

**Third Meeting of State Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
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**80 Years since the End of World War II and the Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
Now is the Time for Japan to Join the TPNW**

Working paper submitted by the New Japan Women's Association

Founded in 1962, the New Japan Women's Association is a non-governmental organization in special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Its members are working all over the country to promote peace and the elimination of nuclear weapons, along with women's rights and gender equality.

Energized by the Nihon Hidankyo's Nobel Peace Prize Award

This year 2025 marks 80 years since the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the end of the Second World War. The world today is divided by the outrageous acts in violation of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and the international humanitarian law, and by the moves to reinforce military power and alliances. The risk of nuclear weapons being used is higher than ever.

At a time of unprecedented crisis, the awarding of the 2024 Nobel Peace Prize to the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo) inspired the movement and influenced public opinion significantly. The prize was given to Nihon Hidankyo to honor the Hibakusha for their efforts "to save humanity from its crisis" by sharing their painful experiences and leading the movement, which have contributed to establish the "nuclear taboo," an international norm against the use of nuclear weapons. The award was presented in 2024, ahead of the crucial year to commemorate the 80th anniversary, as a warning to the current situation that the "nuclear taboo" threatened to be broken. The New Japan Women's Association upholds the elimination of nuclear weapons as the organization's objective, and there are Hibakushas among its members. As such, the Association has always been working together with the Hibakusha in various activities including signature collecting and atomic bomb photo and painting exhibitions. We all were overjoyed at the award as if it had been our own, and are more energized to carry forward the movement to abolish nuclear weapons.

Japan's Prime Minister Ishiba Shigeru, while offering his congratulations on Nihon Hidankyo's winning of the Nobel Peace Prize, advocated in the meeting with Nihon Hidankyo representatives the importance of nuclear deterrence. He even referred to the need to build nuclear shelters, and came under severe criticism. The recent Japan-U.S. summit meeting issued a joint statement, which declared the further strengthening of "extended deterrence" including with U.S. nuclear weapons. This not only trampled on the wishes of the Hibakusha and people of Japan and around the globe who call for a world without nuclear weapons, but also goes against Japan's war-renouncing constitution. It is absolutely unacceptable for Japan, the only country to have suffered the wartime use of nuclear weapons, to take any action to erode the "nuclear taboo," pushing the world to the brink of catastrophe. The New Japan Women's Association has repeatedly urged the Japanese government to become party to the

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in this year to mark the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombing and the end of World War II, and at least to attend the Third Meeting of State Parties.

Break Free from Nuclear Deterrence

The driving force to break from nuclear deterrence lies in the grassroots movement to galvanize public opinion calling for Japan to become party to the TPNW, by enhancing cooperation with municipalities, disseminating the realities of the damages caused by the atomic bombs, and by collecting signatures.

In this milestone year, the New Japan Women's Association aims to organize in all communities, meetings to hear the Hibakusha testimonies, and exhibitions of photo panels as well as of the paintings of atomic bombing created by high school students in Hiroshima. The Association members are visiting local schools to introduce these paintings, and many high schools have welcomed the offer to display the paintings, saying that they would be good material for preparations for school trips and for peace education. An increasing number of elementary and junior high schools have also exhibited the paintings.

The Association's efforts include requesting local governments to work in line with City of Peace or Nuclear-Free Peace City Declarations each of them has adopted, and in response to the Nihon Hidankyo's winning of the Nobel Peace Prize. Many local governments have reacted positively to the requests, hosting or sponsoring exhibitions of atomic bomb photos and paintings in the city hall lobbies, public facilities and libraries. The Association members are actively lobbying the local assemblies to adopt resolutions calling on the national government to sign and ratify the TPNW.

The total number of signatures in support of the appeal for Japan to join the TPNW had reached 1,723,463 by January 22, 2025, and 444,929 were collected by the Association members. In the signature-collecting drive, people are more supportive than before, and even young ones including elementary and secondary students come forward to sign. This kind of positive changes are taking place everywhere. It shows that the Nobel Peace Prize has thrown spotlight on Nihon Hidankyo, and people empathize more than ever before with the Hibakusha's messages such as "Humanity cannot coexist with nuclear weapons" and "It is wrong to believe nuclear weapons can maintain security".

The Association now sees younger members starting their own initiative, such as holding meetings with Hibakusha to share their stories about the atomic bombing, and conducting study sessions and fieldwork at war heritage sites to learn Japan's history of wartime atrocities and crimes. The Association will continue its effort to increase younger members' involvement in the movement by extending its reach on social media and through other communication tools, to make sure the facts of atomic bombing as well as the movement to achieve a nuclear-free world are handed over to future generations.

To promote universalization of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, the New Japan Women's Association will use every opportunity such as the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women to urge all governments to become parties to the Treaty.