



This year's G7 Summit was held in Hiroshima, where the world's first nuclear weapon was used. The leaders visited the Peace Memorial Museum and left their names and messages in the visitors' book, then visited Peace Memorial Park to lay wreaths at the Cenotaph for the Atomic Bomb Victims.

# JAPAN'S LONG EFFORTS TO REALIZE A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

*As the only country to have suffered from atomic bombings during war, Japan has played a leading role in the international community's efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. At this time, when the world security environment is unstable, Japan has the responsibility to lead the international efforts for nuclear disarmament and continue to take concrete measures to realize a world without nuclear weapons.*

For 78 years since the first nuclear weapon was used, the world has sustained the record of the non-use of nuclear weapons. Now, however, that history is more precarious than ever. Surrounded by China, a nuclear-weapon State, North Korea, persisting in its nuclear development, and Russia, threatening to use nuclear weapons in the invasion of Ukraine, East Asia's security environment is becoming particularly severe.

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombing during wartime, Japan has actively been leading international efforts for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It has leveraged both multilateral frameworks and bilateral diplomatic opportunities based on the two-pronged recognition of the need for national security and the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons.

In August last year, Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio became the first prime minister to attend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

Review Conference held in New York. The NPT is an international framework on nuclear non-proliferation with 191 countries and territories including both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. In his general debate speech, Prime Minister Kishida said that, as the guardian of the NPT, Japan would firmly defend it and that he would work on the "Hiroshima Action Plan" as the first step of a realistic road map to link the "reality" of a harsh security environment to the ideal of a world without nuclear weapons. As part of the plan, he also pointed out that Japan would promote the sharing of the accurate understanding of the realities of nuclear weapon use in the world by encouraging visits to the atomic-bombed cities, namely Hiroshima and Nagasaki, by leaders and others from various countries.

True to his words, in May, the prime minister hosted the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, where the world's first atomic bomb was dropped. The leaders of the G7 and invited

Right: Prime Minister Kishida delivered a speech at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on August 6, stating that "The starting point for making firm progress towards the realization of a 'world without nuclear weapons' is accurately understanding the tragic realities of the atomic bombings."



Top: The First Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference opened in July 2023 in Vienna. "There has not been a time since the depths of the Cold War that the risk of a nuclear weapon being used has been so high...The NPT has earned its status as the so-called 'cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation regime' because it is key to maintaining the hard-won norms against nuclear weapons," said NAKAMITSU Izumi, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. [JJI](#)  
Left: Professor AKIYAMA Nobumasa also attended the First Preparatory Committee for the 2026 NPT Review Conference held in Vienna. "It is imperative to reduce the risk of using nuclear weapons and to build mutual trust between nations. In the coming years, when emerging technologies such as AI in nuclear deterrence and arms control will become major issues, Japan should be firmly involved in the rulemaking exercises in those fields," he said. [THE MAINICHI NEWSPAPERS](#)



countries and heads of international organizations visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, which shows the devastation caused by the bombing, and listened to the voice of an atomic bombing survivor. The G7 leaders issued the "G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament," the first-ever G7 Leaders' document with a particular focus on nuclear disarmament.

"The fact that the Japanese government hosted the G7 meeting in Hiroshima and put forward a vision for nuclear disarmament even amidst a difficult strategic environment, demonstrates to the world Japan's consistent commitment through actions, not just words," said Professor AKIYAMA Nobumasa, Dean of Hitotsubashi University's School of International and Public Policy. "Never before have so many heads of state and government, including President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine, and leaders of invited countries, come together to be exposed to the realities of the atomic bombings. By visiting Hiroshima and learning the (catastrophic and inhumane) impact, they reaffirmed the norm of standing against the use of nuclear weapons. Japan's role as a bridge between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, and the continuation of the history of non-use, will serve as an important foundation for rendering nuclear weapons unnecessary."

Another effort by Japan was the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World Without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP) launched in 2022 under the initiative of Prime Minister Kishida. The purpose of the IGEP is to serve as an opportunity for 15 experts from nuclear- and non-

nuclear-weapon States to engage in candid discussions beyond their respective national positions.

Following the second meeting of the IGEP in April this year, with the sense of urgency that the current crisis must be turned into an opportunity to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime, particularly by maintaining and strengthening the NPT, the IGEP issued a message to the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Professor Akiyama is also a member of the IGEP and said, "The challenges for the future involve how to create a mechanism to reduce nuclear risks, including avoidance of inadvertent escalation and how to improve the NPT Review Process to enable substantive discussions on issues related to nuclear disarmament, such as transparency."

The widening division within the international community over approaches to nuclear disarmament, Russia's nuclear threat, and other concerns now make the road to a world without nuclear weapons all the more difficult. In his address at the 78th Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony, Prime Minister Kishida emphasized, "it is precisely because of these circumstances that it is imperative for us to reinvigorate international momentum once more towards the realization of a world without nuclear weapons."

Japan will continue to lead candid dialogue between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States at various fora, including those of the United Nations (UN) and the NPT, and will continue its tireless efforts towards nuclear disarmament in cooperation with the international community. ●