
Second Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

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Reject War, Reject Nuclear Weapons Now Is the Time for the International Community to Act in Solidarity

Working paper submitted by New Japan Women's Association

I. Uphold the Charter of the United Nations and International Law to Resolve the Crisis

1. Founded in 1962, the New Japan Women's Association is a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Its members are working all over the country to promote peace and the elimination of nuclear weapons, as well as women's rights and gender equality.

2. Following the threats of use of nuclear weapons by Russia in its ongoing invasion of Ukraine, Israeli minister said that dropping a nuclear bomb on Gaza was "one of the possible options." The statement goes against Article 1 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons banning the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, and that is a violation of international law. While at the same time, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a nuclear military alliance, and the military alliances depending on the nuclear deterrence such as the one between Japan and the United States are reinforcing their military capabilities, deepening global divisions. The risk of war escalating into a nuclear war is growing as never before.

3. Failure to curb global warming has resulted in extreme heatwaves, wildfire, droughts, floods and other catastrophic weather events hitting all over the world. Climate crisis is imminent, and the very survival of humanity and the planet is at stake. This is not the time to waste money on war and arms buildup. We call on governments not to instigate division and confrontation by strengthening military blocs, but instead to be united in solidarity under the Charter of the United Nations and international law, so that the world can find a way to end wars, resolve the crisis and get back on track toward a sustainable future. In this regard, we sincerely hope that Japan, as the country having contacts with Israel and Arab nations, trusted by both sides because of Article 9 of the country's Constitution stipulating the renunciation of war and the denial of the right of belligerency, to play a vital role in resolving the crisis through peace diplomacy.

II. Grassroots Activism Breaking Nuclear Deterrence

4. The New Japan Women's Association welcomes the number of the signatories to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons reaching nearly half of the number of the Member States of the United Nations, and the number of state parties increasing steadily. Now that the treaty has begun to function as international law, the Association is pressing the Japanese government with the signatures in support of the petition for Japan, the only country that have suffered the war-time use of atomic bombs, to join the treaty.

5. The New Japan Women's Association values the principles: "together with the Hibakusha" and "passing on to the next generations" in its activities, and works in every community to make the facts of atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki widely known. Our work includes holding gatherings to listen to the Hibakusha's testimonies and atomic bomb photo exhibitions, as well as making booklets and picture-story show about atomic bombing experiences. A few years back the Association started to focus its efforts on the showing of the paintings of the atomic bombing created by high school students in Hiroshima as not just summer time events but as year-round activities, and we have been able to display the paintings in public spaces including schools and libraries. Children and those who saw the paintings expressed how they felt, saying that nuclear weapons must be eliminated. Requesting temples and churches to ring peace bells are taking roots in communities as well. All these efforts have contributed to nurturing new forms of collaborations at local level for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and we feel confident grassroots activism has the power to break nuclear deterrence.

6. The government of Japan, chair of the Group of Seven this year, declared in the G7 summit meeting held in the atomic bombed city of Hiroshima last May that nuclear weapons should serve defensive purposes, which brought sharp criticism and voices of anger from the Hibakusha and citizens nationally and globally. It even rejects to attend as observer this Second Meeting of the State Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We will continue to press our government to change its attitude, by making the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons known to the public, and by collecting signatures for the petition calling on the government to join the treaty. The New Japan Women's Association, as a non-governmental organization holding the consultative status at the United Nations, is resolved to do its utmost, including using every opportunity such as the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, to urge all governments to become parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons so that we can achieve a world without nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date.
