



Speaker: **Lee Gyuyeol / Korea Atomic Bombs Victim Association**

Survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in utero while still in his mother's womb. President of the Korea Atomic Bombs Victim Association since 2018. The association was established in 1967 to provide health care, and improve the welfare and relief measures for Korean survivors and descendents of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Hello. I am Lee Gyuyeol, President of the South Korean Atomic Bomb Survivors Association.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to Peace Boat members who take part in global peace movements for a nuclear-free world. I would also like to offer my congratulations on the efforts to prepare and host the World Nuclear Survivors Forum 2021, and extend my support and encouragement.

As you know, over 50 member states of the UN ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which came into effect in January this year [2021]. Nevertheless, nuclear-armed states such as the U.S., China, Russia, France, and the U.K., oppose the treaty and have not taken the slightest step to show their support.

It is especially regrettable that South Korea and Japan, countries that have suffered from nuclear weapons, did not participate in this movement nor ratify this treaty.

August 6 and 9, 1945 was a time under forced occupation by the Japanese Empire. There were 70,000 Koreans living in Hiroshima and another 30,000 living in Nagasaki at the time. On August 6, 1945, Hiroshima was attacked with an atomic bomb by the U.S. and Nagasaki on August 9. Over 100,000 Koreans became victims of the nuclear weapons. 50,000 people were killed immediately, and another 50,000 suffered from the damage, then returned home upon the liberation of their homeland. Many have passed away, and now there are only a little over 2,100 survivors.

Looking back on human history, it is clear that nuclear weapons are truly dangerous. They can destroy humanity and erase all life on earth without a trace. We, along with those who work with Peace Boat in the pursuit of global peace, should take the lead in creating a world without nuclear weapons. I believe that those of us, the survivors of atomic bombs, must be at the forefront of the movement to abolish nuclear weapons.

I would like to add something about nuclear survivors. No words can describe the gravity of the aftereffects on the second and third generations, not to mention on us, the first generation of nuclear victims. Our children and grandchildren, the second and third generations of the survivors, continue to suffer from unexplained illnesses and are in unspeakable pain. Since the cause of these illnesses is unknown, it is not possible to get proper treatment. As a survivor of an atomic bombing myself, I truly regret this situation, and I cannot bear to see it.

In any case, I would like to conclude my message by expressing my sincere hope that the World Nuclear Survivors Forum 2021 hosted by Peace Boat will be a success today, and that nuclear weapons will be eliminated from the earth.



I truly hope that a peaceful nuclear-free world will be a reality. Thank you very much for your attention.

Disclaimer

This transcript is at the responsibility of Peace Boat and may not be completely the same as the original testimony. The original testimony was presented online at the World Nuclear Survivors Forum 2021 on December 2-3, where over 30 nuclear survivors from five continents around the world shared their voices with more than 1000 people. The Forum was hosted by Peace Boat in partnership with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). The stories and panel discussions are all available for viewing on demand via Youtube or on our website here: <https://nuclearsurvivors.org>