

Message from the Mayor of Hiroshima

It is both my honor and pleasure to send this message on the occasion of World Peace Pageant 2025.

On August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb used in human history was dropped on Hiroshima. It instantly reduced our city to a scorched plain, claiming countless lives and shattering normal life. The lives of the *hibakusha* are still impaired by the adverse effects of radiation on their minds and bodies.

The global situation is tense. Russia's protracted invasion of Ukraine and the worsening situation in the Middle East continue to deepen distrust and fear among nations. If nations continue to expand nuclear and other armaments to maintain superiority over others, and the public assumption that we have to rely on military force gains ground, the realization of a peaceful world will grow only farther out of reach.

In times like these, it is important for civil society to unite as one with hope and determination to take collective action urging policymakers to shift their policies. Last fiscal year, more than 2.26 million people from around the world visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. This record number is evidence of unprecedented interest in the atomic-bombed city and a rise in peace consciousness. The foundation of Hiroshima's will for peace is the ardent *hibakusha* plea that no one should ever suffer as they have. To dispel the suspicion and doubt that create conflicts, what we can do now is share, connect to, and discuss the experiences and values of others through exchange activities such as music, art, sports, and more, to foster a circle of trust and spread the sense of safety we feel in our daily lives. As such, it could not be more meaningful that you have organized this event to feature the voice of a *hibakusha* who expresses her experience of the atomic bombing through *kamishibai*, a form of Japanese storytelling, and to spread the wish for the realization of a peaceful world without nuclear weapons. For this, you have my deepest respect.

The City of Hiroshima, together with more than 8,500 member cities of Mayors for Peace, continues to raise peace consciousness in civil society and create a world filled with the culture of peace, thus urging policymakers relying on nuclear deterrence to shift their diplomatic policies toward peaceful solutions through dialogue. I would like to ask you to act in solidarity with us to eliminate nuclear weapons and light the way toward lasting world peace.

In closing, I extend my best wishes for the great success of this event, as well as the good health and happiness of all in attendance.

August 5, 2025

MATSUI Kazumi
Mayor
The City of Hiroshima