

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

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Nuclear deterrence is transforming! Inhumanity of nuclear weapons must be the foundation of our activities

Working paper submitted by ICAN on behalf of member organization Japan Congress against A-and H-Bombs (GENSUIKIN)]

1. On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. There have been several ceasefire talks, but in the end no achievement has been realized yet in the situation. The number of civilian casualties continues to increase, and the number of Ukrainians evacuating to other countries is approaching 4 million. As the military invasion of Ukraine, Russian President Vladimir Putin threatened opposing countries, hinting at the use of nuclear weapons, saying, "Russia is one of the strongest nuclear-weapon states in the world, and there is no doubt that an attack on our country will have disastrous consequences for the aggressors." In January of this year, the five nuclear-weapon states had issued "Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races" and the Russian government stated that "this statement was made on the initiative of Russia." Such betrayal and violence against the international community should not be tolerated. The use of nuclear weapons by Russia at this time demonstrates the worst way of using nuclear deterrence, by attacking non-nuclear-weapon states and not allowing other countries to intervene with the threat of using nuclear weapons. While the current situation requires fundamental review of the traditional way of avoiding war in Europe, there is an increasing trend for arms race and participation in NATO for right of collective self-defence. In facing reality that war itself cannot be averted by arms race and nuclear deterrence, a sort of quandary is swirling that they may be the only realistic choices. How the international community perceives this attitude of Russia and what kind of solution it will take. We think an important question is raised in considering the path forward to the abolition of nuclear weapons.

2. When Japan ratified the "Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty" (NPT) in April 1976, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives issued a resolution, stating the Japanese government must (1) faithfully implement the three non-nuclear principles as a national policy, (2) make a strong appeal to all nuclear-weapon states on all international occasions not to threaten with or employ armed force including nuclear weapons, and (3) call for the comprehensive nuclear test ban, and urge all nuclear-weapon states to make efforts in faith to reduce or scale down nuclear armament with the aim of total abolition of nuclear weapons. The resolution

is based on just causes that Japan is the only country to have suffered atomic bombings during the war, as well as Article 2 of NPT prohibits non-nuclear-weapon states to acquire nuclear weapons. If Japan follows this resolution, it must protest Putin's remarks in unison. However, as if to exploit the Ukrainian invasion and Putin's remarks, a campaign is being staged claiming the inability to have nuclear weapons has caused the Ukrainian tragedy. There are suggestions to introduce "nuclear sharing" that is being carried out in NATO by reviewing the "non-nuclear principles" of not producing, not possessing and not allowing the entry of nuclear weapons into the country that have been the national policy so far. Among the proponents of these suggestions are former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Sanae Takaichi, the chairperson of the LDP Policy Research Council, and Nippon Ishin, a right wing party.

3. Related remarks of former Prime Minister Abe and others harm the trust of the world in Japan that submits a "resolution to abolish nuclear weapons" every year at the United Nations as the world's only wartime victim of nuclear bombs, while they betray the expectations of Japanese hibakusha who have been calling on the world for the abolition of nuclear weapons. They also deny the efforts of regions and countries that have signed "nuclear-free zone treaties" around the world, such as the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the Treaty of Rarotonga. Also, there is no doubt that they violate the NPT Treaty, which Japan has ratified. At present that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has come into force, it is clear the idea that nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence are necessary for national security should not be made a global trend. We are just amazed at the careless remarks of some Japanese politicians.

4. As " Special Session of United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament" was held at the United Nations Headquarters in June 1982, Senji Yamaguchi, from Nagasaki, took the platform for the first time as an A-bomb survivor, showing keloids that remained in his body and made an appeal saying, "I want we are the last to suffer and die from nuclear weapons." Forty years later, TPNW, which calls out the inhumanity of nuclear weapons and denies all of them, came into effect. We believe that the appeal of A-bomb survivors who underwent great hardships horrific stories of radiation exposure and the actual harm caused by radiation that plagued people for a long time have continued to stir the souls of many people, and the voices for the abolition of nuclear weapons from sympathizers of these appeals have come to fruition in TPNW. We must remind ourselves that the very inhumanity of nuclear weapons is the driving force for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

5. GENSUIKIN, together with ICFTU-RENGO, a trade union national centre in Japan, has been working on a signing campaign for the Japanese government to ratify TPNW, and just before TPNW came into effect, submitted 8,247,714 signatures to the Government of Japan in December 2020. I am convinced that Japan's action of taking initiative in ratifying TPNW as the only wartime victim of nuclear bombs will make the world move. However, it is extremely regrettable that the Japanese Government is still in a negative position, upholding claims such as, TPNW creates a division between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states.

6. Today, when the "restricted" use of nuclear weapons is becoming increasingly realistic due to modernization of nuclear weapons, it is important for us to contemplate real consequences to the humankind that the use of nuclear weapons brings about and face its actuality. As the implications of nuclear deterrence is changing drastically through Ukraine war, GENSUIKIN would like to continue to call out the inhumanity of nuclear weapons. At the TPNW 1stMSP, Tadako Kawazoe, A-bomb survivor of Nagasaki, Tadatoshi Akiba, the former president of the Mayors for Peace and two high school students from the Hiroshima and Nagasaki Peace Messengers organization working on the nuclear abolition movement will participate

in the activities of Civil Society. Each one will appeal for the abolition of nuclear weapons from their respective positions.

7. GENSUIKIN, which has been working for the abolition of nuclear weapons for more than half a century with a message, "nuclear weapons and humankind cannot coexist," strongly demands the Japanese government to adhere to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, to ratify TPNW and to lead the way for a nuclear-free and peaceful world. We continue to progress movement for it.
