

**2023 World Conference against A and H Bombs
International Meeting -- Session 1**

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**For a world without war and nuclear weapons
My message to you**

Thank you for your introduction. My name is Kodama Michiko. I am a survivor of Hiroshima. At that time, I was 7 years old, the second grader of a primary school.

The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9 instantly claimed so many lives mercilessly. At the moment of the bombing, I was inside a wooden school building. The ceiling of the building collapsed by the blast and sharp splinters of windowpanes flew all around. The glass fragments stuck into my left shoulder and arm, but fortunately my injury was not serious.

My father managed to come to the school to find me. On my way home, carried on his back, I witnessed hell on earth: I saw many people with their skins burned heavily and peeled off; A mother was carrying a baby, who was burned-black like charcoal; She, too, was heavily burned all over her body; Some people, whose eyeballs were popped out or who were holding their protruding intestines in their hands, desperately tried to take refuge.

People were begging my father and me for water, water, water, and we hurried along home without helping them.

When I arrived home located 3.5 kilometers from the blast center, I found the roof of the house blown away by the blast and the fragments of glass scattered all around. The "Black Rain," containing large amount of radiation, fell into the house, and the traces of the rain on the wall and chests remained for a long time.

My relatives fled for refuge to my house. Of them was my favorite cousin. She was caught by the bomb at about 500 meters from the epicenter. Half of her face, her entire back and legs were severely burned. She looked scary and I could not tell that she was my cousin. Her burns quickly festered. Soon maggots bred and crawled around her body. I only could pick up

maggots and wipe out body fluid. In the morning of 3 days later, she called me “Mitchan” in a small voice and asked me to bring water, and died in my small arms at age 14. I still remember vividly her voice, smell, touch and feel. I feel very mortifying and very sad.

My older cousin at age 10 had minor injuries and suffered from diarrhea. One day around the beginning of September, after he went to a toilet several times, he was standing next to me at a porch. Suddenly, he vomited blood clots and died, bleeding from the nose and mouth. This shows the horribleness of radiation.

Two of my cousins and my relatives, such as my uncles and aunts, died in agony from the atomic bombing.

I could have been killed on that day. I used to go to a school located about 350 meters away from the blast center. But by an order of the government, my family relocated and I was transferred to another school shortly before the bombing. If we had stayed in our old place, I could not have survived. Later I learned about 400 students and 11 teachers in my old school were killed instantly. Their bones are still missing.

The Hibakusha who barely survived the bombings died one after another from diseases of unknown causes. They could survive miraculously, but their sufferings were deep from the guilt of having survived and the scenes of that day still burned in their minds. They had to go through the hardships of life, prejudice, and discrimination. The atomic bomb did not allow them to die as human beings or to live like human beings. When I got a job, got married, and had children, I suffered just because I was an A-bomb survivor. Even now, 78 years later, "that day" has not gone away.

Nuclear weapons have totally deprived us of our normal, everyday lives as human beings.

Years later, my mother passed away from cancer; my father also had multiple cancer surgeries, but died of two cancers. My daughter, who grew up bright and healthy, was suddenly diagnosed with cancer in November 2010 and underwent a major 13-hour surgery. I attended her who was deeply hurt both physically and mentally. But she died suddenly just 4 months after the onset of the disease. I was devastated by grief. She is still with me.

Then, in October 2017, the year the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted, the atomic bomb took the lives of my youngest brother with multiple myeloid leukemia, and in December, my younger brother, who was 5 years old at the time of the bombing, with multiple cancers. I feel regret and loneliness every day. Every day I wonder if I will be next.

We Hibakusha have spread our testimonies of the A-bombing and appealed for “no more Hibakusha” and the elimination of nuclear weapons to the world, so that no one else in the world would experience the hell we have gone through. This is because we know from our own experiences that if nuclear weapons are used, the damage would extend beyond national borders and it would be impossible to protect the lives and livelihoods of people in the world.

Recognizing the "unacceptable suffering and damage" caused by the use of nuclear weapons, the international community adopted the TPNW. It means that our “unendurable sufferings” were recognized, which led to the prohibition of nuclear weapons.

We rejoiced that the door to the abolition of nuclear weapons was finally opened. However, the nuclear weapon states and their allies have not joined the treaty. I strongly feel to see the recent international situation that the reality of the nuclear damage and the wishes and voices of the Hibakusha have yet to be heard, and that we must develop the movement of civil society to change the nuclear policies of these countries.

The Hibakusha call for achieving a shift from security based on nuclear deterrence to security based on mutual trust, and taking a giant step toward a world without nuclear weapons.

We, the Hibakusha, sincerely appeal to the young people who will lead the next generation. If nuclear war breaks out, the human race will be annihilated. The only way to save humanity from extinction is to abolish nuclear weapons.

We are at a crossroads, whether to protect the blue planet or to choose the path of destruction. I appeal once again to all of you gathered here. The only way to protect our lives and safety is to abolish nuclear weapons, so that you, your families, and your loved ones will not become victims of nuclear weapons, and so that the future of the planet will be safe, secure and hopeful. Together with civil society in countries and regions around the world, we must do all we can. Let's take even one step forward.