

Nagasaki Day Rally, August 9

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ROK

I humbly pray for the souls of those who died in the atomic bombing.

76 years ago, on August 9th, 1945, the United States of America, after having attacked Hiroshima with an atomic bomb three days earlier, dropped another atomic bomb on Nagasaki and killed a large number of people indiscriminately. At that time, about 70,000 South Koreans lived in Hiroshima and about 30,000 more in Nagasaki, in total about 100,000 in these two Japanese cities. According to the documents of the Japanese Police Agency, they were mostly workers victims of forced labor and their families and accounted for more than 13% of the population of these two cities.

It can be said that all of them suffered the damage by the atomic bombings. Over 50,000 of them died in Japan. More than 50,000 people who survived went back home after liberation of their homeland. However, many of these returnees could not stand serious diseases and mental suffering and died of despair and hunger without receiving adequate medical care. As of today, the number of Korean Hibakusha registered at our association is 2,050 and also about 2,500 of second generation Hibakusha. They all suffer from the consequences of the atomic bombing.

South Korean A-bomb survivors have lived with miserable feelings, not to speak of those who have passed away during the past 76 years. More than once, they have asked the US, Japanese and South Korean governments to acknowledge their respective responsibility for the atomic bomb damage, officially apologize and take action to provide relieve measures for the victims, but no such action worthy of relief has been taken yet. Instead, these governments continue to adopt a shameless attitude toward the demand of hibakusha. Could they possibly qualify for

the title of state leaders?

Despite these difficult conditions, we have developed and expanded our movement in solidarity with citizens organizations and SPARK (Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea), trying to achieve a nuclear-free and peaceful world. At the Japan-Korea International Forum for a Nuclear-Free and Peaceful Northeast Asia held in May 2019 in Seoul, we proposed to organize a “Citizens’ Tribunal on the Responsibility of the Atomic bombing”. At that time, SPARK had declared the year 2019 as a “Year to Work with A-Bomb Hibakusha” and it openheartedly accepted our proposal to organize a civil tribunal on the occasion of the 2025 NPT Review Conference to put into question the “perpetrator’s responsibility for the atomic bombing”. I am very pleased that our plan is steadily taking concrete shape thanks to the participation and collaboration of jurists, legal experts and researchers.

As the President of the Korean Atomic Bomb Casualty Association, and even after I retire at the end of my term as the President, I am firmly resolved that I will continue to promote the Civil Tribunal initiative together with like-minded South Korean Hibakusha.

Allow me to disclose an idea I have nurtured for some time. I want to invite Japanese Hibakusha to join this campaign. I want that you join us in the campaign to question the responsibility for the US nuclear attacks so that we could together develop it as our joint action. Japan is responsible for the Pacific War but it is the US that is responsible for killing so many Asians by attacks with nuclear weapons. I want to expose this fact to the whole world and demand the US to recognize its responsibility, apologize and compensate for the damage. At the same time, I wish to request the international community to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to contribute to the total elimination of these weapons, so that such tragedies should never be repeated.

In concluding, I wish good health and success to Japan Gensuikyo and members of the international civil society. And I ask you to continue to support us and help us South Korean Hibakusha, our Association, and SPARK and other Korean civil society movements in our effort to expose

the US as the perpetrator of atomic bombing and massive killings

Thank you.