

Japan: Nagasaki mayor criticizes gov't's refusal to demand that nuclear powers shun nuclear weapons

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NAGASAKI — As Nagasaki marked the 68th anniversary of the atomic bombing in a ceremony on Aug. 9, the city's mayor Tomihisa Taue criticized the national government for its passive attitude toward nuclear disarmament.

In the Nagasaki Peace Declaration presented at the ceremony, Mayor Taue pointed out that during the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, which was held in Geneva in April, Tokyo had stopped short of signing a joint statement urging that nuclear weapons not be used.

"The Japanese government did not sign (the statement), betraying the expectations of global society," Taue said. "If the Japanese government cannot support the remark that 'nuclear weapons (should never be) used again under any circumstances,' this implies that the government would approve of their use under some circumstances."

Taue also expressed worries about Japan's resumption of negotiations on nuclear power cooperation with India, which is not a party to the NPT.

"Cooperating on nuclear power with India, who has not signed the NPT, would render the NPT meaningless as its main tenet is to stop the increase of the number of nuclear-weapon states," he said. "Japan's cooperation with India would also provide North Korea, which withdrew from the NPT and is committed to nuclear development, with an excuse to justify its actions."

The mayor then urged the central government to take proactive measures to fulfill its duty as the only nation to have suffered an atomic bombing.

Moreover, Mayor Taue expressed grave concern about the moves to revise the war-renouncing Constitution, citing a phrase from the Constitution's preamble which reads, "Japanese people have resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government."

Taue underscored the importance of not forgetting the terrible experiences of war and atomic-bombing. "In order not to forget this original desire for peace, it is essential to impart the experiences of war and atomic devastation to succeeding generations."

He also talked about Senji Yamaguchi, an atomic-bombing survivor, or hibakusha, who died in July this year at the age of 82. Yamaguchi had previously visited the United Nations, where he called for the abolition of nuclear arms, saying, "No more hibakusha."

"Listen to their (hibakusha's) voices," Mayor Taue said, noting that the average age of the hibakusha now surpassed 78. "Please consider whether or not you will allow the existence of nuclear weapons in the world today, and in the future world of your children."

In his address, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe vowed to stick to the three non-nuclear principles of not producing, possessing or introducing nuclear arms, and also promised to contribute to lasting world peace. He stopped short of saying that his government will abide by provisions in the Constitution, however, which he had mentioned in his 2007 Nagasaki speech while he was previously in power.

Moreover, Abe made no mention of his government's nuclear power policy, although prime ministers Naoto Kan and Yoshihiko Noda had declared at the 2011 and 2012 Nagasaki peace ceremonies that their administrations would seek to end Japan's reliance on atomic power.

The ceremony began at 10:35 a.m. at the Peace Park in Nagasaki. It was attended by about 6,300 people, including *hibakusha* and bereaved families of atomic-bombing victims, as well as representatives from 44 countries.

The attendees offered a silent prayer at 11:02 a.m., when the atomic bomb was dropped in the city on Aug. 9, 1945.

A total of 3,404 *hibakusha* are confirmed to have died over the past year, bringing the number of Nagasaki atomic-bombing victims to 162,083.

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* <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130809p2a00m0na012000c.html>