet because there still exist 14,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Even after 74 years, the atomic bombing continues to affect the health, livelihood, and minds of the Hibakusha. Babies in their mothers' uterus cannot escape from the consequences either. Rather, it is even more true that the effect of radiation on the pre-born child cannot be overstated. In Japan, there are 7,000 Hibakusha who were exposed in utero to radiation from the atomic bomb. The suffering of the Hibakusha and their anxiety about health and concern about their children and grandchildren will continue to torment them.

The atomic bombs annihilated the two cities in an instant with heat rays, blast and radiation, and indiscriminately killed their citizens. By the end of 1945, the death toll rose to 140,000 in Hiroshima and 70,000 in Nagasaki. Many of them were trapped under collapsing houses or burned alive. People with burns and skin peeling off their bodies were plodding in procession like ghosts. Many were unable to save their children or parents or find water for dying victims. For over 10 years after the bombing, the Hibakusha were left without any relief measures; they had to endure various illnesses, poverty, prejudice, and discrimination.

Encouraged by the Movement against A & H Bombs, which was launched following the 1954 Bikini hydrogen bomb test and assembled in Nagasaki on August 10, 1956, the Hibakusha founded the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bombs Sufferers Organizations, or Nihon Hidankyo. In its founding "Message to the World", the Hibakusha said, "We are resolved to save humanity from its crisis through the lessons learned from our experiences, while at the same time saving ourselves." Over the past 63 years, we have made efforts to fulfill the pledge we made at the founding of the Hibakusha movement, we have appealed to the public in Japan and internationally under the slogan, "No more Hibakusha; Stop nuclear war; Abolish nuclear weapons; and Provide state compensation for the damage from the atomic bombing," so that no one in the future should undergo what the Hibakusha experienced.

In April 2016, marking the 60th anniversary of the founding of Nihon Hidankyo, we launched the international signature campaign in support of the Hibakusha's appeal for the elimination of nuclear weapons. In 2015, the NPT Review Conference failed to reach an agreement due to rejection from the U.S., Britain, and Canada. The Hibakusha, whose average age exceeds 80, want to achieve a world without nuclear weapons in their lifetime, so that future generations will be free from the fear of experiencing another hell on earth. As if responding to this call, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted on July 7, 2017 with 122 countries voting in favor. This is a historic treaty that has its root in the First U.N. General Assembly resolution, which called for the "elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction." The treaty has been signed by 70 countries and ratified by 23. The number of countries ratifying the treaty is expected to reach 50 next year.

On May 1, at an NGO session held on the sidelines of the 3rd Preparatory Committee session of the 2020 NPT Review Conference, I became the first "in utero" Hibakusha to give a speech on behalf of the Hibakusha. I urged member states to swiftly implement the "unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament"

that they agreed on in the 2000 NPT Review Conference and reconfirmed in 2010. At the end of my speech I stated, “We believe it is the mission of the Hibakusha, as well as of each and every adult all over the world, to hand down a clear blue sky free of nuclear weapons and wars to our children.” After the NGO session, together with Hidankyo Secretary General Kido Sueichi and the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we submitted a petition bearing 9,415,025 signatures to Preparatory Committee Chair Syed.

Nihon Hidankyo is planning to hold an A-bomb exhibition next year at the U.N. and send many Hibakusha and their supporters to take part in a New York action. Let us work hard to develop cooperation in civil society to collect more and more signatures in support of the Hibakusha Appeal in Japan and internationally, to bring the Nuclear Prohibition Treaty into force as soon as possible, and to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons. Thank you.