

Nagasaki is 'a global inspiration' for peace, UN chief says marking 73rd anniversary of atomic bombing

"Nagasaki is not just an international city with a long and fascinating history. It is a [global inspiration](#) for all those who seek to create a safer and more secure world," Mr. Guterres said.

"I am humbled", he told those assembled, "to be here with you to commemorate the women, men and children killed by the nuclear attack on Nagasaki on 9 August 1945," he said conveying his "deepest respect and condolences to everyone here today, and to all the victims and survivors of the atomic bombs".

Calling the city "a beacon of hope and strength, and a monument to the resilience of its people," the UN chief underscored that while the atomic bomb killed and injured tens of thousands, it "could not crush your spirit".

"From the other side of the apocalypse, the *hibakusha* have raised their voices on behalf of the entire human family. We must listen," he asserted. "There can be no more Hiroshimas, no more Nagasakis, and so no more *hibakusha*."

Mr. Guterres noted that 73 years on, fear of nuclear war still prevails, as States are spending vast sums to modernize their nuclear weapon arsenals.

"More than \$1.7 trillion was spent in 2017 on arms and armies – the highest level since the end of the cold war and around 80 times the amount needed for global humanitarian aid," the Secretary-General pointed out.

Disarmament lag

Meanwhile, disarmament processes have slowed and even come to a halt.

"Many States demonstrated their frustration by adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons last year," said Mr. Guterres.

Other deadly weapons also threaten incessant peril, such as chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction, and those developed for cyberwarfare.

Moreover, conflicts fought with conventional weapons are lasting longer and are becoming more deadly for civilians, he added.



UN Photo/Shigeo Hayashi

Ruins of Nagasaki about 800 metres from the hypocenter in mid-October 1945.

“There is an urgent need for disarmament of all kinds, but especially nuclear disarmament,” the UN chief maintained, citing this as the backdrop of his global disarmament initiative launched in May.

Mr. Guterres labelled disarmament “a driving force for maintaining international peace and security”, calling it a tool for ensuring national security.

“It helps to uphold the principles of humanity, promote sustainable development and protect civilians,” he spelled out.

He turned to his [disarmament agenda](#), outlined in May, to “lower the risk of nuclear annihilation, prevent conflict of all kinds, and reduce the suffering that the proliferation and use of arms causes to civilians,” saying that it illustrates how nuclear weapons undermine global, national and human security.

“The total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the highest disarmament priority of the United Nations,” stressed the UN chief, noting that nuclear-weapon States have a lead role.

He called on all countries to commit to nuclear disarmament and to let “Nagasaki and Hiroshima remind us to put peace first every day; to work on conflict prevention and resolution, reconciliation and dialogue, and to tackle the roots of conflict and violence”.

“Let us all commit to making Nagasaki the last place on Earth to suffer nuclear devastation. I will work with you to that end,” he concluded.