



20th World Congress: From Hiroshima to Future Generations
International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War
Hiroshima, Japan
24 August 2012

On the historic occasion of IPPNW's 20th World Congress, we are witnessing a sea change in global demand for a world free of nuclear weapons and free of the threat they pose to human survival. An emergent movement focused on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons is bringing States and civil society together as partners in working for a global treaty to ban and eliminate the most abhorrent weapons ever created.

We are equally encouraged by the growing demand for action to arrest the global crisis of armed violence that kills hundreds of thousands of people and maims millions more every year in countries around the world. The prevention of war is a public health imperative that extends from the carnage inflicted by small arms and light weapons to the extinction of humanity itself in a nuclear war.

These signs of change are cause for hope that the international community can create a healthier, more peaceful future, where human security is based upon mutual respect and cooperation rather than the force of arms.

We rededicate ourselves to this most urgent task in Hiroshima, the first of the two Japanese cities destroyed by the bomb and rebuilt as global emissaries of peace. We honor the *Hibakusha* of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and thank them for bringing their personal stories of suffering and survival to the rest of the world in the effort to ensure that no one else dies in a nuclear firestorm, or from the radiation that makes nuclear weapons unique and merciless in their effects.

We welcome the Peace Declaration issued by Mayor Matsui on August 6, in which he observed that Mayors For Peace, on its 30th anniversary, has now enrolled more than 5,300 municipal officials who have joined in a universal appeal for what he has called "the genuine peace of a world without nuclear weapons." We congratulate Mayor Taue of Nagasaki for opening a Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition at Nagasaki University, and echo his call for a nuclear weapons convention. We declare our intent to stand with Mayor Matsui, Mayor Taue, and the *Hibakusha* of both cities until we have achieved our common goal.

For more than three decades, IPPNW has endeavored to alert health professionals, political leaders, and the public about the health effects of nuclear warfare. Most recently, IPPNW, working with its US affiliate PSR and prominent climate scientists, has published important new scientific findings about the global climate disruption and devastating crop failures that would result from a nuclear war using even a fraction of the world's current arsenals. Beyond the instantaneous destruction of entire cities and the immediate deaths of tens of millions of people, the "nuclear famine" that would persist for a decade or more could take the lives of at least a billion people in places far removed from the bombs and those who decided to use them.

We are therefore especially encouraged by the resurgence of diplomatic and governmental attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and to the medical and moral imperative for nuclear disarmament. A 16-nation statement on the humanitarian basis for nuclear disarmament, issued at the 2012 NPT PrepCom in Vienna, has become the basis for an international conference, to be held in Oslo next March, to focus world attention on the humanitarian dangers posed by nuclear weapons. We have given this conference our

unconditional support, and believe it can lay the foundation for an international treaty that will finally rid the world of nuclear weapons.

IPPNW attaches special importance to the renewed resolve of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement to prevent “the unspeakable human suffering” caused by nuclear weapons; to ensure that they are never used again; and to take “concrete actions leading to the prohibition of use and elimination of such weapons.” Since the adoption of this powerful new resolution in November, the International Committee of the Red Cross has warned the world that any nuclear war, anywhere in the world, would overwhelm any possible medical response.

IPPNW and the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement are of one mind about the need to abolish nuclear weapons and to prevent them from ever being used again. Therefore, we are delighted that Red Cross and Red Crescent representatives, including Federation President Tadateru Konoe, have joined us in Hiroshima.

ICAN—the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons—is mobilizing public support for a nuclear weapons convention, an idea championed by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Desmond Tutu and other prominent leaders. ICAN, launched by IPPNW in 2007, has now grown into a broad-based, multinational civil society campaign in which we are proud to be the lead medical voice as well as the founding partner organization.

IPPNW doctors, researchers, and activists also serve as the public health voice of the civil society campaigns to end the use of cluster munitions, prevent illegal global arms trade, and address the root causes of armed violence. Through our Aiming For Prevention program, we have put human faces on the world’s failure to invest in community violence prevention initiatives, and to confront a system of global gun trafficking that destroys not only individual lives and livelihoods, but also families and entire communities. At the recently—and disappointingly—concluded Arms Trade Treaty Diplomatic Conference, IPPNW presented a Medical Alert for a Strong and Humanitarian ATT, containing the signatures of thousands of health professionals from 58 countries, to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We renew our call for a global agreement to ensure that conventional weapons do not end up in the hands of those who use them deliberately and indiscriminately against civilian populations or to violate anyone’s human rights.

As we gather in Japan—the only country against which nuclear weapons have been used in acts of war—for the purpose of rededicating ourselves to their abolition and to the prevention of armed violence, we must remember the tragic events at Fukushima from which the people of this country are still suffering 18 months later. We know that the entire nuclear chain—including uranium mining and processing, the production of energy from fissionable materials in dangerous reactors, contamination from nuclear waste products, and nuclear weapons themselves—is fraught with risks to health, our environment, and our security, and that we must take action to prevent future harm of such magnitude.

IPPNW’s message has been carried from Nagasaki to Hiroshima during the past two weeks by 40 cyclists from 20 countries, who braved the heat and humidity of the Japanese summer to remind us all about the catastrophic effects of nuclear weapons and to advocate for their abolition. The medical students who organized this tour—and previous bike tours in other parts of the world—are the future of our federation. Their energy, creativity, and determination inspire all of us and give us the confidence to believe that there will never be another Hiroshima, that there will never be another Nagasaki, and that the coming generations will inherit a more peaceful world.