Statement of Hibakusha

Working paper submitted by Hidankyo/Hibakusha Organization of Japan

I. Atomic bombs (nuclear weapons) are inhuman and absolute evil weapons that cannot coexist with humans

1. The atomic bombs destroyed the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in an instant, taking countless lives. Most of them were vulnerable people: children, women, and the elderly. Only 4% of the dead were cared for by their families. The majority of the dead were "killed by heat rays outside the house" or "pressed and burned to death inside the building". These were deaths that could hardly be called human deaths. Even those who barely survived died successively of acute atomic bomb-related illnesses such as fever, diarrhea, vomiting, bleeding, and hair loss.

2. Hibakusha could not bear the experience of that day. They were unable to remember or talk about it. The anxiety and anguish over their lives, bodies, livelihoods, and minds will continue throughout their lives.

3. For more than 10 years after the atomic bombings, the occupying forces covered up the damage caused by the atomic bombings and suppressed the media coverage and research. The Japanese government abandoned the Hibakusha and other victims of the war and took no action. Hibakusha were forced to remain silent.

4. Supported and encouraged by the growing movement against A and H bombs, triggered by the 1954 Bikini Atoll hydrogen bomb test, Hibakusha formed the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo) in 1956. Nihon Hidankyo conducted surveys and researches on what the atomic bomb means to humanity, and revealed that the atomic bomb is a weapon of inhumanity and absolute evil with which human beings cannot coexist, and which does not allow us to die as human beings or to live as human beings. At the same time, we have lived our lives believing that saving humanity from destruction by nuclear weapons is the only way for us to live as human beings. We have made it clear that the creation of a world without nuclear weapons and war is the only way to save humanity, and we have appealed to the world for the abolition of nuclear weapons and demanded that the Japanese government atone for and compensate the victims of the atomic bombings.
5. Our wish led to the establishment of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The treaty embodies the very aspiration of the Hibakusha. We welcome it with joy from the bottom of our hearts. In particular, we hope that the support for victims of nuclear weapons provided in Article 6 of the Treaty will be discussed and deepened at the Meeting of States Parties, as it will lead to the safety of all people.

II. Wishes of the Hibakusha and Responsibilities of Japan as a bombed Nation

6. In 1947, after the end of World War II, the people of Japan adopted the Constitution of Japan which declared: "We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of peace-loving peoples of the world" (Preamble) and "forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes; and (2) In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized" (Article 9).

7. The 77 years from the Meiji Restoration to the defeat in World War II was a period of war after war, but during the next 77 years since the war, not a single life has been taken by Japan in war. The Constitution of Japan has protected life. This fact teaches us that the elimination of the threat or use of force is the only sure way to protect lives. It is the responsibility of the A-bomb survivors as well as the people of Japan to protect Article 9 of the Constitution, to spread it throughout the world, and to make it a common norm for all mankind.

8. At the talks between Prime Minister Ikeda and US Assistant Secretary of State Walter Spencer Robertson in 1953, the year after the occupation ended, the issue of revising Article 9 was raised for the first time. Since then, until today, conservative parties have called for the revision of Article 9, and the government has promoted the enhancement of self-defense capabilities. The conservative parties and the government have been on the path of creating a country capable of waging war in violation of the Constitution.

9. Why doesn't the Japanese government, which claims to be the A-bombed nation, sign and ratify the TPNW? The reason is that the Japanese government refuses to reflect on its past wars, especially the 15-year war, and underlying this attitude is the policy that all Japanese citizens must endure any sacrifices caused by the wars of their country.

10. In 1980, the Conference for Fundamental Problems of Measures for the Victims of the Atomic Bombs (Kihon-kon) issued an opinion on the "Basic Principles and Ideas for Measures for Atomic Bomb Survivors". The opinion stated that all citizens must endure the sacrifices caused by war, saying, "Under the emergency situation of war, in which the very existence of the nation is at stake, even if the people are forced to make sacrifices of life, body, or property due to the war, they must all endure such sacrifices equally as 'general sacrifices' made by the entire nation in the war."

11. "Endurance theory" is a theory that affirms and promotes war, which is contrary to the Constitution. The Japanese government has the basic policy of staying under the U.S. nuclear umbrella and promoting "nuclear deterrence". This is why the government has not signed or ratified the TPNW, contrary to the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the Japanese people.
12. We Hibakusha refuse to accept the use of force as a means of resolving international conflicts. Responding to force by force will only lead to the continuation and expansion of conflicts.

13. On behalf of the Hibakusha, we would like to pledge to the people of the world to continue to seek the abolition of nuclear weapons and to live to create a world of peace. Thank you for your attention.