



NCC 日本キリスト教協議会

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NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL IN JAPAN

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Rev. Makoto WATABE
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General Secretary

Statement Regarding the Effectuation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which prohibits the development, manufacturing, possession, and storage of nuclear weapons and aims toward a world without nuclear weapons, came into effect on January 22 this year, following Honduras' ratification on October 24 last year, making it 50 countries and regions which have ratified this Treaty. This Treaty was adopted on July 7, 2017 with approval from 122 countries and regions in the United Nations, and after 3 years, it has finally gained the 50 countries and regions necessary for it to come into force. However, we are left with a strong sense of disappointment that this day arrived with the Japanese government neither approving nor ratifying this Treaty.

First and foremost in the background of the formulation of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, there is the experience of the most heinous, indiscriminate massacre and destruction in human history by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, as well as the earnest pleas of atomic bomb victims, resounding amid the unending suffering that continues long after the War, to never again let anyone become a victim of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the suffering of radiation exposure by the crew of Daigo Fukuryu Maru due to the thermonuclear test carried out at Bikini Atoll in the Pacific Ocean by the United States in 1954 sent shockwaves throughout the world. This led to the 1968 adoption of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which came into effect in 1970. This in turn led to the adoption of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996 (yet to be effectuated). The world's path toward the abolition of nuclear weapons and prevention of nuclear proliferation has finally led to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, following global campaigns by international organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-government organization such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), who argued against the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons and aimed for the realization of an international treaty.

Japan, however, although being the only nation victimized by nuclear bombing, experienced the great disaster of the Nuclear Power Plant in Fukushima in March 2011, which completely shattered the safety myth of nuclear energy, promoted under the pretext of "peaceful use." Despite experiencing several tragedies of radiation exposure, the Japanese government has refused to transform its energy policy, and moreover, has stubbornly refused to join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The reason that is given by the Japanese government for refusing to join the treaty is, there is no choice but to depend up the deterrent force of the U.S. nuclear umbrella in order to secure the safety of our country from the nuclear thread in North East Asia posed by the People's Republic of China and the



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Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

However, by continuing to hold such a nuclear deterrent theory and rely on nuclear weapons for national security, Japan firstly gives reason to nations it views as hostile to continue developing nuclear weapons, and falls further into self-contradiction by increasing the uncertainty of being targeted for nuclear attack. Secondly, such a nuclear deterrent theory by the Japanese government causes the nation to walk away from the principle of Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan, which declares the permanent renouncement of war and military power, caused adoption of the Three Non-Nuclear Principles (1971), and accords with the principles of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which aims to eradicate nuclear weapons from human society. Thirdly, the path chosen by the Japanese governments ignores the significance of the valuable lives of the Atomic Bomb victims lost in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, tramples upon the relentless struggle for peace by nuclear victims who cry out in prayer to never repeat nuclear tragedies, and communicates an attitude that learns nothing from the history of the Fukushima nuclear plant disaster.

“The development of nuclear weapons signifies not a country's elevation to greatness, but its descent to the darkest depths of depravity. These weapons are not a necessary evil; they are the ultimate evil.” We must return to immeasurable weight of these words by Setsuko Thurlow. Truly, nuclear weapons are an inhumane ultimate evil, and Japan as a nuclear victim nation should be at the forefront, boldly proclaiming that their use, possession, and development should never be allowed. Japan should demand that both sides holding the ultimate evil nuclear weapons abandon them, and should not neglect to work toward peace out of deference to the United States. The government leaders should not use false words such as “building bridges with nuclear powers”, which contributes nothing toward nuclear disarmament. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons had already been adopted by the United Nations General Council, and has now achieved effectuation, but it is hugely disappointing that the Japanese government has not even expressed approval of this. We demand the Japanese government's immediate ratification of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

In the statement released by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in July 2014, it says “The voices of the hibakusha, the pi-pok-ja (Korean atomic bomb sufferers), and test site victims cry out for an exodus from the nuclear age.”

Not only have the nuclear deterrent theory and the safety myth of “peaceful use” been shattered, nuclear weapons and nuclear power generation destroys lives, health, and the environment, and is the ultimate evil that can drive humanity to utter ruin. We shall use the remaining time to our best efforts to cause



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more people to awaken to these facts, raise our voices so we can escape from slavery of such destructive systemic evil, and continue to demand and pressure the Japanese government into joining to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

As the Church, as Christ's body that believes in the Creator God, who holds heaven and earth in God's eternal mercy and who created all living things to sustain each other's life, and as people called and sent to serve the *Oikoumene*, we believe that we are required to carry out this task as the ultimate mandate of the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ.

January 27, 2021

National Christian Council in Japan

Rev. Dr. KIM Sungjae, General Secretary

Rev. NAITO Shingo, Chair, Peace and Nuclear Issues Committee