

Statement from four universities protesting Israeli cabinet minister's comments on the use of nuclear weapons and calling for an immediate end to Israel's attacks on the Gaza Strip

An Israeli cabinet minister has stated that “the use of nuclear weapons is an option.” As residents of the atomic-bombed city of Nagasaki, we live with the strong desire to “make Nagasaki the last atomic-bombed city.” We express our strong protest against the fact that a wartime cabinet minister would flirt with such a statement. In response to such statements and ideas, and with a strong desire for an immediate ceasefire, the four school corporations in the atomic-bombed city of Nagasaki jointly issue this statement of protest.

Located in the atomic-bombed city of Nagasaki, in all of the schools and kindergartens under the school corporations, which are the bases of our four universities, we have been praying together with kindergartners, students, faculty and staff for a world where nuclear weapons are never used and taking a strong stand for the realization of a world of “peace” to Japan and other countries in the world.

August 9, 1945, 11:02 a.m. The atomic bombing of Nagasaki was an act that deliberately took the lives of civilians, especially children, who were undoubtedly not soldiers. We must never forget that there are still people who continue to suffer even though nearly 80 years have passed since the day of the atomic bombing. As the *Hibakusha* (atomic bomb survivors) population ages, we are continuing to search for ways to convey the reality of the damage caused by the atomic bombing to future generations so that humanity will not forget the horror of nuclear weapons.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas suddenly launched a large-scale attack against Israel. Even considering the historical background and the recent situation in the Middle East, we, who hope for a world of “peace,” cannot help but be saddened. The subsequent Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip has made us realize the horror of the cycle of hate being perpetuated by both sides, and once again forced us to ask the big question, “What is true ‘peace’?” Under such circumstances, a minister of Israel, representing a country which has not publicly declared the possession of nuclear weapons and is not a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), has publicly stated that “the use of nuclear weapons is an option.” Currently, Israel has not completely ceased the attacks on the Gaza Strip, creating a situation in which the people living there are not able to lead a normal life. These actions are unforgivable. It is clearly an outrage against Article 2, Section 4 of the United Nations Charter, which prohibits the use and threat of force, as well as the relevant provisions of international humanitarian law.

For the sake of those living in the Gaza Strip, for those who are still being held hostage, and above all, for the sake of the many children, who are victims of adults who only see their own justice, and their future, we sincerely and strongly hope for an immediate and complete ceasefire and a resolution of the conflict through discussion instead of weapons. Pope Paul VI once declared that peace through nuclear weapons is “an attempt to hide terror in the name of peace,” and Pope Francis, who visited the atomic-bombed city of Nagasaki in 2019, has repeatedly pointed out that the security gained through nuclear weapons is “false security.” We appeal to everyone how vain “peace” achieved through military force is.

As residents of the atomic-bombed city of Nagasaki, our strong desire to make Nagasaki the last place to be bombed by nuclear weapons is unwavering. Humanity should never experience that tragic event again. May there be true “peace” for all.

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