

Message from the Mayor of Hiroshima

It is both my honor and pleasure to send this message on the occasion of Peace Lantern Ceremony in Berkeley.

Seventy-eight years ago in the summer, without warning, the first atomic bomb to be used against humanity was dropped. It detonated over the citizens of Hiroshima just 600 meters above ground. The horrific heat rays and blast winds claimed countless precious and innocent lives and everyday life vanished violently into scenes from hell. To this day, the lives of the *hibakusha* survivors are still impaired by the adverse effects of radiation on their minds and bodies.

In the present, the Russian invasion of Ukraine continues to fuel the notion that nuclear deterrence is the only way to maintain peace. To accept such a notion is to accept the status quo, abandon the ideal of peace maintained without military force, and threaten the very survival of the human race. Above all, entrusting a nuclear button to any world leader is to sanction continued nuclear threats to humanity and the potential re-creation of the hellscape of August 6, 1945. We must immediately render all nuclear buttons meaningless.

With the *hibakusha*'s will for peace at our core, the City of Hiroshima will continue striving toward nuclear weapons abolition, however arduous the path, rather than treating a world without nuclear weapons like a distant dream. In this process, we must realize the ideal of a civil society in which each and every citizen shares the conviction that happy lives require an end to war, an end to armed conflict, and an end to life-threatening social discrimination. It therefore could not be more meaningful that the Peace Lantern Ceremony is held in your city, to remembrance of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, all victims of war. I extend to you my deepest respect.

At the G7 Hiroshima Summit held in May this year, world leaders touched upon the realities of the atomic bombing, took the Will of Hiroshima into their hearts, and sent to the world a message of working toward a world free from nuclear weapons.

In the wake of the G7 Hiroshima Summit, together with more than 8,200 Mayors for Peace member cities, our city will never stop in its mission to promote a culture of peace that rejects all forms of violence and to encourage policymakers to pursue foreign policy through dialogue without relying on nuclear deterrence. I would like to ask you to act in solidarity with us as we strive to eliminate nuclear weapons and realize lasting world peace.

In closing, I extend my best wishes for the great success of this event, as well as the good health and happiness of all in attendance.

August 5, 2023

MATSUI Kazumi
Mayor
The City of Hiroshima