

## **Statement for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons Workshop (August 10th, 2025) commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the Dropping of the Atomic Bombs, the End of World War II, and the Establishment of the United Nations**

We – religious leaders and citizens in the Asia-Pacific region – have gathered for a workshop to advocate for demilitarization, military de-escalation, and the global abolition of nuclear weapons. We reaffirm the grave dangers posed by nuclear arsenals which have brought, and continue to threaten, unprecedented death and destruction to humanity.

On this 80th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki we acknowledge the witness of the experience of the hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors) and the victims of nuclear testing in Australia and across the Pacific. We heed their passionate plea that their suffering will not be repeated for future generations and that this necessarily entails the abolition of nuclear weapons. We thus declare our unwavering determination to achieve their complete elimination.

It is now 2025. We cannot deny that the risk of the use of nuclear weapons has become alarmingly high. It is estimated that there are twelve thousand nuclear warheads globally, of which more than two thousand are ready for immediate launch. The United States and Russia currently account for 90% of these. The leaders of Russia and the U.S. have both threatened the use of nuclear weapons this year. Meanwhile, China, with over six hundred warheads, is expanding its arsenal faster than any other country. Furthermore, more nations in Europe and the Middle East are working towards developing nuclear weapons capability. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has warned that “a new nuclear arms race has begun.”

Based on religious and spiritual teachings and values, religious leaders and their communities have played a significant role in promoting justice, security, demilitarization, and peace around the world. At the 10th World Assembly of Religions for Peace (WCRP) in 2019 global religious leaders reaffirmed their understanding that “the happiness of others and ourselves is inherently shared” and that, because we all live interconnected lives, the dignity of every individual and all life in the planetary ecosystem must be equally respected and protected.

The rational opposition to nuclear weapons is that they foster military escalation, threaten environmental devastation, necessarily target civilians, threaten the destruction of humanity and habitat, and divert resources away from urgent humanitarian concerns. For people of faith the objection is primarily an ethical and moral one. Acts related to nuclear weapons such as use, development, testing, production, possession, transfer, storage, or threat of use are morally and ethically unacceptable. We recognize the theory of nuclear deterrence to be a major obstacle to the abolition of nuclear weapons and as such poses a great danger and harm to humanity and the planet. This theory breeds suspicion and mutual distrust and is thus incompatible with our beliefs and religious faith. As religious communities we have a moral duty to pursue peace collectively and actively.

Based on this belief and in commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings, we declare our commitment to the complete abolition of nuclear weapons.

- We say to our leaders of the world that nuclear weapons pose a catastrophic threat to all of humanity and the entire ecosystem and that their use can never be justified under any circumstances, and that all measures for abolition must be implemented without delay.
- We urge all countries to support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as an instrument (treaty) which bans nuclear arms under international law and to work toward its universal adoption.
- We call on the countries involved, along with the international community, to address the concerns of those affected by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear testing, nuclear accidents, and uranium mining by investigating the damage and providing compensation.
- It is imperative that all countries promote education on the existential risk of nuclear weapons, and peace-making and cooperation through dialogue.

We remain inspired by the urgent plea of hibakusha – “No more hibakusha.” Given our sincere reflection on past wars and our responsibility to build peace, we renew our determination to strive for the abolition of nuclear weapons. We stand in solidarity with people around the world who share the dream of a nuclear-free world, who are committed to persistent dialogue and prayer to make that dream a reality.