



Mayors for Peace

Secretariat

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OPEN LETTER FROM MAYORS FOR PEACE

The world has spoken. Recognizing that “the current international climate makes increased political attention to disarmament and non-proliferation issues, the promotion of multilateral disarmament and the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons all the more urgent,” on December 23, a large majority of nations “decided to convene in 2017 a United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.”

In so voting, the global majority finally acted on the fervent wish of the atomic bomb survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (*hibakusha*), that no one else should ever suffer as they have. Mayors for Peace, a nonpartisan organization with 7,196 member cities in 162 countries and regions, representing one billion people, wholeheartedly welcomes this landmark vote and calls on all states to participate constructively and in good faith in the 2017 negotiations.

Today, more than 15,000 nuclear weapons, most an order of magnitude more powerful than the bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki, over 90% of them held by the United States and Russia, continue to pose an intolerable threat to cities and humanity. With nuclear-armed countries edging ever closer to direct military confrontation in conflict zones around the world, former U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry has warned: “The probability of a nuclear calamity is higher today, I believe, than it was during the cold war.”

In this increasingly volatile environment, the illusion of international security still depends on the threatened use of nuclear weapons as prescribed by the doctrine of “nuclear deterrence” – a notion based on mutual distrust and the unspeakable horror the term implies. But nuclear deterrence offers no effective solution to the global security challenges we face. Nuclear weapons are useless both in preventing and responding to terrorism. Their very existence brings new risks of use each day.

In this time of global upheaval and uncertainty, we are witnessing a growing trend towards exclusivity and conservatism, in terms of both economics and diplomacy. Precisely for this reason, all states must redouble their efforts to transcend differences and overcome obstacles through persistent dialogue and cooperation, which are key to creating common values. This applies especially to the nuclear disarmament process. While most of the nuclear-armed states and states under their “nuclear umbrellas” voted against the resolution, the serious sense of crisis shared by the majority of the international community must not be neglected. Participation by the nuclear-armed states in these negotiations can provide a venue for confidence-building and constructive engagement that can contribute to de-escalation of international tensions. We expect the nuclear-armed states and their allies to take innovative approaches and demonstrate decisive leadership in this regard.

When government representatives gather at the United Nations in New York, from 27 – 31 March and 15 June to 7 July 2017, we call on them to engage in cooperative dialogue, to overcome their political and ideological differences, and to bring us closer to achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

Mayors for Peace pledges to support initiatives by world leaders to develop a new global security paradigm based on dialogue, mutual understanding and cooperation, instead of doomsday threats. It is time for state and city governments, with diverse civil society actors, to consolidate their efforts and promote the legal prohibition of nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination.

December 24, 2016

Mayors for Peace

- President Mayor of Hiroshima, Japan
- Vice president Mayor of Nagasaki, Japan
- Vice president Lord Mayor of Hannover, Germany
- Vice president Mayor of Volgograd, Russia
- Vice president Mayor of Malakoff, France
- Vice president Mayor of Muntinlupa, Philippines
- Vice president Lord Mayor of Manchester, U.K.
- Vice president Mayor of Akron, U.S.
- Vice president Mayor of Ypres, Belgium
- Vice president Mayor of Biograd na Moru, Croatia
- Vice president Mayor of Granollers, Spain
- Vice president Mayor of Halabja, Iraq
- Vice president Mayor of Brussels, Belgium
- Vice president Mayor of Fongo-Tongo, Cameroon
- Vice president Mayor of Mexico City, Mexico
- Vice president Mayor of Frog, Norway
- Executive Governor of Bangkok, Thailand
- Executive Mayor of Fremantle, Australia
- Executive Mayor of Semey, Kazakhstan
- Executive Mayor of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Executive Mayor of Cochin, India
- Executive Mayor of Montreal, Canada
- Executive Mayor of Wellington, New Zealand
- Executive Mayor of Santos, Brazil
- Executive Mayor of Cartago, Costa Rica
- Executive Mayor of Bogota, Colombia
- Executive Mayor of Des Moines, U.S.