



## Message from the Mayor of Hiroshima

It is an honor and pleasure to send a message on the occasion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Bay Area Japanese Peace Lantern Ceremony.

On August 6, 1945, a single atomic bomb rendered Hiroshima a scorched plain and burned tens of thousands in its flames. By year's end, 140,000 irreplaceable lives had been taken. Those who managed to survive, their lives grotesquely distorted, were left to suffer serious physical and emotional aftereffects compounded by discrimination and prejudice. Nuclear weapons are an absolute evil and the ultimate inhumanity.

This absolute evil in the form of more than 15,000 nuclear weapons still exists in the world, threatening the very survival of human beings. As long as such weapons remain, anyone could become a *hibakusha* at any time.

Human beings, regardless of differences of nationality, race, religion, and language, share the planet to live out our one-time-only lives. To coexist, instead of resorting to the inhumane threat posed by nuclear weapons, we must value person-to-person relationships, and build a world that allows forward-looking dialogue.

Toward this end, Hiroshima calls on everyone throughout the world to share the sincere message of our *hibakusha*, "No one else should ever suffer as we have," and to act with us. The spirit of this heartrending message, forged through suffering and sorrow, transcending hatred and rejection, is generosity and love for humanity with a focus on the future of humankind. Mayors for Peace, an organization that is presided over by the City of Hiroshima and has over 7,000 member cities, shares the *hibakusha*'s message and has devoted itself to mobilizing people and increasing international momentum toward negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention. Our goal is total abolition by 2020.

The need for a legal framework to ban nuclear weapons has been increasingly recognized by the international community. Toward that end, cities, NGOs, and citizens are expected to play a role in urging policymakers around the world to share in the *hibakusha*'s sentiment and to tirelessly engage in dialogue; the role these groups play is becoming more important than ever. In this sense, your commemorative event held again this year in Berkley, an important member of Mayors for Peace, is truly significant and I extend my deepest respect for your commitment.

Recently, President Obama of the United States visited Hiroshima and reaffirmed his commitment to work for nuclear abolition, stating that "among those nations like my own that hold nuclear stockpiles, we must have the courage to escape the logic of fear, and pursue a world without them." Seizing this opportunity, the City of Hiroshima intends to redouble our efforts to strengthen international momentum for nuclear abolition through various initiatives such as inspiring people to visit the A-bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

I would like to ask all of you to continue to strive with us to eliminate the absolute evil of nuclear weapons and to realize a peaceful world.

In closing, I extend my best wishes for the good health and happiness of all in attendance.

August 6, 2016

MATSUI Kazumi  
Mayor  
The City of Hiroshima