

Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons
Nayarit, Mexico, February 2014

Humanitarian Consequences of Atomic Bombing
What Did the A-bomb do to Humans?

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I would like to thank the chairperson, friends from across the world, and especially the Government of Mexico, for giving me this opportunity to speak before you on behalf of the atomic bomb survivors.

I am a Nagasaki survivor. I am working as Secretary General of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo). I would like to speak about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, based on my own A-bomb experience.

On August 9, 1945, I was caught by the atomic bomb in Nagasaki at the age of 13. On that day, I was at my home, located 3.2 kilometers from the blast center. Fortunately I escaped suffering any major injuries.

Three days later, I entered the ground zero area to find my relatives. One of my aunts and a cousin were burned to death at the site of their house, about 500 meters from the explosion center. My grandfather, who lived within a 700-meter zone from the blast center, was dying, with heavy and deep burns that penetrated to the bone. With my own hands, I cremated the body of another aunt in the field, who had been heavily burned but survived for three days after the bombing. Looking at the ashes of the aunt whom I had just seen a few days ago, I broke down crying. My uncle, who survived without external injuries and went away from the city to seek help, later developed a high fever, and he died 10 days later.

Altogether, five of my family members were brutally killed by the atomic bomb, all at once. Even after 68 years, their tragic deaths and the dreadful scenes I witnessed in that area still stay vividly in my memory.

On August 6 and 9, 1945, Hiroshima and Nagasaki were attacked with atomic bombs. The nuclear fission energy released from them completely destroyed the two cities. Mighty blasts, heat rays and radiation mercilessly assaulted all the citizens and children of the cities, where they had lived, worked, studied or played. They suffered serious burns from heat rays; they were thrown onto the ground by the blast, burned to death while buried under fallen houses, or died in agony due to the destruction of their cells by intense radiation. The number of those killed on that day reached tens of thousands.

In those days, no one knew about the effects of radiation emitted from the atomic bombs, or about the residual radiation from fallouts. Not only those who narrowly survived that day with only slight injuries, but soldiers and citizens who entered the city later for rescue, started to suffer from acute radiation symptoms such as loss of hair, bleeding from various parts of their bodies or high fevers, and fell into critical condition or died.

It is estimated that by the end of 1945, about 140,000 people in Hiroshima and 70,000 in Nagasaki had died. But your attention must not be caught only by this huge number of the dead. Please imagine that each person of this number had hope and dignity to live their lives, but they were denied this cruelly in an instant.

The atomic bombs did not allow the Hibakusha to die as humans.

The A-bomb radiation destroyed cells, gene information and the immune systems of the survivors, and kept them in constant suffering from various aftereffects, including leukemia and cancers. Recently it was found that radiation also had effects on non-cancer diseases. The Hibakusha are in constant fear of the aftereffects and the possible consequences for their children and grandchildren.

Those who faced the extreme situation of life or death and those who engaged in rescue activities or collecting dead bodies have suffered from the sense of guilt for not being able to act humanly in these circumstances. In addition to the fear of the aftereffects of radiation, they are still suffering from such trauma even 68 years later. Their wounds will not heal, and the scabs are still peeling off repeatedly.

In this way, neither did the atomic bombs allow the Hibakusha to live as humans.

This expression symbolically describes the inhumane situation that the Hibakusha had to go through. But there are many Hibakusha who have struggled against this inhumanity and lived their life humanly with dignity.

The US occupation forces covered up the A-bomb damage. The government of independent Japan also abandoned the Hibakusha without extending any help. Attention was not paid to the request for help made by Dr. Marcel Junod to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Moreover, as the A-bomb deprived survivors of their families and destroyed their community life and human relationships at their workplaces and schools, they were isolated from society. It was only in 1957, 12 years after the atomic bombings, that the government of Japan finally started taking some measures to provide medical relief to the survivors. By then, isolated socially and discriminated against due to the wrong understanding of the A-bomb damage and aftereffects, a significant number of Hibakusha had already agonized and died from illnesses and difficult living conditions. The state of inhumanity caused during the war remained in Japan for some time after the war ended.

In March 1954, the hydrogen bomb test conducted at Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands caused widespread damage to people in the Pacific, including the crewmembers of Japanese tuna fishing boats exposed to the fallout from the bomb. This incident triggered a massive anti-A and H-bomb movement all over Japan. Encouraged by the movement, the Hibakusha came together to establish their organization, Nihon Hidankyo, in August 1956, 11 years after the bombing. Since its founding, members of Hidankyo have demanded state compensation for the A-bomb damage and called for the swift abolition of nuclear weapons, so that no one else should experience the same suffering that they have

gone through. Internationally, Hidankyo has worked tirelessly to make the truth of the inhumane A-bomb damage known to the people all over the world.

The use of nuclear weapons is an act of denying humanity. In order for humanity to survive, nuclear weapons must never be used. The “nuclear deterrence policy”, which assumes the use of nuclear weapons, is a clear violation of the morality for human community to survive.

We call on the nuclear weapon states and their allies: Please make a bold decision to stop relying on nuclear deterrence theory and to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons, in order to achieve the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons. Eliminating all nuclear weapons from the earth will guarantee the survival of humanity.

There are still 17,000 nuclear weapons on earth, including those on operational status. There may be difficulties to reach the goal of abolishing nuclear weapons, but we believe that we can achieve the goal if we maintain our strong resolve to do so. As nuclear weapons are invented by humans, so it is also humans that can abolish them.

Dear friends, let us rally our strength and wisdom and work together to achieve a nuclear weapon-free and peaceful world.

No more Hiroshimas. No more Nagasakis.
No more Hibakusha. No more war!